

# GROWTH - GREATNESS - GRACE

## 2nd Samuel

Thoughts come from a wide variety of sources. Some from messages I have heard from individuals, some from assembly Bible studies, some from home life and some from books I have read. The Holy Spirit is the Teacher who makes them real to me.

- "The Life Application Bible." Tyndale House and Zondervan

### 2nd Samuel 1

#### HOW ARE THE MIGHTY FALLEN!

The book of 2nd Samuel is a historical account of the life of David that includes his maturing into a spiritual leader, his effective leadership and his personal failures. The end of the life and reign of Saul and the result of Jonathan's choice, introduce a whole new era in the nation of Israel. David succeeded in uniting a fractured kingdom of twelve tribes into a centralized nation. Worship of God had been taking place in various places and under David's leadership, national worship was established at Jerusalem. David practiced the principles of God in his leadership knowing that God alone supplied the wisdom and strength to carry out those principles.

The **greatness** of David was not an accident nor was it incidental. When popularity and influence increases in a person's life through experiences and the passing of time, one needs to be aware that it is "God who works in you to will and to do of His good pleasure." The wise person gives credit where credit is due. "To God be all the glory." God's nature is the standard for justice and morals because men are imperfect at the best. There was a certain lack in the character of David in that discipline, both personal and in his family, were not what it should have been.

Beside growth and greatness, in this book we learn of our need of grace when we sin. Sin is much more than a flaw or weakness. It is a fatal act that has serious consequences which reaches to others when we seek to excuse it. A desire for prosperity leads to trouble. Temptation comes when we are at leisure and are aimless because of success. Lust and covetousness never quit in their quest to bring a child of God down. Sin creates a cycle of suffering that spreads like ripples in a pool. This book deals with a lot of the issues of life we face in our day.

For David there had been years of waiting times. Waiting times are difficult especially when we know what God has in mind for us in the future. During these times our patience is tried, but a benefit from this is the fact that "training for reigning" takes place. Preparing to lead takes time. There were also weeping times when disappointment and despair came upon David and his men. Sorrow for others is not a sign of weakness but of empathy when one connects personally with those who are in need. The waiting times were also learning times in which David learned to discern lies and deceit which he had to face when the Amalekite came to him with Saul's crown and bracelet. Saul was wounded before the Philistines came, and the deceitful Amalekite lied seeking to earn David's favor.

Waiting times lead to changing time in which God raises up those He chooses and puts down those who have failed or whose leadership is no longer that which is needed. God has His own times and "our times are in His hands." Waiting times are also choosing times. Our character is often developed when we take the time to think a matter through carefully. David chose not to hate Saul, but rather looked at the positive things of both Saul and Jonathan in his lament. It is not easy to deliberately lay aside that which has hurt us and deliberately find reasons to express our respect for those who seek our hurt and downfall. Remembering times follow the choosing times as we consider our personal attitude toward other people. It is easy to bless the memory of those with whom we have enjoyed fellowship. The love between David and Jonathan was that kind of value that is higher and greater than mere emotion. It values a person for who they are and their impact on us personally. This is not physical or sentimental love.

It is hard for us to bless the memory of certain people when we know they have sought to put us down in defeat. Wise is the person who can look above personal attacks and differences and value others for who they are in the sight of the Lord. A good lesson for us is to not get impatient during the waiting times in which God is molding and preparing us for growth, perhaps for greatness and always to demonstrate God's grace.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 1:25.** *"How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places."*

#### HOW ARE THE MIGHTY FALLEN!

The place where they had hoped to win  
Became the place of the grievous result of sin -

How different from where he began -  
O Saul, how are the mighty fallen!

Loyal to his friend, more loyal to his father  
Tested in battle, called by David, "A brother"  
Fallen and slain in the midst of the battle -  
O Jonathan, how are the mighty fallen!

The war for the souls of men still rages  
Sin still claims from compromise its wages  
The word of warning still comes from the sages -  
O careless soul, how are the mighty fallen!

A servant faithful to God and His calling  
Is in enemy territory, there still is danger of falling  
When one who served well fails, it is appalling -  
O servant of God, how are the mighty fallen!

Raised in a home where parents lived by faith  
Learned the value of Christ's blood and His work of grace  
Turned aside from following the Lord by a pretty face -  
O enlightened one, how are the mighty fallen!

Taught God's truth by those who practiced what they preach  
The clarion call of the Gospel to my soul did reach  
Had the privilege of serving with those who are apt to teach -  
May it never be said of me, how are the mighty fallen.

**"O God of mercy, hear my prayer as I ask for the needed grace and courage to avoid any and all the stumbling blocks Satan puts in my way. By Thy divine power please enable this feeble servant to be strong in the Lord and the power of His might. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

## **2nd Samuel 2**

### **CIVIL WAR**

In the plans of God there is a "course of time" in which His work is to be carried out. David wisely waited for as long as necessary for the kingdom of Israel under Saul's leadership to be concluded. He knew it was God's will that he be king because to that end Samuel had anointed him a number of years before. He was not power-hungry nor was he grabbing for a position when he asked for God's guidance now that there was a vacancy in the leadership of God's people. By faith he recognized God knew the whole situation and simply acted in wisdom for divine guidance. It is never wrong for us when we are in doubt about the will of God, to ask specific questions and then wait for clear answers.

When David, his family and those who followed him arrived in Hebron, it was under the authority of divine direction. Hebron was the largest city in Judah and was a geographical center with roads coming to it from different directions. There apparently were villages around it and because of its size and location, it was a secure area. Added to that is the fact that the men of Judah all gathered together there to inaugurate David as their king. His office as king had long been established. Now it was time for him to go forward in divinely appointed leadership. To act in haste can create unnecessary problems, but also to lag behind can leave a gap that is hard to fill if left in uncertainty.

The men of Hebron recognized and submitted to David's leadership for seven and a half years before the rest of the nation turned to David for leadership. Apparently, Abner, a commander in Saul's army and Saul's cousin, was really the leader of the ten tribes for five years before he put Ish-Bosheth, a son of Saul, into the position of leadership from a city on the east side of Jordan. In essence he was a pawn of Abner who put him into that role and intimidated him to rule in Abner's way for two years.

David's commendation of the men of Jabesh-Gilead was a good act of diplomacy in which those who had appreciation for the deliverance from the Philistines under the leadership of Saul were commended. Therefore, they took the body of Saul and buried it with a certain dignity appropriate to a king who had been designated by God as Israel's first king. The location of Jabesh-Gilead was near the city from which Ish-Bosheth was living. His message was clear that he would show them favor as the king of Judah even though they were not living in Judah. There is often an opportunity to settle differences of opinion without confrontation if we are willing to look for reason to encourage and bless others. "A soft answer turneth away

wrath" really does make it much easier for two opposing parties to come together and conclude a matter with dignity and yet each party retain their honor and individuality.

Abner, Saul's cousin, and Joab, David's nephew, were probably in opposition since the time when Saul was hunting David to kill him. Abishai and Asahel also probably had a bitterness against those of Saul's household and those who followed him to kill David their kinsman. Bitterness has a way of defiling many and the "battle-by-proxy" in which twenty-four men died in hand-to-hand combat ended in full scale civil war. The death of Asahel at the bottom end of Abner's spear infuriated Joab who was prepared to attack the losing army by himself with his brother Abishai. The battle by proxy didn't accomplish a thing and the battle that followed didn't either. Civil strife usually is caused by stubbornness, which many think is necessary to retain their honor or gain. Persistence in a good thing is a valuable trait. Stubbornness promotes disunity. A goal must be right and worthy of our commitment before we pursue it with vigor.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 2:6.** *"And now the Lord shew kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because you have done this thing."*

#### **KINDNESS AND TRUTH.**

A few valiant men in peril of their lives  
Were able to deprive the enemies of their prize  
And prayer was made on behalf of them  
That the Lord's kindness and truth would be given those men.

How often since that time has the same been shown;  
It is not deserved, but God for His own reasons, makes it known  
Those two things together give all that is needed  
To live for God Himself, so they must be heeded.

When the Lord Jesus came, He brought grace and truth  
Many overlooked the need of them and what they're worth  
Grace, we need to overcome all the things that we lack  
Truth is needed to keep all we do in life on track.

There was no mistaking His grace; He who was rich became poor  
So that poor and needy sinners could enter into heaven's door  
The truth He taught has deep value in every word  
It reaches to the intellect and conscience like a two-edged sword.

Now it is my turn to pray these two characteristics will be  
Shown out to others as they watch and listen to me  
If kindness and grace some way through me can be seen  
Perhaps the truth I speak will in others become keen.

If from day to day kindness and truth be lived out  
Then to get my message across, I won't have to shout  
But will with grace in my lips and truth in my heart  
People who hear and believe will have a new start.

When these two characteristics are lived out and passed on  
The important things like this will draw God's people as one  
To model what was prayed for to which Christ shed new light  
So that kindness and truth will be modeled in life.

**"I am very interested Father, when I read of David praying for these two Christ-like things to be shown to those brave men. Did they change because You gave them these characteristics? Did they become unique among David's men? I know when they were seen in Christ and dispensed to sinners like me, it made a lot of changes. May I be able to show kindness and truth today. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 3**

#### **A LONG WAR**

Seven and a half years of murder and mayhem is a long time for blood lust and sexual lust to run unchecked in an unstable society. Even though David and the men of Judah were gradually gaining in power and winning in battles, those who still followed the leadership of Abner and Ish-bosheth did not stop fighting. In those times the problem of uncontrolled lust seems to be greater than at other times when people are living normal lives. David took four more wives by whom he had children. Abner didn't hesitate apparently to claim the house of Saul for himself including Rizpah, Saul's concubine. Uncontrolled lust does not always bring

trouble at first but David's lack of good judgment, even though polygamy was accepted in that society, led to murder, rebellion, greed, rape and national disgrace. The wrongful desire of a moment, can bring a snowball effect that creates mayhem in a family and in a society.

Lack of moral strength in leaders plagued Israel for four hundred years following. There were only four "good" kings out of all who followed David and Solomon. When something is wrong, it is our responsibility to reject that behavior and stand up against it. When something is right, we must promote it and uphold it even when popular opinion goes the opposite direction. Moral weakness often goes from one generation to another because of the failure of the original model. Courage and convictions go together when we are facing opposition because of that which is morally wrong.

Abner, even though he was the commander of those who followed the house of Saul, could see the way things were going. When Ish-bosheth who was weak morally, spiritually and emotionally challenged an action of Abner, he had his opportunity to stop the war and at the same time gain a position of authority under David's leadership. They had probably served together in Saul's army in past years and each knew the other and their strengths. When we know each other well, it is wisdom on our part to not seek to take advantage of another's weaknesses but to use their strengths to reach a goal that will be for the common good.

Overcoming jealousies and uniting the country and the tribes under David's rule was helped by the influence of Abner. He knew the leadership qualities of David and how Israel had gained victory over the Philistines by the power of God through David. He also knew he was on the losing side of the long civil war. David, on the other hand, knew that if Michal, the daughter of Saul, was given back to him, those who followed Saul's family would see evidence of David's position being strengthened because he had no longstanding animosity toward the family of Saul. However, we know that even when a wrong is corrected there will be a negative effect that we will have to live with. Sin does have wages no matter who is involved.

Joab, David's nephew and the commander of his troops, was an aggressive, hard-hearted military leader who did not hesitate to act independently when he felt it was justified. This fierce leader had his own agenda and goals and would have considered the coming of Abner who had killed his brother, a threat to his leadership position. Deception was not considered to be wrong nor beyond his use to obtain his ends. The use of deception even in a small way, undermines the character of a man or woman and leaves them with a question-mark over their head from then on. A person who has been deceived once will find it hard to be trusted by those who have been deceived.

There is not question that Joab was a skilled military leader. Because he was from David's tribe and David's family, he was secure in the role he filled. Abner may not have been as aware of Joab's character as he could have been, but perhaps he was overconfident after having met with David. We have enemies seen and unseen of which we should be aware. The world, the flesh and the devil are unseen enemies who are always near waiting to deceive us with apparently innocent attractions that appeal to us but can ruin our life and testimony in a very short time. Those we see may be people who want to take advantage of our self-confidence or our weaknesses by subtle suggestions and appeal to our exalted opinion of our intellectual abilities. It is of extreme importance that we keep in fellowship with our Lord so that humility is not affected but is real.

"He that is down need fear no fall,  
He that is low no pride.  
He that is humble shall ever have,  
God to be his guide."

**2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 3:38.** *"And the king said unto his servants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?"*

#### **DECEPTION.**

One in pettiness laid a false charge  
Foolish because jealousy was likely the cause  
Deception has the ability to take many faces  
Raising its head in any and all places.

It may start some place with a false accusation  
And ends its cruel journey in the death of a nation  
When it gets started, one thing then leads to another  
And often will end with brother against brother.

A false word and smile though it may seem real

Can create a terrible rift that time cannot heal  
Insincere conversations can seem right at the start  
But they leave in the end a trail of broken hearts.

Smooth talk that seems to melt like butter in the mouth  
Sends signals of danger that is lurking about  
Watch the eyes to see if they are furtive or kind  
They often reveal what is down deep in the mind.

Hands also send messages when they move too much  
Letting us know things are happening we must never touch  
Sweat on a forehead may give warning when it's cold  
That the purpose is different than what the words just told.

Be careful when one seems over-friendly to you  
There usually are ulterior motives that are trying to get through  
Don't be hard but be cautiously careful and watch  
Being aware of the danger deception uses to catch.

God gives us wisdom and common sense too  
So, you can avoid deception before it gets through to you  
Most things deceptive we can generally avoid  
When we are receptive to the guiding of the Spirit of God.

**“O gracious God, for the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit that enables us to discern what is false and true, I give Thee my heart-felt thanks, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

## **2nd Samuel 4**

### **MORAL WEAKNESS**

It is a sad commentary on humanity that once departure and decline begin in a society, it is very hard to stop that from continuing. At first, our awareness of wrong creates discomfort and unease. Before long we become used to that which we knew was either inappropriate or just outright wrong. Then we find excuses to justify doing that which is sinful. Saul was a morally weak man even though he was large and imposing physically. Perhaps Ish-bosheth was not imposing in size physically because he was sleeping in the middle of the day. For whatever reason, when Abner left him, he lost his courage and all those under his leadership were unsure of what was going to happen next.

Fear and moral weakness paralyze an individual and that extends to those under that person's influence. When we are conscious of our inability and are awakened to our need of God's guidance - we have access to divine strength. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not on thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

Moral weakness and injustice also go together. Once compromise takes place, it is much easier to either compromise again or even turn away from that which we know is of God, to that which is expedient. Leaders are not free from this danger. When pressure is applied by the majority, it is not easy to stand firm unless we have a word from the Lord. His truth remains unchanged no matter what people may say or do.

Cowardice and moral weakness go together. Two leaders going into a private bedroom and killing a sleeping man are the actions of people who could never be trusted. When Rechab and Baanah brought the head of Ish-bosheth to David, they probably thought because Joab had got away with a cowardly killing and deception, they would too and would be rewarded. David knew enough to never trust a traitor. Whatever was the reason he let Joab go unpunished, he was not going to do the same with those who had been enemies. God does not promote wrong to produce that which is right. "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."

**2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 4:6.** *“And they came thither into the midst of the house, as though they would have fetched wheat; and they smote him under the fifth rib: and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped.”*

### **NEVER TRUST TRAITORS.**

They were in positions of leadership - captains of bands  
Trusted until the kingship changed hands  
Planning and plotting to kill the king of their land -  
Underneath lay the hearts of two traitors.

There are those who seem to be to some quite dependable  
They will align themselves with you until you are expendable  
But take your time before trusting them - be sure they're reliable -  
Because they may have the heart of a traitor.

At times they will assure you they are solidly behind you  
But to others they speak differently undermining the work you do  
Subtly they deceive, speaking of things they never knew -  
Adversely affecting your work because they're traitors.

Not everyone can be trusted, choose your confidants well  
Often, they are noted by the lies they will tell  
Be careful lest you fall under their evil spell -  
Because deception is the mark of a traitor.

There are times when you have to suffer the wounds of a friend  
He may warn you of those to whose words you attend  
Be wise and avoid those who God's truth will bend -  
At heart they have the characteristics of a traitor.

May we always let God work things out in His way  
Don't swallow every smooth speech people will say  
Guard yourself by prayer and fellowship with God every day  
And you will escape the snares of the traitors.

**“Holy God who knows the hearts of all men: please help me discern reality from falsehood. Keep me from falling under the influences of those who speak as if they are true but really are traitors to truth. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

## **2nd Samuel 5**

### **AT LAST!**

Even though we might know *what* the mind of the Lord is about a matter, we do not always know *when* He will bring it to pass. To wait patiently is very difficult when either by our own nature, or from other people we are pressured to "get up and go." Rather than getting instant results and success, we need to remember that more is involved than fulfilling a task. Waiting times develop character. Character develops wisdom. Wisdom develops skill and proficiency. Skill and proficiency produce good and lasting results that far exceed that which a "quick fix" can accomplish.

David was first anointed king by Samuel when he was either in his late teens or perhaps twenty years old. After ten years of "training for reigning" he was anointed by the men of Judah as their king. Finally, when he was thirty-seven years old, he was anointed king of a united Israel. Patient waiting for the promise of God to be fulfilled served to unmistakably establish his authority to be the king of Israel. Half-hearted followers of a less-than-proved leadership, leaves people in a weakened condition, with unsure and unstable results.

The victory over Jerusalem was accomplished because David knew "the Lord of hosts (the Lord God Almighty) was with him." "David perceived the Lord has established him king over Israel." Obstacles have a way of being surmounted when God works in us and for us. That which may be overlooked by the natural eye, is able to be perceived when we see things as God sees them. The impregnable city of Jerusalem was able to be penetrated through the "gutter," the water shaft, and that which should have been done generations before was finally accomplished. That strategic city in a strategic location, became "the city of David." It remains in its place as a key location in the affairs of nations today.

The building of a house for David by Hiram king of Tyre may have been a political act between the two leaders, but in a sense, it was secondary to David. However, in some way it assured him of the fact the Lord had established his kingdom and it was recognized by others in the middle east.

David's personal weakness was not overcome even though he was the king of Israel reigning from Jerusalem. More wives and concubines served to complicate his already complicated personal life. In spite of that, God was willing to use his servant who was weak in one area of his life and empower him to be successful in other areas of his life and service. So, when the Philistines came against him to stop the power of a united Israel, God had His man in place.

A great leader knows his limitations and need of divine guidance in every part of his life. David had a general understanding of God's intention and of his own responsibility to lead the people, but he needed specific guidance in each situation as it arose. It is a wise leader who takes time to consult the Lord as to how to go

about a task. Psalm 18 gave voice to the thoughts of David in this situation. Ambition has to be kept on a short leash. Conquest, armies, wealth and power do not guarantee victory. We need God in every work or conquest we face.

David was liked by the people, he had established a good reputation, he was successful and had the potential for greatness, but he knew he needed God. When God has the first place in one's life, and each thing we are called upon to do, is done under divine control, then we can expect success and give God all the glory. The challenge of the Philistines was obvious and conflict was inevitable. How to accomplish the task was up to the Lord. In both battles with the Philistines, the wisdom and power of God was needed. Because something works well one time does not mean that is what we are to do the next time.

It was important to David to have unmistakable instructions from the Lord before each battle. He did what the Lord said because he first asked if he should fight or not. Then he got advice from the Lord and did it. When the victory was won, he gave God all the glory and credit for the success. These three principles are important for us to act on in our service for the Lord. Leadership means we must protect the Lord's people. We must keep them unified and we need to establish and maintain the testimony of the Lord's united people.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 5:12.** *“And David perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel’s sake.”*

**THE LORD HAD ESTABLISHED HIM.**

It wasn't because of his unnatural skill  
And it wasn't because he became famous and the giant did kill  
But because the sovereign God had a plan to fulfill -  
And He had chosen David to be king.

There are times when doors open and we are compelled to go through  
Others may question and wonder what we are trying to do  
But it is plain God has guided and now it is up to you -  
To act in the fear of God and do this thing.

When one has the inward sense the Spirit of God is leading  
And the scriptures of truth confirm something in your daily reading  
Then it is wise and right to act, for it is God you are heeding  
He has chosen you this work to begin.

His guidance doesn't always promise a walk of ease  
And what other people don't understand you are able to see  
God has been preparing you as Him it has pleased -  
No longer wait wondering just when.

The work was designed long before you came  
You are expected to go forth in the Lord Jesus' name  
And God is always and forever the same -  
So, the time has come to dig right in.

Do the work, don't be afraid to plod  
Even though other people may think you odd  
Work for the Lord and leave the results to God -  
Some will realize the Lord established him.

Everything is never truly done at once  
God has been at work for a long time since  
He planned the worker to be you from whence -  
He fulfills His purpose and His people bless.

**“Holy, All-Knowing God, this work I am in presently seemed to come as an open door. Use Thy servant and Thy Word today that God's people will be benefited and Thy Word established in their hearts. I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

**2nd Samuel 6**

**MOTIVATION, METHODS, MISTAKES**

A sincere motivation to do a good thing is not the criteria by which we decide a matter. A person may have good intentions and be sincere in them, but that does not make something right. The standard of right and wrong has been established by God, is revealed to us in the Bible, and is not up for change by men. Our

motivation to do good things, has to have divine authority and sanction before we engage in it. The events in this chapter may not follow chapter five in chronological order, so we are wise to read 1st Chronicles 13,15 and 16 to get information about things that surrounded this event.

David had established Jerusalem as the political center of the nation and now wanted to make it the religious center of the nation. It was not that what he wanted to do was a bad thing, but the man who had earnestly inquired of the Lord for guidance in dealing with enemies, and waited for divine instructions, didn't think it was necessary to make that inquiry regarding the work among God's people. He must have thought he knew how to do this on his own. We need God as much, or even more, in dealing with the people of God, as we do in dealing with unbelievers. To attempt to do a work for God in the energy and wisdom of the flesh is sure to fail.

Thirty thousand men agreeing on a matter does not make it right if it is not according to the Word of God. True, the house of Abinadab was blessed when the ark was there for twenty years. It was a good thing that David wanted that blessing for all of the people and so wanted the ark to be at rest in Jerusalem, the capital city. The first mistake David made in this situation was to consult with men first and not with the Lord.

The second mistake he made was to not find out what the Word of God said about transporting the ark. He chose to do it in the same way the Philistines did. It worked for them so why wouldn't it work for him. Believers cannot expect God to bless what we do because there are presently no bad consequences that fall on people who do wrong. The Philistines were not the people of God and had no instructions given to them as to how to move the ark from place to place. Therefore, they moved it in the way of their own understanding. As children of God we know better than to copy the ways of the world. "A new cart" can be dressed up to look nice and seems to be sensible to human opinion, but we have received a "pattern from the Lord," and it is that by which we make our decision.

There are lots of new methods and new ideas the religious world uses today that are very attractive to the people of the world and to believers who do not read the Bible very much. The simplicity that is characteristic of divine guidance is overlooked because it does not appeal to the natural eye, and it does not get applause because it is not very dramatic. Those who know and follow the Word of God need to remember that divine things need divine sanction. We are not permitted to do things "like other nations."

When the oxen stumbled and Uzzah put his hand on the ark to steady it, he died on the spot. When transporting the ark even in the correct way, human hands did not touch it. They carried it on poles. We dare not be casual about the holy things of God. Uzzah was not a Levite and should not have been placed in, or allowed to be, in that position. He was involved in a work that belonged to others for whatever reason. So, David as a leader, allowed a third mistake to happen which ended tragically. The holiness of God's person and name is to be taken very seriously. Anything attempted for God must be done in God's way. Just because a certain way may seem more expedient, faster and better to us, does not mean it can be done that way. A "new cart" may be decorated, the oxen may have garlands around their necks, but that does not mean we should allow it.

David was angry at first that a well-meaning man died, and like most people today, would think that God was unfair and too severe in punishment. Our problem is that we do not realize how holy God is and how wrong we are to underestimate true holiness and its effects. By nature, we want to look at holy things and measure them from our own frame of reference and value rather than by God's holy word. Wisely David quickly realized the fault was his because of his fleshly enthusiasm, and his anger turned to fear. Rather than press on with his own plan, he called a halt to the whole event and the ark was placed in the house of Obed-Edom, a Levite. To press ahead willfully in a work without evidence of God working in and through us is a futile effort. We need daily to make sure the Word of God supports what we plan to do each day. When in doubt - wait, watch and pray.

When things do not work out right, fill the waiting times with meaningful activity and a search for the mind and will of God. According to 1st Chronicles 15:11-15, David made sure that which God had prescribed was done. For three months careful investigation was made, a place for the ark to rest was prepared, and the right people were found and designated to carry the ark. The words of Psalm 68 would perhaps be sung when the ark was cautiously moved forward six steps at a time and an offering made. From the near-by house of Obed-Edom into the appropriate place in the city, the ark slowly came to the place prepared for it.

Caution is a wise way to proceed in a work after there had been failure and a known mistake made. Wrong has to be judged and dealt with. A tempered enthusiasm is wise when a change is made to be sure we are acting in the mind and will of God. Joy is contagious and to restrict it by insisting on a sober demeanor does

not make a thing holy. An uplifted spirit after the weight of disobedience and failure has been dealt with is normal and should be encouraged. Zeal and enthusiasm for that which is right is of far greater value than a false sobriety that is used to create an impression of spirituality. For twenty years the ark had been in obscurity as far as the nation was concerned. "The glory had departed," but now God was again in the midst of His people. No wonder there was joy and gladness!

However, there will always be critics when it comes to doing a work for the Lord. "You should have done it this way. No, no! Not like that! I think this is the way it should be!" These are common expressions we have to face when engaged in, and promoting the work of the Lord. Michal did not appreciate the things of God. She was only concerned how things looked, and particularly how her husband looked, because it reflected on her own opinion of herself. Humility is never out of style for a child of God. When one is humbled in his own sight and can identify with those of a lower social standing, that person has gained the respect of those who really count. "God has chosen the weak things to confound the mighty."

Harsh criticisms may come but we should not allow that to discourage us from honoring the Lord. Satan will use any means he can to hinder the work of God. Hindrances may come when we become careless about holy things. If we try to do God's things in our own way he will use that to condemn what we have done and discouraging us from trying again. He will use the mockery and criticism of others to embarrass us and to get us to quit. God has His own way of dealing with those people and things. Let us not be "weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." Sacrifices, joy, cautious optimism and a careful observance of God's will bring blessings to many.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 6:17.** *"And they brought in the ark of the Lord, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it: and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord."*

#### **THE RIGHT THING IN A WRONG WAY.**

Perhaps they forgot to read the Word to learn how God had planned  
The way to transport holy things was to be done by holy men  
Among 30,000 surely there were some qualified to carry the ark  
But instead they chose the Philistine way and put it on a cart.

We have a book of clear instructions as to how God wants things done  
It is totally inappropriate to do God's work on our own  
There are lots of new ways to copy; much is done by the ideas of men  
We must remember when involved in God's work to do things as it pleases Him.

We know it is God's will that a plain message of the Gospel to men be preached  
The problem now in our day is that fewer people are seeming to be reached  
Some around now entertain; they say it is the ways to get folks to come in  
And when you preach don't mention "hell" and don't talk much about sin.

But sin is the problem, it must be faced or sinners will end in hell  
We are responsible to warn of those things when we the Gospel tell  
We must be faithful to God's truth, be compassionate but plainly say  
That sin keeps a soul out of heaven, and Jesus is the only Way.

Teaching the Word is needed, believers need to understand  
Where we live and work, we are pilgrims in a foreign land  
There must be a separation between what is false and true  
The commitment to the truth of the Bible is what takes saints safely through.

Baptism as taught in the scripture is a symbol of a believer's death  
To compare it to circumcision is denying what the scriptures saith  
The Lord's Supper is a place of remembrance, and showing Christ's death on the tree  
It has nothing to do with forgiveness nor does it set the guilty sinner free.

God has His way to do things; today as in days of old  
By reading and learning God's truth, we know what He has already told  
Is His will and His way for us to apply ourselves to His service  
And tell His truth so others, can live by learning God's message through us.

**"For some reason Father, last night's message didn't seem to flow out the way it should. I am sorry I failed Thee in this way. Please help me today and tonight to be a vessel that can be filled with truths you want spoken of and use these clay lips to present them acceptably. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

## 2nd Samuel 7

### A COVENANT

The making of a covenant between two persons is a very serious and important commitment with lasting implications and effects. Covenants are never to be entered into in a light-hearted manner because not only do they affect those in the covenant, but also others who come after. Covenants had been made by God with others before David. Noah, Abraham and the nation of Israel itself had entered into covenant relationships with God. Today the church has entered into a New Testament (covenant) relationship with our Lord that has been ratified by the blood of Christ. "This cup is the new testament in My blood." it is a holy exercise we participate in when we take part of the Lord's Supper.

There were prophets designated by God to speak for Him in the reign of the Israeli kings. Samuel was the prophet who spoke to Saul for God. Some kings listened to the prophets. Other prophets were ignored and despised - and some were killed. David and Nathan must have been in a friendly relationship when David spoke to Nathan about building a "house" for the Lord. Nathan apparently agreed at first until the Lord spoke to him in the night. Our first reaction to a suggestion often comes from what we consider to be reasonable and a very worthy work. However, we are limited to that which we have experienced and "see through a glass darkly" as we look ahead. The Sovereign Lord has a plan that involves much more than we can perceive with our limited minds.

During the "night watch" Nathan received a message to give to David in which he was reminded of God's grace down through the past generations since the children of Israel left Egypt. God dwelt in tents all through those years and He was still with His people. In other words, God is not limited by time or space, but in grace is with His people wherever they are. "The Word became flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us" is true for us today. "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them."

The Lord also instructed Nathan to tell David of His sovereign purposes for him in the future. The "house" He referred to was in the sense of an on-going family that would continue after David died. David's son would build a house for the Lord because David had been a man of war. The temple would be built by a man of peace. The books of 1st Kings and 1st Chronicles gives the whole narrative. These covenant terms were important because contained in them are the purposes God had in sending our Lord Jesus Christ into the world. He would completely fulfill the terms of the covenant with David and ultimately sit on David's throne as the Supreme Ruler over kings and lords.

When Nathan delivered the Lord's covenant message to David, he left his beautiful house and sat before the Lord in the tent where the ark was. There he prayed with joy and appreciation in a humble and sincere way. He knew God had made him king and now he had a look into the future of greater and more important days. He did not ask again to build a house for the Lord, nor did he complain because he was not permitted to do this work. He did give thanks for knowing what the Lord was going to do and worshipped the Sovereign Lord there. He was glad to know what God revealed to him and gave God all the glory.

We may not know much about the future, but what we do know is certainly thank-worthy. "No condemnation;" "all things in Christ." "we shall be with Him and like Him;" "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." What blessings are ours because of the new covenant in His blood!! Like David who believed the promises of God - we too have "exceeding great and precious promises." God always keeps His promises.

It may be, we hope for something, and then our Lord says, "No." That does not mean we are rejected, but that our Lord has something different planned. One thing of which we can be sure, is that everything God does is right, and we can rest in faith that whatever the Lord determines is to be our role in His work is the right one and the best one. He knows that for which we are best suited and capable of doing. When the Lord has spoken to us through His word and used whatever He chooses to bring about His purposes, it is a blessing. That blessing is not just to us but to all who are in this covenant with the Sovereign Lord.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 7:22.** *"Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God like thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears."*

### LEARNING GOD.

Through thoughts unexpressed in the heart  
And sighs that unfold day by day  
Through words that sentences start  
But because of awe unfinished lay  
Through ears that hear musical sounds  
And wonder what those sounds really mean  
Sounds of creation around

Help me learn God who I have never seen.

Watching old saints that know Thee  
Learning from them reverence and respect  
Impressions are created within me  
Are a reminder that I must never neglect  
Those things God says are eternal  
For they are the ones that will last  
Often they are obviously supernal  
And their impact never will pass.

Learning God goes on through my life daily  
Some will be learned once, others over again  
There are things imposed on me privately  
Others when in a gathering of men  
I learn God through acts of my children  
And learn much from the words of my wife  
Some lessons come to me unbidden  
Others repeated every day of my life.

I long to know God much better  
To never be surprised by what He does  
I read His Word like a letter  
And from it am made aware that He chose  
The weak and poor and despised  
To show forth His glory and grace  
Every lesson I learn is prized  
Though unseen I learn God deeply by faith.

**“Father, I know Thee better now than before. Give me help to take Thy yoke upon me and learn of Thee. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

## **2nd Samuel 8**

### **CONSOLIDATION**

When a work of God is started in a new area, the early days of the work are heady with success. There are the wonders of God working in power and grace to bring those who were in darkness into the light of salvation through the preaching of the Gospel. Taking the Gospel into Satan's domain is not usually easy nor is it done without opposition. "In vain do earth and hell oppose, for God is stronger than His foes."

Under David's rule as king there were Israelite victories in which the Philistines, Moabites, Syrians and those from Zobah were defeated and came under the rule of David. Those victories were a result of the promises of God for His people. The animosity of those nations had been directed against Israel for many years. Under David's leadership, the Lord had a man who, for most of the time, committed himself to do what God instructed him to do. Believers and unbelievers alike have to accept the consequences of their actions. It is a principle of life, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." That is true for nations as well as individuals.

Dealing with enemies is not an easy matter because, just because a war is won does not mean there will not be on-going antagonism. There are a number of reasons for showing mercy, and a number of reasons for being firm and final in dealing with those who hate God, His people, His word and His ways. The Lord did not want Israel to have a lot of horses because of the temptation to go back to Egypt with ease. By hamstringing them they could still be use for agricultural purposes, but not for warfare or rapid travel. It was in this area that David only partly obeyed the Lord. He kept one hundred horses for himself. When things are going in a way that seems most advantageous to us is the time when we are in most danger of acting on our own without divine guidance. In mercy the Lord did not deal with David, but in the next generation when Solomon was king, they were seriously multiplied. We all need to remember the decisions we make will have an effect on the next generation.

During those years of consolidation of a group of tribal people into a strong nation, David organized the leadership of the nation into a variety of areas of responsibility. Joab was the chief military leader. Jehoshaphat was responsible for the money. Zadok and Ahimelech were the religious leaders. Seraiah was the communicator or press secretary. The Cherethites and the Pelethites under Benaiah's leadership were the guards, or similar to our Secret Service guards. The enlarged kingdom would mean there was a need for a large number of people serving David in various parts of the kingdom. The more complicated our lives

become, the more we need to commit ourselves to the work as a whole, rather than just one or two things in which we have vested interests.

To do that which is right and just before God, usually is right and just before the people. The reason David pleased the people was he pleased God first. Pleasing God is being guided by truth, reason and fairness. David was fair in interpreting the law and administering justice with mercy. He had respect toward the rights of the people and led them in recognition of his duty, and theirs, toward God. Pursuing justice is God's command because it is consistent with God's character. Justice and fairness should be the way we relate to people no matter who they are.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 8:6, 14.** *“Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus: and the Syrians became servants to David, and brought gifts. And the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went.”*

#### **THE LORD PRESERVED DAVID.**

There were enemies coming with different schemes  
Some came with subtlety not really being what they seemed  
Others came armed each one determined to do battle  
Still others came with plans, the defenders they wanted to scatter.

But during these times of testing the Lord preserved His chosen  
No matter how the attacks came, the Lord was there beside him  
Whether it was those from the north or those from further east  
The Lord was with His chosen servant who had learned in his Lord to trust.

There are times when we worry about the outcome of a matter  
But when we realize the Lord preserves and He knows so much better  
Then we do as to what should be done and how to approach the issue -  
Then we can rest assured the Lord knows the solution far better than we do.

We need to be preserved from the quiet innuendoes from within  
All seems quite in order until the murmuring does begin  
When it seems, there is danger of division among God's people  
The Lord steps in with the solution and the action to take that is needful.

Temptation from without will often test our faith  
Answers that seem so logical take the place of needed grace  
In these times remember the Lord has provided an escape  
And He who provides the solution, guards the way I take.

Outward opposition can create in us unnecessary fear  
Because what we see approaching seems far greater than we can bear  
But He that in us is greater than he that is in the world  
Outward foes can be banished before the preserving hand of the Lord.

How important it is to remember God has not left us to struggle alone  
He has promised to be with us and by His strength He carries us along  
It is His service we are in; we labor for our heavenly King  
So, we can be assured the right outcome He will surely bring.

**“O God who preserves the simple and guides the footsteps of Thy servant: I pray that this day as we again step out to meet needs that are around us, You will preserve us in the way we take and keep me in the paths of righteousness. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel.9:13.** *“So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet.”*

*“Gracious Father: joy is deep in my soul, and it is with patience I will wait until The True King sits on David's throne. In His name. Amen.”*

#### **THE KINDNESS OF GOD**

Jonathan was dead and Saul was dead. The kingly line of Saul was gone except for a five-year old boy! What to do? The nurse heard the news, quickly grabbed up the five-year old boy and fled to save his life. Where to go? Away from here. Far away where no one will think to find a young prince. Hide him; disguise him; do whatever is necessary to keep him from the avengers! How to go? There is no time to call for help. Flee, run, go as far and as fast as possible without anyone knowing where. So, the nurse with the boy in her arms ran for his life. How unfortunate that fall was! Not just one foot, but both feet. Irreparable, can't be

helped, crippled for life – but alive! Until she died the nurse would wonder if she could've done anything different.

But the Father in heaven, who has delegated angels for the children, watched over that fleeing nurse and little boy until they got to a safe place called Lodebar. It wasn't a nice place but it was a safe place. Over the years as he grew accustomed to the pain and the crutches, he grew and lived in obscurity. No one knew and no one cared as far as he was concerned.

But...The Father in heaven knew, and cared. He who holds the heart of the king in His hand, moved the king to remember where he came from, the goodness of God to him, and the close friend who had died. The servant Ziba who wanted to ingratiate himself with the king knew. His interest was self-serving, and he had kept the information for a better day. Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lodebar knew. Ammiel was one of the "People of God" (the meaning of his name) and Machir his son would have known the crippled boy from his youth.

King David cared and wanted to know: love for a friend doesn't die, even if the friend does, because a friend is one whose need, I can meet, not just one who meets my need. A friend is one who encourages his friend in God. A friend is one with whom I share a deep common interest. A friend is someone committed to helping his friend realize God's purpose and potential for his life. A friend, who is a true friend, declares his loyalty and commitment to the friendship.

The kindness (grace) of God was now to be shown to the one who was far away, through the king who in turn was the servant of God. The blessings God had shown to Mephibosheth's grandfather and father were now to be his. Instead of being poverty stricken, he was rich. Instead of being afar off, he was brought near. Instead of obscurity, he was notable and wealthy. Instead of being a "dead dog", he was now as one of the king's sons. Instead of being pitied, he was now served. Instead of being hungry, he ate at the king's table.

Mephibosheth was alive and well. His little boy is with him too! He's back with his young son, Micha ("who is like Jehovah") in the place of blessing. No longer a stranger; no longer at a distance, but now in the place of blessing, thanks to the kindness of God. The lameness doesn't change anything – he is accepted and blessed because of the grace of God.

**"O God of all grace; the Father of our heavenly King; the Benefactor and Protector of children: look upon my grandchildren with favor. I am not worthy that such wonderful people would be in my family. The potential of these young people is so great, I am moved to make daily sacrifices of prayer and intercession for them. The enemy wants to chase them down and destroy them, but for the sake of my Heavenly Friend, who gave his life on the battlefield of the cross; please guard them from the implacable foe. If they need to be crippled in some way to keep them humble and ready to be blessed - so do. If they need to be in obscurity for some time that might appreciate the blessing of God when it comes to them - so do. If there is some searching that I should do to bring them to the place of Thy blessing - so lead me. I just want them to be in the "House of the Lord forever." Amen."**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 9:6.** *"Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, 'Mephibosheth.' And he answered, 'Behold thy servant!'"*

**HE FELL ON HIS FACE.**

In the presence of royalty - give honor  
Always give honor where honor is due  
Reverence and respect are the way  
We show our allegiance is true  
We do this before authorities and kings  
How much more we must honor the Lord  
It is appropriate to bow low before Him  
For He is the Most-High God.

The bent knees and bowed back often show  
Not a fearful heart but sincere respect  
With one's face to the ground and eyes shut  
Here are no distractions so I won't forget  
That I am in the presence of Him  
Who holds my breathe in His hand;  
Yet He has bid me to come

Even though I'm a frail mortal man.

The position is not the door  
Into His presence so we can speak  
It is more an attitude of heart  
When requests or communion we seek  
In every position or moment  
God's ear is tuned to our cry  
With the gracious heart of a father  
He bids us always to Him draw nigh.

Sometimes there are very few words  
When before Him I begin to pray  
There are occasions when silence  
Seems more appropriate than what I might say  
But reverent respect is always right  
Whether on my knees or when driving a car  
For God is forever Supreme  
No matter what the circumstances are.

**“O prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God: I thank Thee for hearing the words of my prayer this morning as I seek to express my thoughts to Thee with sincerity and truth. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

## **2nd Samuel 10**

### **BAD ADVICE**

There are times in the course of almost every day when we need to talk to someone else about some situation in which we are found, and we need counsel and advice from a different perspective than our own. It is not a good thing to act on advice given without considering it from a biblical view. We need to know what our Lord has to say about a matter. That is often given in a general way as we apply scriptures to the issue. When it comes to acting on tried and proven principles and then applying them to a specific situation, and then asking others for advice, we are acting scripturally. "In the multitude of counselors, there is safety." David had no ulterior motives in approaching Hanun and acting kindly toward him. But there are times when even the best intentions are misunderstood, and occasionally, misrepresented.

In spite of how suspicious we might be of overtures of kindness others might show toward us, the kind person takes them at face value until proven wrong. At the same time wisdom does hold in reserve that thought that there might be more here than meets the eye. To act belligerently in any case is inappropriate. There was an arrogance in the "princes of Ammon" when David's servants came to speak for David and comfort Hanun. The "I don't need your sympathy" attitude is never in order. To insult and demean people is not ever a way to talk to people, let alone physically mock them. Humiliating a person or persons will never be forgotten by them even if you have done it without malice.

The results of one act of humiliation may quickly be over, you might think, but hurt and unfair treatment will not likely ever be truly let go by the ones who were the victims. To forgive is our responsibility. To truly forget is beyond human ability. Even hastily spoken words of humiliation and disdain that were just casually spoken will be remembered. As believers we are told to be willing to "be defrauded" rather than take people to court to get our rights, but that doesn't often happen among unbelievers. The actions of Hanun that exposed David's servants to ridicule, also was an indignity towards the king who sent them to do business for him. When he realized the problem, he had created between the nations, he should have sought for some way to negotiate a solution, and apologized for what had been done. Instead he did not admit any fault in causing David's anger. The result was thousands died and barriers arose between those nations that remain today.

To seek a peaceful solution to a matter is always the first step to take when conflicting opinions arise or something happens that can create a problem. In the conflict that followed between the nations, Joab told his soldiers to "Be of good courage," knowing also "The Lord will do what is good in His sight." When the time arises in which we are found in a difficult situation and cannot avoid a conflict, we need to remember the outcome of the matter is in God's hands. He is in control. We can use our minds, hands and resources but only as they are in obedience to our Lord. The outcome of a matter is up to Him and we must trust Him for the outcome.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 10:5.** *“When they told it unto David, he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed: and the king said, ‘Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, and then return.’”*

### **SERIOUS INSULT.**

It happens sometimes - you wonder -  
Could it have been avoided? And further you ponder -  
Is there something I did that was wrong?  
Had I misjudged the matter all along?  
Why did they say that? What was the reason?  
Is the action they took reasonable or is it treason?  
And the questions continue without any real answer -  
The doubts inside increase eating away like a cancer.

But then comes the time - what should be my response?  
Should I take this seriously or put it down to chance?  
Can this have serious effects, will it hinder our life?  
If I respond in some way will it lead to more strife?  
Suppose we just wait quietly and make no reply?  
Will the consequences continue or will the matter quietly die?  
There are times when I wonder when serious insults are made -  
Whether to rise to the challenge or just carefully turn away?

I read of the Lord when reviled He reviled not again  
Often, they insulted Him when in truth He answered them  
With words of scripture or some carefully planned story  
That silenced their vain words and brought to God much glory  
So, it seems to me after considering the source  
That it is best to let insults lie or else run their course  
And when all is done and my answer is only my silence  
There won't be a fiery blaze, just a reasonable patience.

Insults have come and will probably come again  
I just want to be careful I give no reason for them  
And when they are made and for whatever reason they're past  
The one making them will know on my Lord the burden I cast  
By God's grace I want to keep a spirit that is always sweet  
And when whatever caused the problem is done and complete  
I will have been Christ-like in my response to the serious insult  
Knowing there has been no reason for it so in my reply is no fault.

**"Keep me sweet-spirited Father, lest I bring dishonor on Thy name, Thy people, Thy Gospel and Thy servant. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

## **2nd Samuel 11**

### **THE DETERIORATING EFFECT**

Believers do not plan to sin and commit themselves to unfaithfulness, but we are not immune to temptations nor are we powerless to deal with sin because "sin shall not have dominion over you." However, if we get complacent and settle down to comfortable living and circumstances that tend to give us ease, we are in danger of yielding to temptation in a way that we would not if our hands are full in our work for the Lord. The story of David's fall in this chapter is a warning to every child of God of what can happen in one day, even after a life of devoted service for God had characterized us.

The "time when kings go forth to battle" was when the roads were dry enough for travel and food was plentiful enough to feed armies of men. It is a principle in leadership that those who fight the actual battle need to know their leaders are there for them to give direction in order to provide the desired result because they have the ability to see the big picture. Tried and proven leadership is invaluable when the pressure is on and the enemy is out to stop what is right. Leaders are susceptible to temptation the same as anyone else but are called upon to conduct themselves by a high moral standard so that those who follow them have an example to go by. David fell into sin because he was not where he should have been doing what he should have been doing.

He lacked a defined purpose for his daily activities when he felt he was not responsible for the warfare he had delegated to Joab to accomplish. He focused his attention when he was at ease on getting that which he had no right to have. In the time of temptation, he turned into it instead of away from it. There is always a way to escape temptation. God provides that. In taking the action he did, David chose to sin deliberately rather than act wisely. Then he tried to cover sin by sinning further calculating to use the sin of deception. Then, as if that wasn't bad enough, he tried to cover his sin of adultery and his sin of deception by the sin of

murder. All the laws taught in the ten commandments were broken as he went further and further down the road of moral deterioration.

The punishment he inflicted on others to cover his own sin was on him for the remaining years of his life through far-reaching consequences in his own family. The farther he went in deception, the worse it became in bad consequences. Sin is impossible to control and to stop once we have deliberately allowed it to start. The greater the sin, the less desire we have to face it and the harder it is to correct the effects of it.

Dealing with temptation is a deliberate action on our part. We need to flee temptation. We need to resist temptation. Earnest prayer for divine help to make us willing to do that which is right is needed. The word of God hidden in the mind and heart by memorization, or read on a daily basis, combats our moral weakness. There are times when we need the help of other people to overcome our times of temptation by wise and scriptural counsel.

The whole event exposed the moral weakness and deterioration of all the parties involved. David was certainly wrong in his condition, position and actions. Bathsheba was wrong to expose herself openly even though she was going through a biblical practice of purification. She was wrong to commit adultery even with the king, although she was not really in a position to deny his request. Joab was wrong to submit to an obvious attempt at murder. The contract to murder Uriah was under his power to not be allowed to be carried out. He had stood up to David before. Apparently, it was not a big deal to him to arrange for another man's death. He did what David wanted and did not grieve over the action he allowed. It may have been because Uriah was from the line of Ham with probably a different skin color that he was not seriously bothered with such injustice.

Uriah's loyalty and allegiance to his king and his fellow soldiers identified him as a trusted man. His bravery and skill as a warrior made him one of David's "mighty men." His personal discipline and commitment to that which he was given to do by those higher in authority establishes the fact that he was a man of high moral character living at a time when even those around him were deteriorating morally. It is up to us what we allow in ourselves and to ourselves in these days of declining moral standards and resisting of divine authority. The principles of holy living are not subject to the opinions of men because they are established on the unchanging word of God.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 11:24.** *“And the shooters shot from off the wall upon thy servants; and some of the king’s servants be dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.”*

### **URIAH THE HITTITE IS DEAD!**

Though from another nation he joined David's mighty men  
Not afraid to venture out and in battle held up his end  
His name was held with honor, he was one who men could trust  
To have the man beside you meant you were with one of the best -  
But Uriah the Hittite is dead!

The ark was in the field not under David's sheltering tent  
The soldiers were at the battle when to the king he was called and sent  
What is behind this scheming, why did David call him in?  
The darkness that came on his heart made him willing more to sin -  
So, Uriah the Hittite is dead!

How far can a believer go? Can such evil in a believer take place?  
Can a child of God sin so and still experience God's grace?  
Sin raises its ugly head when often you least expect  
And one sin can follow another until its course is spent -  
Like when - Uriah the Hittite is dead!

O Lord God! Stop the course of one who forgets what's wrong  
Bring to true repentance one that is weak now, though once was strong  
Turn them back to Thee, Lord, before they go too far  
Stop them by whatever means before their testimony they do mar  
Let none say - Uriah the Hittite is dead!

Let conscience assert its power to turn one back to Thee  
Let memory of Thy grace and love cause them from sin to flee  
Help all of us who own Thy name never forget we are not our own  
May we be conscious of our need of Thee whenever temptations come -  
So none will say - Uriah the Hittite is dead!

The lessons are indelibly printed on the recording part of my mind  
I am aware I am susceptible and to evil I can become blind  
I fear lest I become wicked even now when I'm in old age  
Please, O Lord God, keep me from turning up some dark page -  
Lest some say - Uriah the Hittite is dead!

**“The lessons here O Lord God, are so plain, so stark - and yet such a warning to me. Please preserve me from being where I should not be, doing what I should not do and causing the fall or fatality of others. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

## **2nd Samuel 12**

### **PAYDAY COMES**

The longer a wrong practice or an inappropriate matter is allowed to continue, the more likely a person is inclined to think there will be no consequences to face. That idea is entirely erroneous. Payday comes someday. A Righteous God does not compromise His justice to suit the opinions of men. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," is a lasting principle. For a year or more David and Bathsheba would have gradually become used to the guilt that probably plagued them for quite some time. However, God was not done with them. Perhaps the waiting time was to allow them to learn a lesson that would not have been learned if judgment had quickly come upon them. We deceive ourselves if we think payday for evil is not going to come. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore is the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."

In the Lord's time, He sent Nathan the prophet to deal with these two people who were hiding sin. Confrontation is very difficult because it is usually resented and people become very defensive as they try to cover sin or belittle its effect. There are times when it is necessary to confront others so preparation is important. To say what is needed and not say too much, requires tact, courage, skill, thoughtful preparation and planning. Our objective needs to be clear and precise. Wisdom with words and attitude appropriate to the problem and presenting the message, needs to be guided by the Holy Spirit. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

Illustrations often open the doors of understanding and give light to a matter even before the application is made. Illustrations make a message easier to take especially when it is brief and to the point. Consequences follow every action, and in this case, there was no way to escape them. Sins done in public have public consequences. Sin desensitizes people when it is allowed to continue to the place where those who have committed the sin, think they have mastered the problem. Guilt can be avoided for awhile, but payday comes. "Be sure your sin will find you out," is a principle. Sin left unconfessed and undealt with, will be exposed by God against whom we have sinned.

After a year passed, and David now had seen and known the child he had fathered, he may have felt comfortable in spite of his sin. The time had come when he had to learn the full impact of what he had done. God waited until the appropriate time to bring the best possible result from a very bad situation. Condemnation is easy when we can focus our criticisms on other people. Faults are always easy to find if that is what we are looking for. Character flaws seem to stand out in others which we can easily condemn. However, the flaws we first see in others are the ones most obvious in ourselves.

Dealing with a critical spirit in myself will only come when I am honest before the Lord. He knows both me and those who are the objects of my criticism. What I see in others and condemn, likely is the same thing that condemns me. The consequences of sin cannot be avoided. David stole Bathsheba and killed Uriah. Murder was a continual threat in his own family from then on. His own children plotted and rebelled against him. His wives were used by others in public view. His children died terrible deaths. His pleasure brought pain to others as well as himself.

Restoration is possible, is valuable and is available when repentance is real. Restoration is the first step to hope being given even after grievous sin. Psalm 51 was written by David in which he expresses his guilt and his need for forgiveness. Recovery may not remove all the consequences of sin, but it does make possible a return to fellowship with the Lord. Apology does not necessarily remove the consequences of wrong-doing even though fellowship has been restored. There is always judgment for sin that has to be accomplished. Grace provides the way this can be done and we can move on in our life. Psalm 32 expresses the joy of grace being experienced after the drought of being in a spiritual wilderness.

The death of David's child was a judgment on David. The child is with the Lord who gave him life in the first place. This child escaped the terrible life of that dysfunctional family. His siblings had so many issues that

plagued them because of the lack of attention given to their upbringing. God spared David and Bathsheba's lives although the law said they should be executed for the sin they had committed. God was not done with them yet, so in mercy they were permitted to live on to fulfill God's purposes through them. The punishment on them by the child's death was probably much harder for them than their own death would have been.

When a terrible, tragic sin has been committed, and when the matter has been dealt with by the sinner in a biblical way, to dwell on that matter is not if any profit. When one repents of their sin and turns to God again and knows they are forgiven, then one should press ahead in fellowship with the Lord in life and not go back again to experience the guilt of sin that has already been taken care of by God's grace. We accept God's forgiveness, we make sure we have changed in our life and attitude, and then move on to accomplish that for which God has in His mind for us. A few years later, Solomon (peaceful) was born to David and Bathsheba. The Lord told Nathan to give him another name, Jedidiah which means "beloved of Jehovah." The grace of God supersedes even the gravest of sins, and allows the guilty to live on to fulfill His will.

In an act of grace, the Lord allowed David to regain a degree of credibility in his nation by giving a victory over the Ammonites and the capture of their capital city of Rabbah. The one-hundred pound crown of gold studded with precious stones was placed on David's head giving to the Israelites and Ammonites the assurance that he was still in control of the affairs of the nation in spite of the personal disgrace he brought upon himself and his family. The Ammonites from then on became physical laborers that would keep them totally occupied to the extent they could not create political opposition. The nation of Israel would be enriched because of the manufacturing and other work done by the Ammonites so that Israel was not only a political power but and economic power in the middle east.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 12:13.** *"And David said unto Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord.' And Nathan said unto David, 'The Lord hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.'"*

#### **THE WAGES OF SIN.**

One man - strong in battle - brave in spirit - loyal to his master  
Lying by the king's gate - obeying the king's command - faithful to God  
Carrying his own death sentence - called to do battle again  
Lying dead because of deception - the wages of sin!

The sound of a new-born - smiles that melt hearts from a child's face  
Infant sounds - then sounds of a child - watching adult eyes  
Perhaps behind the adult-smiles are pangs of guilt - as times pass, they ease  
Until the word of the Lord comes - a week of grief and the child dies - the wages of sin!

Dutiful soldiers who trust their leaders - following orders to advance  
Following Uriah - falling back when ordered - still in range  
Lie dying in the field of battle - wondering why - against better judgment  
Families and perhaps children mourn - the wages of sin!

Death following with silent footsteps - the family fails and falls  
Tragedies of great dimension track them wherever they go  
Why do such things happen? Why does God allow it?  
God arranged it to preserve future generations - the wages of sin!

Parental indulgence allowing what should be prohibited - saying it is love  
Acquaintances introducing others to new experiences - and substances  
Pressure to conform to those who form the majority - acceptance  
Premature aging on the face - discolored hands and skin - the wages of sin!

New flavors that burn and change the mind - speech without control  
Gradual dependence - needing the unnecessary - hands that shake  
Mind pictures that seem real - increasing poverty - left alone  
Others who truly loved are forsaken - the wages of sin!

Arguments over things trivial - discussions that never seem to end - contention  
Divisions caused by insisting opinions - demands made for superficial conformity  
Divisions not measured in feet or miles - insistence on surrender where there is no battle  
What was strong becomes weak - then non-existent - the wages of sin!

**"May I learn well, O God, the lessons of life from the sins of others. I do not want to repeat what can be learned by remembering, reading and responding to Thy teaching from the sad experiences, others passed through. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

## 2nd Samuel 13

### TURMOIL AND TRAGEDY

The breakdown of family life and even family structure is not some new phenomena of this day and age. It happened in David's family when he became so caught up in his own personal life and the business of being a king that he neglected his responsibilities as a father. He had ruined another man's family by his multiplied sins against that family and also against the Lord. He had sinned against a woman and had deliberately killed an innocent man. His son Amnon sinned against a woman, and his son Absalom killed a man - Amnon, his half-brother.

The sin of Amnon was the rape of his half-sister. To allow the lust of the eyes to continue in one's life leads to adultery, fornication and lasciviousness. We must resist temptation and "abstain from all appearance of evil." Always evaluate advice given and be sure it has a righteous and solid basis behind it. Not every person who claims to be our friend can be trusted. Deception started the chain of events that made David's family such a dysfunctional group of people. Half-brothers were jealous of each other and looked on their mothers as leaders rather than their father. David was the king, even in the family, but his role and responsibility as a father was basically missing.

It is important that we do not equal love and lust. They are two very different things. Lust demands satisfaction - love is patient. Lust makes demands and wants its own way - "love seeketh not her own." Lust likes to be called love but does not have any godly characteristics. Lust will not wait and when it has physically expressed itself it results in self-disgust and hatred for the other person who was involved. Amnon ruined Tamar's opportunity for marriage, and in revenge Absalom ruined the family's chance for any kind of normal family relationship. David ruined the chance for reconciliation by not dealing with Amnon, probably because of his own previous sin.

The sin of Absalom illustrates the teaching of the Lord Jesus when He equated anger and murder. For two years murder was in the heart of Absalom. What a person allows themselves to think about a lot, so characterizes who they are. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Absalom's sin was of such a nature that it ultimately involved a great number of others, including his servants, his siblings, his father, and it set the course of his own future. Even his maternal grandfather was involved. One act of sin because of one man's unguarded eyes, and one woman's unguarded modesty affected all their family and the lives of those around them. "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished bringeth forth death."

**2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 13:36.** *"And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of speaking, that, behold, the king's sons came, and they lifted up their voice and wept: and the king also and all his servants wept very sore."*

#### FAMILY TROUBLES.

The ways of the world don't all stay out of the home  
What others think is okay, we often will copy  
When the actions take place and the consequences come  
We may wonder how to respond and reply.

For a father to remain silent in the face of blatant disregard  
Of what is moral and when conduct is not right  
He has failed his children even though correction is hard  
He has left them in darkness instead of showing them light.

From earliest years a child has the right to be taught  
And when the lessons he heard are learned very well  
He will understand wrong behavior and when he is caught  
Proper correction will save his soul from hell.

To leave unaddressed things you know are wrong  
Is unfair to each and everyone who is involved  
Discipline carried out right makes an erring one strong  
And most problems in this way are easily solved.

Many families are broken and hearts broken too  
Because indulgent parents don't take proper control  
In days coming in the future children can blame you  
For not carrying out discipline for the salvation of their soul.

We must never let children think that sin won't find them out

There is a principle that what we sow we will reap  
We dare not ignore wrong for their tears or their pout  
Do what is right now or forever they will weep.

Learn from the failures of those long in the past  
Who, though godly left carelessly, their families untended  
By correcting them quickly you avoid problems that last  
Instead of dysfunction, your family will be blended.

**“O God who knows every family need: draw near here I pray and give me understanding as to how to help these people who are just starting out raising children. By Thy grace, give me words to guide that are from Thee, and help me to be relevant to present day needs. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

## **2nd Samuel 14**

### **THE FAILURE OF AVOIDANCE**

Absalom becomes a center of attention in this part of the history of David's reign. His revenge and rebellion is the beginning of the decline of the kingdom that had been prophesied. David's lust and adultery had a lasting negative effect on those who came after him. The revenge killing of the firstborn son opened the way for him to be king he thought. By killing his half-brother and rebelling against his father, he was taking matters into his own hands. Popularity and good looks were in his favor, but his heart was far from God.

We have to guard ourselves lest the rebellion and sin that is latent within us leads us astray and we fall. Even our children and grandchildren learn from our example and form their opinions of what is right and wrong, and maybe even their convictions from what they see in us. Our obedience to God and His word forms the character that reveals us to those around us. It is a fact that we are constantly teaching others by our lifestyle that which is good - or bad - depending on what our relationship with the Lord is like.

It is possible to be so preoccupied with our own life and work, that what is important in families is overlooked and neglected. In David's case his own guilt over sin probably caused him to neglect his responsibility in disciplining his children and fulfilling his parental role. Once the cycle of sin starts in a family it is hard to break. Even though David wanted to see Absalom, he could not bring himself to initiate the first step to reconciliation. That first step is usually the hardest, but once we are willing to do that, opportunity arises to go further.

However, Joab manipulated the whole matter and by subtlety and deception (and perhaps good intention) started what should have been, and could have been, a reconciliation but did not complete the work by bringing Absalom to David or vice versa. There are some things in which we have to assume the responsibility to accomplish ourselves. If we try to get others to do that which we should do, the outcome will be less than satisfactory. To bring Absalom to Jerusalem after two years away, and then for both David and Absalom to be living in Jerusalem at the same time for two years without seeing each other, testifies to the fact that this state of affairs is not right. David should have taken control of the situation and done what was necessary.

He should have banished Amnon right away for the rape of Tamar, Absalom's sister, in order that justice might be served. Cities of refuge had been established for that purpose until justice was carried out by those appointed to do that in a legal way. Absalom did pre-meditate the murder of Amnon, and there may have been a little justice in what he did, but it was still not dealt with properly by the king. True restoration can only really take place when we face the problem of sin and repent of it to God. Reality will be seen when a new and righteous life demonstrates the fact that a just solution has been found to the problem and acted upon.

Joab and David did not have a trusted relationship between them. The relationship between David and Absalom was severed, and Absalom began to get a following as he moved about Israel and beguiled the people. The results of sin may come in many different ways, none of which are good. Joab only went part way in bringing reconciliation and that did not stop until after two years Absalom set fire to his field and called for him to arrange a meeting with David.

After five years of not seeing his son Absalom, what should David do? Should he be his righteous judge? Should he be his loving father? Sin must be punished so how can we demonstrate and carry out justice and love at the same time? This was David's dilemma. Absalom was haughty and still proud; Joab was dispassionate and David was a weak father in this particular matter. Even though they finally met - the son bowing down before the father in the appearance of humility, and the father kissing the son in a form of

reconciliation - reconciliation was not complete. Justice was not served nor was love really expressed. The absence of discipline in a matter does not bring the right results.

The example of God meting out punishment on His own Son on behalf of the guilty is how we are able to be forgiven. Forgiveness can take place when either the guilty party or the injured party takes the loss personally. A price has to be paid for reconciliation to be genuine. We have been reconciled to God by the death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 14:33.** *“So Joab came to the king, and told him: and when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king: and the king kissed Absalom.”*

### **SHORTCUTS.**

There really is no conclusion when full justice we try to avoid  
We may feel we are being kind but our view is not that of God  
Schemes and plans we may make thinking our way is best  
But we are making a mistake if we think a shortcut is what God can bless.

Thinking a problem will go away just because we may wish it so  
Doesn't change things, because it will follow us wherever we may go  
Whenever we are dealing with people whether strangers or even our own  
It is impossible to end the issue by pretending there is none.

When a wrong has been committed we must squarely face the fact  
That acknowledgement of guilt and repentance is the very first act  
Of bringing true reconciliation so healing can then begin  
There are no legitimate shortcuts when it comes to dealing with sin.

Pardon and restoration require honesty and an awareness of God  
To overlook what God does not ignore means you're not doing what you should  
God is willing to forgive and grant pardon but He does not overlook wrong  
Those who refuse to do what He wants cannot be treated as sons.

One thing follows another when a shortcut to a problem is added  
Because the shortcut is wrong too, so more difficulties come - not deleted  
To put off what needs to be done only leaves the problem to fester  
As time goes by the poison remains; instead of lessening it gets deeper.

God is fully aware of everything we might think or try to conceal  
He has given the protocol to follow so these kinds of things can be healed  
Do not think for a moment a shortcut will bring a conclusion to sin  
Follow the guidance God gives and the problem much quicker will end.

**“I know O Righteous God, there are teachings regarding making right, things that are wrong. I pray for wisdom to know Thy mind and courage to face a wrong and deal with it until I can make it right. Help me to avoid saying or doing anything that would bring dishonor upon Thee or Thy work. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

## **2nd Samuel 15**

### **FIGHTINGS WITHIN**

The city gate of Jerusalem was the governmental and business center of the whole area, and in this capital city, of the whole nation in regards to the carrying out of legal matters. Absalom's plan was to take advantage of his good looks and dramatic style with a false concern for justice and friendly "embrazzo" for everyone who came into the city from other places. In that way he created dissension and a favorable public impression. Before long he was able to rally the ignorant young people to follow him. By flattering people and speaking nicely to them, and making promises he could not keep, and even giving free food, he undermined the leadership of his father David. He even found one unhappy advisor, Ahithophel, to follow his rebellion.

Absalom in this story has the characteristics of Satan in that he creates division, hatred and rebellion among the people of God. The enemy of our souls is out to steal the people in whatever way he can and fools them with flattery, deception and false hopes and promises. His purpose is to claim the allegiance of the unbelievers and turn aside the faithful testimony of God's people by falsehood and deceptive influence. His initial attempts may be from some obscure place where news comes of a wonderful man of great intelligence and leadership qualities who can unfold the scriptures in a way that people have never heard before. Those who are not well-versed in the truth of God may get messages on-line and before long are

teaching things they never got from God but from an unknown person who appeals to them by his charismatic ways.

Absalom probably had friends in Hebron who would have been glad to align themselves with him in order to rise up in power and claim fame and status. The rebellion was widespread and could not be easily stopped. By its very nature dissension spreads quickly, and even more so in this age. Instant communication and social media make it impossible to stop innuendo and lies before they have a negative influence on people who feed on dissatisfaction.

When David fled the city of Jerusalem, he was not unaware of what Absalom wanted. By leaving he preserved the city itself and the population from a battle in which many innocent lives would be lost. It takes as much courage to not fight as it does to fight. Backing down from a confrontation for the sake of the welfare of others can be a good thing. To choose to wait may be a wise thing, especially if there is a plan to preserve the assembly, work or family.

There were some faithful people David could trust even though he knew his life was in jeopardy. He took Ittai and those with him who were strangers, even though they were not Israelites. These loyal people could be trusted with his life. Abiathar and Zadok the priests, were told to remain in Jerusalem with the ark and be in position to help the cause of David there. David left the city barefoot like one walking on holy ground, and covered his head in sorrow. He did not want Jerusalem destroyed by warfare and did not want Absalom killed. He obviously expected to return so left ten house-keepers there, the priests and Levites and Hushai, an advisor - all who were loyal to David.

The counsel of spiritual and faithful people is always important to consider when decisions have to be made in time of difficulty. "In the multitude of counselors there wanteth not safety," is a principle we are wise to follow. Hushai was a true friend who could give needed information as to events under Absalom's rule. It is not an easy task to remain true and faithful when surrounded by those who want to bring about unscriptural change. Wisdom and integrity are essential in remaining true to our "heavenly David." It may be that we are called to serve our King in the place where the enemy dwells and seems like he is in control. Some are limited in what they can do like Mephibosheth and may find themselves evil spoken of by those who promote themselves like his servant Ziba. Ziba was a deceitful man unworthy of trust, but David did not have the time to find out he was an opportunist wanting to profit from Mephibosheth's inability to follow David. Shimei was an outspoken open enemy of David who blamed him for the downfall of Saul and his family. Resentments often are deep and long, and usually are not within our ability to change or do much about. Some things we have to take, and leave the final results with the Lord.

Hushai was able to contradict the counsel of Ahithophel, the grandfather of Bathsheba. Ahithophel had aligned himself with Absalom for some reason, and later found out that deception and rebellion have a way of coming back to attack those who promote them. There are costs to following our Lord and there will be dangers when we stand for righteousness and truth in this changing world and changing society. David wrote a number of psalms at this time (39, 41, 55, 61, 63) that we can identify with when we find ourselves in similar circumstances. It is important for us to remember when we think we have failed and don't know what to do next or where to go, to lift our eyes of faith to our Lord and trust Him to open the way before us, and do what is necessary when we can do no more.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 15:21.** *"And Ittai answered the king, and said, 'As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be.'"*

#### **LOYALTY IN ADVERSITY.**

The unthinkable has happened - the worst has come to pass  
Those who meant so much to you - now consider you an outcast  
Even though they would be nothing if left without your name  
Now they consider you a pariah - you are the one to blame.

What to do when such times come may be hard to plan  
Instead of listening to what you taught, they listen to other men  
They are quite sure what is right is what pleases well the most  
It's the way to go so they turn that way forgetting the final cost.

How should I act - where should I turn - what is left to do?  
I must stop and carefully consider my Master is the One who knew  
The way He reacted when turned against was to continually show love  
Even though there was grief and tears He did not return shove for shove.

When He was reviled by His own, He reviled not again  
He remained true to His calling just like when He first began  
Until the time of total rejection, He continued to fulfill His mission  
By His grace alone and help, I too will continue my commission.

Others may change to suit the times like different foods and flavors  
But I am called to be light and salt - salt that hasn't lost its savor  
People will try new flavors as they move about from place to place  
I know they will still need the salt to give truth a better taste.

So no matter what those around me do, where the King is I will stay  
There may not be many come to help, and only a few to pray  
But loyalty to the Lord still stands as a banner of allegiance  
And I intend to continue on, not changing from a biblical stance.

Where the King is, is where I want to be even when He is rejected  
I do not want what He has called me to do, to ever be neglected  
It seems to many, even those who are close, our work is bound to fail  
I want to remain loyal to Him in spite of what that may entail.

**“O God of mercy and grace: my pledge of allegiance is to Thee - not to the things that are popular. My commitment is to Thy Person - not to what seems to be more successful. My heart and soul belong to Thee - not to people who can change when they feel like changing. I am Thine - thankfully. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

## **2nd Samuel 16**

### **CHARACTER TRAITS**

In crisis times we often find out what people are really like. The pressures of the moment bring out character traits that can be hidden much of the time but become obvious when life and death issues are at stake. The motivation behind actions are exposed when crisis times arise. Some people see those times as opportunities to exploit for their own ends, and others are glad to be able to respond to the needs of others. Zibah was the servant of Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan who was lame on both his feet. He was physically unable to follow David, and Zibah saw this as an opportunity for him to ingratiate himself into David's favor. By bringing needed food supplies for David and those who followed him, Zibah was able to falsely implicate Mephibosheth as wanting to take over the kingship himself. Deceit has many forms, from subtle suggestions to outright lies.

David, on the other hand, did not take the time to check out Zibah's story to see if it was true or not. There are times when we are inclined to act in haste because of circumstances that press upon us. When those times come, we are best to wait until later to make decisions until we have opportunity to consider all the alternatives and/or get all the information we can to help us decide wisely the course of a matter. Zibah was like people who act as if they are serving the Lord but don't really have love for Him. By His lie he hoped to get the property of Saul that had been returned to Mephibosheth. Those who love the Lord, are like Mephibosheth. They do all they to the best of their ability but also know their limitations.

The character of Shimei is that of those who are enemies of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was disrespectful of David, he cursed David, he opposed David by throwing stones at him. Opposition to the Gospel from those who do not love our Lord, and directed toward those who preach it faithfully, is to be expected. David did not want vengeance meted out on Shimei. He left that to the One who said, "Vengeance is mine. I will repay." It is not right for us to hate, despise or speak against those who oppose us, but to seek to win them for Christ by being gracious and, if possible, show them kindness.

Absalom was his own favorite admirer. He liked himself a lot and had a high estimation of himself because of what he looked like and how he could manipulate people. Inside he was deceitful, a liar, covetous, a murderer. We should never be quick to accept someone's opinion of themselves, nor should we be quick to accept someone's condemnation of another. The wise person will take the time necessary to be sure of a report before accepting it and acting upon it. Unjust criticism is hard to take, and is also hard to defend against. Only God knows what accusations. We must trust Him to make right that which is wrong, and vindicate us if that is called for by His sovereign will. When Absalom took his father's concubines openly in front of the people, that was his public claim to his David's throne and all that belonged to David.

Not all counselors are people of integrity and honor. Some people will limit themselves to making suggestions. Others will give alternatives. Some are dogmatic and some are afraid to be open and precise

for fear of what might happen to them. For some reason Ahithophel was seriously opposed to David, perhaps for leading Bathsheba his granddaughter into sin and all that was a result of that event. He apparently wanted David to be put to open shame and punished by death. People put a lot of stock in his words and advice. He probably thought of himself as a man of wisdom and may have been proud of that.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 16:14.** *“And the king, and all the people that were with him, came weary, and refreshed themselves there.”*

#### **IN TIMES OF TROUBLE.**

There will be times that come when we wonder why  
The Lord allowed this to happen to us  
Those we had counted on to always be nearby  
Now they are making an awful fuss  
One who seemed so very cool  
That butter wouldn't melt in his mouth  
Turns out to be an opportunist  
Seeking gain as he looks about.

Another who down deep inside  
His anger now lets it out  
He must have been biding his time  
Because now it comes out with a shout  
Long hidden bitter resentments  
Bursts forth in temper and rage  
In opposition to all you have done  
There is no way his anger to assuage.

One takes his time to consider  
God has worked with you in the past  
Through you to accomplish a work  
That God has promised would last  
So with careful words and consideration  
He stays where he can help you the most  
Although questioned as to his motives  
He has already counted the cost.

Bitterness lies deep in some people  
When hurt in his family takes place  
He may be wise in some things  
But the root of bitterness hides behind his face  
When trouble comes upon the one who caused it  
He takes advantage to strike a hard blow  
Knowing a way to repay you  
And bring who he considers high - down low.

In times when trouble comes in  
Be aware that some will attack  
Some few may truly be trusted  
Others will seek to stab your back  
All you can do at such times  
Is be sure you are right with the Lord  
And leave opposition quietly alone  
Trusting God to bear that heavy load.

Look ahead into the future  
And remember promises of the past  
God is able to conquer opposition  
You on Him must your burden cast  
He knows the end from the beginning  
And will take full responsibility  
Someday the crisis will be over  
And the reasons will be plain to see.

**“O God of all grace, in spite of what I might think or what others may say or do - I commit myself here today to keep quiet when charges come unless You make it plain, I should answer them. I am conscious of the fact that trouble comes sometimes and other people may use that time to make their personal points known. Give me the wisdom to keep silent when no good can come out of an answer. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

## 2nd Samuel 17

### COUNSELORS

A bitter spirit has an effect on a lot of people and must be dealt with personally as soon as possible when we find it rising up in us. Ahithophel was determined that David must die right quickly and wanted to have an army of 12,000 to separate David from his men and only kill David. He believed all the others who followed David would come and follow Absalom. He may have known how to scheme and plan but he did not know how to discern nor judge people. Not every psychologist or counselor gives good advice. Ahithophel knew what David was like but he didn't know what Absalom was like, nor did he admit to the treachery of his own heart. It is a wise person who knows their own limitations and can discern between what is wise and right and what is vindictive. Perhaps his plan would have succeeded but David had prayed that God would turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness and God answered that prayer. Ahithophel knew that if his counsel wasn't followed, David would return as king. So, he hanged himself. Psalm 55 gives David's thoughts about Ahithophel and they are similar to as the Lord's thoughts about Judas Iscariot. To be betrayed by a friend is a devastating blow to a trusting heart.

Hushai on the other hand, was David's friend and he knew David well. He wanted David to have enough time to get far enough away to prepare for a battle that was bound to come. That battle would determine the leadership of the nation. His suggested plan was to overwhelm David and his followers with numbers, which would seem wise to people who do not take God into consideration. All Israel knew David and those who followed him to be mighty warriors who were not easily intimidated by opposing armies. It takes time to know people personally, not just by reputation. That is time well spent when we are involved in leading people or giving counsel. Hasty counsel often leads to hasty decisions and hasty failure. More than that, Hushai knew God was involved in the whole matter of this evil rebellion. The two priests, the woman who took the message to two messengers, and even the fact that they were hidden in a well for a time, all points to divine intervention on behalf of David. We should never take anything for granted when it comes to our service for the Lord. Opposition may come but even that is under divine control.

Absalom's ambition and self-centeredness overpowered his common sense and understanding of the situation in which he was found. Flattery is a tried and proven method of deception which he used without understanding those very things can be used against you. Vanity and self-exaltation will inevitably bring about a fall. "Pride goeth before a fall." People take advantage of those who believe they are superior to others. To think one's self to be great is to face the fact that "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."

When Absalom and his army under the leadership of Amasa, one of David's nephews, both Absalom and Amasa may not have realized there were those who still acknowledged David as king. They supported him with food, shelter, beds and the needed utensils to keep an army of men ready to do battle. When we are willing to follow the Lord even though others choose to go a different way, we find there are others also who want to follow Him and are willing to do what is necessary to maintain the order of the kingdom of God in a biblical way. Not all counsel given will be popular to the Lord's people but it is our responsibility to listen to and act upon biblical counsel given by spiritual believers in Christ.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 17:14.** *"And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, 'The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel.' For the Lord had appointed to defeat the counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom."*

### THE EGOIST.

Each one a leader of men wanted his own plan to be followed  
Opinions differ among them as to how God's chosen king he could swallow  
And leave dead that the usurper could rise and claim leadership of the nation  
Egoists all have opinions as to what is best in any given situation  
Each will insist that all others are wrong, only his has a chance to succeed  
Scrap all the others you have planned; my plan is the only one you need.

It happened to better men than me and failure was the final result  
I learn from their mistakes, if my plan loses then it's really my fault  
I should take the counsel of God and wait until the solution is plain  
If my one plan comes to naught, I am still able to begin again  
But if I "up the bottom" and force the matter to conclude  
I am in danger of finding myself in opposition to God.

The egoist insists he is right, and he may be for all of that  
But when his opinion is rejected there is no need for him to fall down flat

Stop being so self-centered; there may be a lesser plan you can alter  
Others may see your wisdom when their plans begin to falter  
Just consider you are not perfect, others have opinions too  
The end result is what really counts, not just to whom credit is due.

When you know failure can in no way be avoided  
Try to salvage what you can when the issue's concluded  
Don't gloat over the egoist's downfall and lay blame  
Retain your integrity and respect; preserve the value of your name  
Some battles are lost in war, and thankfully some are won  
The insistent egoist has lost credibility, when the matter is finally done.

Your integrity you must maintain, even in a hopeless cause  
Instead of pressing ahead in pride, just quietly stay in your place  
During years of living often we will have to take a step back  
And watch to see God accomplish powerfully what we in weakness lack  
Then God gets all the glory, neither the egoist nor any other  
Will claim the key to the solution which belongs only to our Father.

**“Father God, if there is a tendency in me to think I have all the answers - please silence me in whatever way is necessary. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

## **2nd Samuel 18**

### **PAINFUL PROPHETIC FULFILLMENT**

When a crisis time comes in God's calendar of events for us, we should not be surprised at the accuracy of scripture in describing what will happen. For a lengthy period of time, perhaps several years, David seemed to be lethargic, indecisive and not really leading the people the way he should. In this leadership vacuum Absalom stepped to take advantage of the situation and become king. If we are not careful, we will start taking people and things for granted that should be attended to. People have the right to expect those who lead them to have an on-going agenda in which their lives have meaningful activities in which they are involved. To live for pleasure or just to maintain the status quo does not give satisfaction in living.

Finally, David took charge of the situation in which Israel was found. When he took command of his men and designated leaders of three groups of warriors, there was a decisiveness in him that let his men know he was in back in charge. It is our duty to rise to the occasion in which our Lord places us, and act responsibly to bring about the best possible result. Yet, like David, we should never think we are above listening to the advice other responsible people give us.

The battle that followed was a tragic event with huge losses as is the case in many civil wars. When conflicts arise among those of the same nationality, assembly or family, each side seeks to vindicate their position by vigorously seeking to defeat those who have different opinions. The fact is that between those who should be united in good fellowship, an "Absalom" sometimes comes to the forefront, and before we realize what has happened, division has come among God's people.

Absalom's death was not unexpected because rebellion against the sovereign will of God always fails. It is an act of divine intention to "resist the proud." God has purposed to bring a proud man down and to raise a humble man up. Absalom's pride brought him and thousands of others with him to the dust of death. His death was the right thing because being the kind of man he was, he would have tried again to take the kingdom from David by force. Joab was a practical man who was not easily guided, but in this case, he knew what was right and did it. David's sentimental and parental feelings toward his rebellious son, were understandable but unrealistic.

However, when our Lord and King instructs us, we can be assured that what He says is always right. We may not understand why He instructs us in a certain way, nor why what He wants us to do is important, but we do it because we know He knows the conclusion of a matter. It is always right for us to obey His word in spite of our fears and trepidation.

The two memorials set up were a real contrast. The one was made by Absalom to memorialize himself. The other was a huge pile of stones over the hole in the ground where he was buried, to remind all who passed by of the rebel who sought to kill his own father. Absalom wanted to honor himself, so set up a pillar for people to remember him. If God does not honor us, anything we might do to exalt ourselves is spurious and abhorrent.

It is understandable that David mourned for his lost son. He knew he Absalom had never turned to the Lord. He knew Absalom's sin had found him out. Perhaps as a father would, he was aware of his own failure and felt serious guilt. He would remember the fearful prophecies Nathan gave him that would fall on his family. David's upset over Absalom's death was partly because of his own failure; partly because of the fact that his men killed Absalom against his wishes; and because he loved his son.

The time to start correcting and instructing our children is when they are very young. We all need God's help in raising our children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." It is impossible for us to make our children Christians or believe what we believe. We cannot guarantee their future will be bright. But we can train them early to be righteous, obedient, honorable, respectful and people of integrity. We can train them in the fear of God and urge them "to seek the Lord while He may be found, and call upon Him while He is near."

**2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 18:18.** *"Now Absalom in his lifetime has taken and reared up for himself a pillar, which is in the king's dale: for he said, 'I have no son to keep my name in remembrance:' and he called the pillar after his own name: and it is called unto this day, 'Absalom's place.'"*

#### **TWO MEMORIALS.**

Perhaps the one was orderly, well-built with stones made to fit  
The other we know was a very great pile heaped over a deep pit.  
One was raised as a symbol to exalt the king's son in his pride;  
The other for generations to remember how this proud man died.

Self-exaltation sets one out in blatant opposition to God.  
He lifts up the humble, and is determined to bring down the proud.  
It is a principle you can count on, the high will be brought low.  
The story of Absalom is told, so this principle I will know.

Just because we are privileged does not make us immune -  
There is a high price to pay, when the truth of God we impugn.  
Payday always comes to us whether for or for bad  
In one day, Absalom lost all, including what he once had.

There are consequences to follow every action that I take  
It is not wise to glorify self or some "ego-pillar" to make.  
Honoring one's self leads, to ultimate defeat and despair.  
Sooner or later you will wish you never had thought to go there.

When a humble person dies, there is much good people will say  
About their kind spirit, their humility and their spiritual ways  
Of promoting what was needed to bring to, and give, God all the glory  
For everything that was accomplished through each day of their life's story.

Let others raise a pillar of remembrance if they want  
A self-raised memorial will forever, continually your reputation haunt.  
The great pile of stones of scorn, of rejection and denial -  
Are there as reminder of the body of a lost soul lying under that pile.

**"O God of Righteousness and Holiness: I do not want people to exalt me in any way. But if there is some way people can honor Thee through anything I have participated in - then Thy will be done. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

**2Samuel.19:10.** *"And Absalom, whom we anointed over us is dead in battle. Now therefore why speak ye not a word of bring the king back?"*

#### **BRINGING THE KING BACK.**

The war is over, and Absalom is dead! The handsome son with heart so willful and self-centered, has met the end all such usually find is their portion after all is said and done. The grief is real because his death was so unnecessary and untimely and humiliating. But for all of that, it is time to look ahead and see where do we go from here? How can the damage done be repaired enough that life can go on, and kingdom business needs to start again? There are breaches to repair, hearts and homes to mend, lawlessness lurks in every tribe and unless the king comes back, this cycle will continue.

The priests are so slow, they don't really seem to care that the worship they are to oversee is interrupted. Maybe they like the rest from daily, holy duty. Maybe they are glad to be in the limelight rather than in the shadow of their kinsman-king. Come now, we can't do what we want but what the anointed of the Lord would have us do. Bring the king back!

Amasa, come now man; time is wasting! There's work to do! There are still those whose minds are disaffected. They want another king, another leader who perhaps will give them a place they long have coveted. Unless order is restored completely and maintained, there is trouble yet to come. Bring the king back!

Shimei, you rascal! What you said and did was totally wrong. You now should die. Get up on your feet! Get off the ground and stand and die as enemies of the king should die. The executioner is there to do his work. But listen now! The king speaks loud and clear. "The war is over. I know I am king. I don't need fallen enemies to remind me of my work and the need to start anew a day of new beginnings. Thou shalt not die. I give you my word." The king comes back!

Mephibosheth, the lame man who could not walk but called for a donkey to ride on from Ziba his unfaithful servant, now comes to meet the king on his return. Where were you when the king was gone? Why did you not join him at whose table you daily sat? Did you not know you owe him your very life? Limitations not self-imposed had stopped this grateful, humble man from joining him who had grace and kindness shown to him, when he was far away. "Now what can I say." I don't deserve any rights at all. These crippled legs and subtle, deceiving servant had stopped my course. I have no more to say- except, "I'm glad the king is back!"

Barzillai, the aged, who brought the great provision to feed and care for the king and all his people in the king's rejection; comes to conduct with honor, his regent across the river to where he belongs. How shall the king honor such a man? "Come with me and I will feed thee at my house, my home from my provisions." The older man with years now past, will dwell at home, in places more familiar, and die in peace among his own. He is glad the king is back!

And so, it is with me, there's strife in the land, the King is gone. There are skirmishes around but the war is over. The King won a mighty victory and the good of it is mine now and forever. But he's not here, not now, not yet, but He is coming, His throne to ascend and fill with righteous justice and reign in peace. I look to see Him any day; I want to do what's needed to bring the king back!

**"God of the ages, and Father of those who are Thine own by Thy own choosing: In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, hear my anxious, anticipating prayer to bring the king back. May all who are His own in His rejection, be ready and waiting for His return as He crosses over to where we are and calls us to come and reign with Him. Amen."**

**2nd Samuel 19:43.** *"And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, 'We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more right in David than ye: why did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king?' And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel."*

#### **AFTER THE FACT.**

Strange it is that a short time before  
They rallied around the enemy and despised the king  
But now after they had fought and lost the war  
They were slow to act until others did bring  
The rightful sovereign back to his place  
And now with angry words so full of complaint  
They pretend they were anxious to see his face  
Trying to get back in favor with the one they did hate.

Repentance must be real although it is hard to tell  
When one says they are sincere and claim to believe;  
There must be more than words, for words often fail  
To tell the whole story whether Christ they received  
We look for a change in attitude and acts  
To see whether one has truly turned from his sin  
We cannot trust words only that are after the fact  
Because one can copy what in others he has seen.

A work of grace changes one who believes from within  
There is genuine humility that is not hard to see  
You watch and listen as to how he will begin  
To express the change that in him has come to be  
There will be original ways of expressing his faith  
God will be real to him, not just words after the fact  
Appreciation shows when he speaks of Christ and grace

And you know he is glad when the King welcomes him back.

**“O God of All grace, when one comes to Thee in genuine repentance and faith, it is not hard to discern. May I be wise to watch and listen lest deceivers come and spoil Thy work that has been entrusted to me. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

## **2nd Samuel 20**

### **NOT AGAIN!**

"Jealousy is as cruel as the grave" and following close behind it is hatred and bitterness that soon leads to division and even death. Tribal jealousy initiated by Sheba who was from the tribe of Benjamin started a latent rebellion again. Jealousy makes unstable any fellowship or work of God because people look to other people instead of to the Lord for guidance.

Sheba was a man without honor who had a defiant attitude toward David, the Lord's anointed king. He may have wanted to rule the kingdom himself. But whatever the reason was behind his antagonism, it could not be left unchallenged to fester a sore among the people of God. Some problems can be settled reasonably and others must be dealt with firmly and finally.

For some reason, Amasa who had just been made chief officer by David even though he had served as leader of Absalom's army, was too slow in carrying out the king's command. Even though he was Joab's cousin, he should have been wary of the friendly greeting offered to him by Joab. "The king's business requireth haste" is not some mere suggestion. When we are under divine commission, our time is not our own. Everything we do should be done to accomplish our God-given task as effectively, efficiently and as quickly as possible. "The vows of God" are on us.

The violent death of Amasa by a violent, ruthless, vengeful, pitiless man like Joab reminds us that "they who live by the sword shall die by the sword." There are depths of hatred in some people that are hard to understand. Such animosity may be caused by pressures applied on a person that seems to be, and maybe are, unfair. It may be the result of unfulfilled ambition. It may be because of the circumstances of life into which we have been born. Whatever the cause or reasons we may seek to blame for what happens to us, each one of us is personally responsible as to our response to life's event and the circumstances in which we are found. To blame others for any misfortunes that happen to me, does nothing at all to absolve me from my personal response, reaction and attitude. No one has the power to make me lose self-control. That is up to me. Joab was a brilliant and violent military leader, who did not like to be told what to do unless it agreed with his own personal agenda. Stubbornness and self-will have both positive and negative results. When a person is under authority of another, our obligation is to obey that person.

One hundred miles north of Jerusalem was the city of Abel that was known throughout Israel as a place of fair judgment and wise counsel from those who lived there. It was to this place Sheba and those who followed him went. When the city was surrounded and besieged by Joab's army, and ramparts were being built against the walls to break a way into the city, a wise woman came to the wall to talk to Joab. Perhaps a man may have died if he came to talk to Joab, but this wise woman wanted clarification as to what exactly was the cause of this attack.

Most of the answers to a problem can be found if the problem can be stated briefly in one sentence. To be able to articulate the causes of division and unrest in understandable terms, takes wisdom and careful thought. When that is done there are usually only one or two alternatives to take to avoid impending disaster. One man out of touch with God and His people, if left unchallenged, can create terrible havoc. There is only one way to deal with those who cause division. This true "mother in Israel" quickly understood the problem, used wise words and had a plan of action to defuse the whole matter. The trouble-maker was dealt with and the matter was concluded when the trumpet sounded across the land. The civil war was truly over and peace was restored to God's people. "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God."

**2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 20:19.** *"I am one of them that are peaceable and faithful in Israel: thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel: why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the Lord?"*

### **CONTENTION AMONG THE PEOPLE OF GOD.**

One man with ambition and words of malice  
Can bring dissension and confusion that is hard to stop  
From the meekest and poorest right up to the palace  
Contention affects all, making it almost impossible to cope

Until someone with wisdom can see some way out -  
Then there is hope of a solution to bring an end  
To the bitterness and hurt that has been raging about  
And opposing parties will listen to one God did send.

Usually there is pride that raises its insidious head  
Not satisfied to follow those who have cared for the flock  
They often will not listen for they have a real dread  
That their ambition and plan will ultimately come to naught.  
Others are touchy with feelings that are easily hurt  
And their complaints seem reasonable to the changeable novice  
They challenge leaders simply because they lead and do the work -  
Wanting to control other but avoiding the work of the office.

When these times come, beware, because there is no easy solution  
Some will likely leave when they cannot get their own way  
Rebuke and avoidance are biblical responses to the situation  
Those that remain will not have a whole lot to say  
Because they understand these people are the people of God  
And He has the right to step in and control  
For the people of God, He alone is the Master and Lord  
He knows what is needed to heal and make whole.

**"I have just heard Lord God, of one who left Thy people after years of leadership. Did he leave because he didn't get his own way? Did he leave for some justifiable reason? Please give all who are involved in that matter a sense of the fear of the Lord and the need of holiness in Thy house. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."**

## **2nd Samuel 21**

### **FAMINE AND FOES**

God does not keep time the way we do. His memory is not limited by time and His commands and laws do not gradually fade away into insignificance. Generations earlier in the history of Israel, Joshua acted without consulting the Lord and granted the Gibeonites assurance that they would not die even though they had used deception to gain this promise. Then for some reason Saul had killed some of the Gibeonites years before the famine. Justice is done by God even if it doesn't happen immediately in our way of reckoning. We may think a matter is finished because it hasn't continued to be a problem, even though we have managed to ignore it or put it to rest unresolved. These events are not in historical chronological order so sometime during David's reign the three years of famine came across the land of Israel.

Promises made are like vows that cannot be broken without consequences that follow. We need to be careful in making vows and promises that they are not made without the assurance from God that they are in His will. What one willful person does in the energy of the flesh can affect a lot of people for a long time to come. Every man suffers for his own sin, but the children who follow often suffer too for a rash decision made on the spur of the moment. Because Saul sinned by breaking a promise, the whole nation suffered. It is a fearful fact that those who lead the people of God can create a negative issue or result that will have a long-lasting impact.

David saw the problem and the effect it was having on his people. Instead of going to the Lord for the solution to the problem, he went to the Gibeonites. The Lord had revealed to him the problem, but he went to the Gibeonites for the answer to the problem. God is aware of every part of every situation in which we are found. When He has made plain to us through His word by the Holy Spirit that which is wrong, we should know that He knows what is to be done to bring about the right conclusion of a matter. Sin that is not confessed has long consequences. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." When sin has been confessed and we do that which is right, God has promised forgiveness.

In the early part of the story of David, we read that he took five smooth stones from a brook when he killed Goliath. There were four other giants in the Philistine army that had to be dealt with. During his reign as king, David faced one of them whose name was Ishbi-benob and was having trouble conquering him. Abishai killed that giant and from then on David's men wanted him to step back and let them do what was needed. Sibbecai killed the giant named Saph. Elhanan killed another who was also named Goliath and Jonathan killed the fourth who had twelve fingers and toes. Because we have had one victory ourselves does not mean that we do not need the help of other brothers and sisters in Christ. God does meet our need and responds to our calls in prayer, but He answers in His own way that is not necessarily what we expected.

There will be times of trouble as long as we are in the world. The curse has not been lifted from the earth so we still have the thorns and thistles to contend with. Sometimes we will have difficulties with other believers and sometimes there will be opposition and conflict with enemies. Our only recourse as a way to deal with the difficulties and troubles in life is to go to our Lord and by the power of God these things can be dealt with in a way that is according to His will and word.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 21:22.** *“These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.”*

**IT'S NOT DONE TILL IT'S DONE.**

Who would have thought after all these years,  
History would repeat itself.  
Though Goliath was long dead, resentment remained  
Determined to destroy David's house.

But God had His men, and when the time was right  
They brought all the giants down.  
And antagonism caused a serious fight  
But God promised His servant's crown.

There are times when we least expect  
Satan will stir men to attack.  
We must be prepared to defend and meet  
The challenge and drive the enemy back.

It is not all that easy when we think the battle is won  
To realize the bitterness some men, have.  
By the strength of the Lord and the power of His Word  
We can from those dangers be saved.

God's grace is sufficient even though we are weak  
To bring down our strongest foe.  
When dangers arise, God's face we must seek  
And to Him in confidence go.

There will be times when we're tested as to our faith  
God allows what was past to reappear.  
But I have learned that He wants us to trust  
And He will remove every fear.

**“When those old charges come back again Father, help me to resist them by faith and move forward in full trust in Thee. When these doubts and fears arise, I will look to Thee and not be afraid. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

**2nd Samuel 22**

**A SONG OF PRAISE**

Praise is not just a song about God; it is also a song to God. When we focus our hearts on God, we will find much to praise Him for and reasons to give Him personal praise. We can find many of His characteristics when we read His word. Many of His attributes are revealed to us as we meditate on Him, thank Him for who He is and all His blessings to us and express our appreciation for Him for His willingness to have a relationship with us. David wrote this song of praise after having experienced God in His life.

Verses one through four is praise for the Person of the Lord Himself. There is a list of titles David gives the Lord. He is "my Fortress," a Place of Safety. He is "my Deliverer," a Provider of liberty. He is "my Rock," a Person of strength. He is "my Shield," a Power to protect. He is "my Horn," a Preserver from enemies. He is "my High Tower (stronghold)," a Position to occupy. He is "my Refuge," a Protector against opposition. He is "my Savior," a Promise who keeps us.

Verses five through seven is praise to God who hears the cry of those who are in the middle of trouble all around. There are enemies all around God's people who may or may not be seen or known. Even death itself is near seeking to claim us.

Verses eight through twenty is praise to God for His power in nature. David mentioned in his song an earthquake, a volcanic mountain, violent storms, and lightning and wind. But it is so gratifying that he was brought by the Lord into a large, spacious place of safety from his enemies.

Then there is praise for God's knowledge of human character in verses twenty-one through twenty-eight. Believers are delivered by the Lord because of their commitment to righteousness. Unbelievers are exposed for who and what they are.

From verses twenty-nine through forty-three David gives praise for God's power given to those who fear Him. They are able to do that which is beyond normal. They are able to do what they should do. They are able to be both strong and gentle. They are also able to be over-comers of enemies.

The song of David concludes with praise for God-given grace to rule well and be victorious in leadership. Grace is necessary in using delegated authority. We need strength and power to deal with evil. David promises to give God all the glory for how He uses the one he appointed and gives grateful thanks to the Lord for His mercy and kindness.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 22:47.** *"The Lord liveth; and blessed be my rock; and exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation."*

#### **DAVID'S SONG.**

The Lord liveth – He who is eternal reveals Himself unmistakably  
The Lord is my rock – Secure and safe are those who trust Him completely  
The Lord hears – In times of danger from without rely on Him only  
The Lord answers – When distress threatens to overwhelm, He acts powerfully  
The Lord speaks – Nature moves at His bidding to bring repentance quickly  
The Lord rebukes – And all that have opposed are defeated overwhelmingly  
The Lord secures – The storms rage outside but we dwell in a large place quietly  
The Lord rewards – faithfulness to Him is recompensed righteously  
The Lord guides – And the trusting soul moves forward confidently  
The Lord recompenses – Uprightness of life and holiness allow Him to act mercifully  
The Lord is light – His holiness and sinlessness shine brightly  
The Lord gives light – Those who were in darkness can now move forward assuredly  
The Lord gives His Word – there is no need to live in uncertainty  
The Lord is God – Eternal, unchanging, and committed to save His own eternally  
The Lord never fails – Enemies try to defeat His people but He delivers victoriously  
The Lord is exalted – He is praised and worshipped by those who love Him supremely  
The Lord is glorified – World-wide honor and appreciation is given to Him exclusively.

**“What can I say to Thee, O Lord God, most High and Holy, that has not been already expressed. I repeat the words and thoughts of others before me who have tasted and seen that the Lord is good, and I make those my own. My heart is wanting to express all the “good matter” that rises up in me and can't find a way out to be put into spoken words. So I open the doors of my mind to Thee and offer these things spoken and those unexpressed to Thee as praise and adoration to Thyself and for Thyself, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 23**

#### **LAST WORDS**

The last words of any person have a particular impact on those who hear them. The last words of a father or mother are often remembered for the rest of one's life. The final conversation of a faithful servant of the Lord is not easily forgotten. Last words are usually those which have characterized one's life and fill the mind. David's last words sum up his life. He was raised up of the Lord from being a shepherd of sheep to being a shepherd of God's people. He was anointed by God to lead a splintered group of twelve tribes into a cohesive nation that was united even though there had been civil wars. The Spirit of the Lord was on him to write thoughts in poetic form that have blessed God's people down through the years and all over the world. The psalms still are a source of comfort and inspiration to millions and are even quoted in the halls of power.

David recognized the fact that he was being used by the Spirit of God to express in words what people needed to hear. He was conscious of the fact the thoughts that came from his pen came from divine Persons to express divine inspiration that would bless those who drew near to the Lord and longed for a way to put into words that which was in their own hearts. Many will quote the words of David when in times of sorrow, despair, need and joy. David knew his description of a just and righteous ruler was not fulfilled in him, but he perhaps looked ahead to the One who would come and sit on the throne of David and rule and reign in righteousness and peace over all the earth. People of faith looked forward to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ who will fulfill all the prophetic truths that to came believers of old.

Those who lead God's people must be just and fair in their dealing with people. The reverential fear of God is an essential quality of one who is going to be respected by those who follow his leadership. Leadership calls for those who can give the light of understanding like the dawning of the day and things that had been previously not known, then become clear. Not only that, but those hidden things or things not understood will actually become acceptable and refreshing through the insight of spiritual leaders. Leaders are not perfect people but have been given responsibility by a covenant-keeping God who they serve by His will and their own willingness. The leaders need to be consistent and not vacillating because they are passing on the truth of God to others. It is their responsibility to protect and defend God's people from evil men who are motivated by the power of darkness.

There were thirty-seven mighty men of valor who are listed as those who deserve special honor among the army of David. There is a group of three among the thirty-seven who are given special recognition similar to the Medal of Honor winners in the United States. Adino slew eight hundred at one time. Eleazar remained at his post when others went away and slew Philistine enemies until his hand was cramped onto his sword. He actually won that battle, and others came back to gather up what had been left by the defeated foe. Shammah stood alone in a field of lentils that was needed to feed the people, and defeated the opposition when the Lord brought a great victory through him. Each of these men remind us that when we are involved in a work to which our Lord has directed us, He does not leave us to do what we cannot do naturally, but empowers us to accomplish that which is beyond human ability. The Lord's people need protecting, defending and feeding.

Three others of David's men broke through a Philistine army to get water from the well of Bethlehem for David. He was so touched by their sacrifice and courage that he looked at the water as the blood of a sacrifice that was to be poured out before the Lord because it was so precious. An effort that costs great sacrifice, courage and devotion to the Lord is not overlooked by our Lord. Abishai, Benaiah and all the others listed were men who were mighty in courage. They were also men of wisdom in their actions and devotion to David. Those thirty followed David from the cave of Adullam to the throne of Israel and all the way their complete devotion to him kept them true to him. They had been with him long enough to know him well, even though they knew his failures too. Devotion to our Lord motivates us to go beyond what others may think is enough because we know Him well and have taken His "yoke" upon us and have "learned" of Him. He is deserving of every last effort of devotion we can give Him.

The motivation of those thirty-seven men to do great things and go above and beyond "the call of duty," was the personal qualities of David himself. He inspired them to go beyond that which is normal, to reach beyond their goals and to fulfill their potential. Hidden potential is not often drawn out unless there is an urgent situation, or a person who claims our heart. The One we follow has affected our lives and motivates us to fulfill our commitment to the cause and the Person we serve. David was aware of God's leadership, and they were aware of David's leadership. He was a good leader following his Leader. Respect and devotion to our Leader will promote loyalty and allegiance to our Lord in other people who may be following us.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 23:5.** *"Although my house be not so with God; yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow."*

#### **ALL MY DESIRE.**

How thankful I am for the Spirit of God within  
Apart from His power I would be, O so prone to sin  
Because I am not perfect even though saved by God's grace  
It is the Spirit of God alone who empowers me to live by faith.

The desire is there, but far too often the power is not  
Except for the fact that the Holy Spirit in me has wrought  
A work of Himself in this frail and weak body of mine  
So what is not natural to me is to God's will brought in line.

What naturally would not happen, God is able to bring to pass  
What seemed so fleeting, He has made it to flourish and last  
And I look on with wonder at what in His grace He has done  
With such a feeble effort from such an unworthy son.

I know I look differently at many things that are going on  
Then many around me, even those who are closer to home  
But in my own way I strive and want to be consistent  
Knowing God is still working though the Holy Spirit who is persistent.

We don't see things the same, though I believe our family loves the Lord  
I am out of date to some, like a life-form from some different world.  
But I see no reason to change what I have experienced to just please them  
I am more concerned with what God wants, rather than trying to please men.

I may end up alone as others chose to walk a different road  
Perhaps when I get older this will seem to me to be a heavy load  
However, my desire is to be where my Lord calls me to dwell  
And if I am alone there with Him, I'll still know that all is well.

**“O God, I know my family looks at a lot of things differently than I do. But I am thankful for what I see of Thee in them all. I am content with where You have placed and kept me until now. You are all I desire. I pray the same will be true of my family. May their desire be always for Thee. May they be discerning whenever choices are to be made. May they always set Thee before any man or idea. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”**

## **2nd Samuel 24**

### **THE PROBLEM OF PRIDE**

Because these last chapters of 2nd Samuel are not in chronological order, it is not clear just when this census taking and judgment took place. It has been suggested by some that it happened before the ark was brought into Jerusalem. It may have happened after the rebellion of Absalom. It is a lesson to us that God is involved in all the affairs of a nation even to the extent of knowing the general attitude of the people as well as those who lead. Lack of humility when God in grace preserves His people, and pride of our own successes are serious public sins of the spirit that can bring a far-reaching judgment from the Righteous God. In this case God allowed Satan to move David to number the people [1 Chr.21:1].

When we feel we are successful because of our skill and energy, we are in danger of the sins of the spirit. David became proud and had to learn how wrong and serious this was. The action of Israel in rejecting David's leadership for that of Absalom, and even some during Sheba's rebellion, was cause for divine judgment on the nation. When a census was taken the people were to give a half-shekel [Ex.30:12] and there is no evidence this was done. As the Lord's people we must never forget we are His purchased possession. In times of judgment we come to know more about God's grace and power - and our own limitations - than at other times. Angels also are reminded of the holiness of God as they observe His ways with His people. God's wisdom and grace are displayed in contrast to David's willfulness in this case.

For nearly ten months the census count went on before it was concluded and yet there was no consideration of what was being done or if the action was justified and right. David could have changed his mind and gone over his reasons for doing this. It seems like it was for self-gratification on his part because there was finally peace and unity in the nation and he was taking credit for this. Joab had the wisdom to oppose this action but David would not listen to him. Advice given to us needs to be considered no matter who gives it to us. When someone passes on an opinion it should be considered in the light of the scriptures of truth to see if it has merit. A census of the people would be taken if there was reason to draft an army in times of war and danger to the nation. A census in peace-time would be to gather the half-shekel tax for a reason.

Stubbornness and self-will are evidence of pride in one's life. David was given lots of time to consider what was happening and repent of that. But instead of advice given he continued on with his calculated plan in a spirit of rebellion and with persistence. The sins of the spirit such as pride are farther reaching than even the sins of the flesh may be. Adultery affected David and his family. Pride affected David and the whole nation. Four people died as a result of David's adultery. 70,000 died in the nation as a result of his pride. Such a calculated act over a long period of time gave ample opportunity to consider what he was doing, but he persisted in acting without the mind and word of God. We need to be reminded that we are not immune to the sins of the spirit in times of success and in old age. "The wages of sin" certainly brought death to David's family because of the sins of the flesh, but they brought even greater consequences when judgment fell because of the sins of the spirit. He woke up to that fact and confessed, not just "I have sinned," as in the first case, but in the case of national judgment, "I have sinned greatly."

Those who are in places of authority and leadership have a great influence for good or evil because of the position they hold. Pride and disobedience in those who lead will be reflected in those who are led. David's sin was a reflection of the attitude of the nation. Perhaps it was because of the rebellion against God's anointed king, but for whatever circumstance and reason the sin was judged. Taking the census was not wrong, but the reason for it and how it was done was. The seriousness of the sin of rebellion obviously had not brought the nation to its knees in repentance and change of attitude. There is often a particular reason

behind it when a nation suffers. National pride, complacency and unwillingness to acknowledge and obey God can cause a nation serious suffering.

When God in mercy halted the angel of death, the words of the prophet Gad brought David to the place the Lord commanded. Mercy was shown and there was the necessity of a sacrifice to be made. A sacrifice of that which belongs to another is not a sacrifice at all. It would be more a sacrilege because it would be evidence of pretension and insincerity rather than appreciation, gratitude and faith. If it costs me nothing a sacrifice in form is worse than no sacrifice. It was for that reason David bought all that area that belonged to Araunah as well as the threshing floor and his oxen to offer as a sacrifice. Araunah offered it freely to his king but David had repented and knew what was needed for God, and to be acceptable to God. The place of a curse became a place of sacrifice and blessing. God's grace meets us right where we need it most. Grace is given for grace needed. That location became the place where Solomon built the temple.

We are never immune from temptation even when we get older. Sins of the spirit such as pride and rebellion have great and serious consequences, especially when we ignore the opportunity to reflect on what we are doing and recognize the sin involved and repent of that sin. Pride often keeps us from admitting guilt because we hope other people won't know what we are doing is wrong. There is always a reaping time when we sow. Public sin involves other people and unfortunately many who follow their leaders will suffer because of their sin.

True confession is a result of humility and a renewed awareness of the holiness of God. There is a real cost to true humility. Sin has to be faced and dealt with in God's way. A return to obedience, faith and honesty before God and before men is humbling and at the same time, a blessing. Dedication to God is a principle by which we live effectively and fulfill what our Lord wants from us. Commitment to God and loyalty to Him is what makes our lives count for the Lord, and what is satisfying to us as well. The growth of David in his faith led to greatness in his service. But in every part of his life, right to the end, God's grace was evident in his life in his weakness and well as his strength.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 24:14.** *"And David said unto Gad, 'I am now in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man.'"*

#### **THE NUMBERS GAME.**

It seems like people want scores to measure success  
If the numbers are high, they think God has come to bless  
If the numbers are low then there is no way to measure  
After all, don't numbers tell us how much we have to treasure?

But numbers can deceive us into thinking we are successful  
If they are not too high, life seems a whole lot more stressful  
When financial profit is high - way high up in the thousands  
Some think God has blessed and shown His approval to them.

People often ask, "How many in the meetings did you see saved?"  
Reserving for a good number reached before giving God the praise.  
Saving souls is not my work, but preaching the Gospel is  
When God chooses to save a soul, all the glory must be exclusively His.

"How many are there in your assembly? Why are you such a few?"  
The numbers seem to make them determine if God is there with you.  
The Lord mentioned "two or three" and in the ark "a few" was eight.  
God can be with a little group the same as He can in a crowd that is great.

I'll leave the numbering of the people to Him who knows all hearts  
And hopefully nip in the bud the numbering game before it even starts.  
Numbers to the flesh are important, but that's not what God's work is about -  
We serve in whatever capacity He wants, and leave Him to make the final count.

God will not give His glory to a man who stands tall in his pride  
Seeking to give numbers as a reason people will think God is on his side.  
By God's grace I'll just do my work and leave all the results to Him  
Because I know broadcasting numbers can lead me to serious sin.

**"For any benefits received by people in these past meetings, Father, I give Thee all the glory. For any saved in the past, all glory belongs to Thee for You saved them. For**

any way the Lord Jesus Christ has been honored - I give all praise to Thee in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."