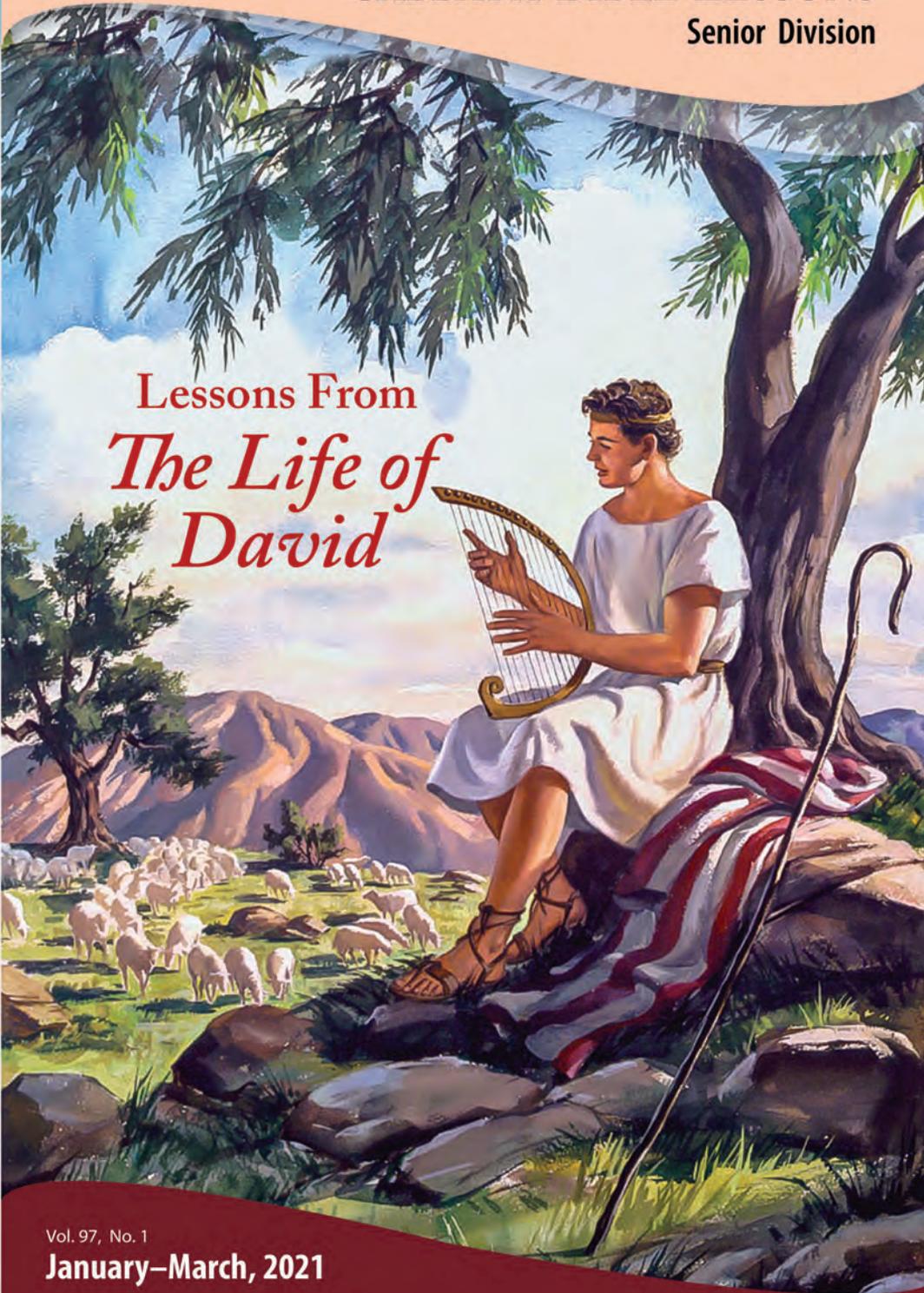


SABBATH BIBLE LESSONS
Senior Division

Lessons From
*The Life of
David*

Vol. 97, No. 1

January–March, 2021



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Sabbath Bible Lessons, a daily study program, is based solely on the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy without additional comments. The quotations are as brief as possible to provide concise, direct thoughts. Brackets [] are supplied in some cases to ensure clarity, proper context, and smooth readability. Further study in the source materials is strongly recommended.

Illustrations: Advent Digital Media on the front cover; Map Resources on pp. 4, 30, 72; Good Salt on pp. 51, 72.

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Foreword

The Sabbath school studies for this quarter are based on *Lessons From the Life of David*. Why is the study of this topic so important for us today?

“The history of David affords one of the most impressive testimonies ever given to the dangers that threaten the soul from power and riches and worldly honor—those things that are most eagerly desired among men.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 746.

“David was a representative man. His history is one of interest to every soul who is striving for eternal victories. In his life two powers struggled for the mastery. Unbelief marshalled its forces, and tried to eclipse the light shining upon him from the throne of God. Day by day the battle went on in his heart, Satan disputing every step of advance made by the forces of righteousness. David understood what it meant to fight against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 3, pp. 1142, 1143.

“God selected David, a humble shepherd, to rule His people. He was strict in all the ceremonies connected with the Jewish religion, and he distinguished himself by his boldness and unwavering trust in God. He was remarkable for his fidelity and reverence. His firmness, humility, love of justice, and decision of character, qualified him to carry out the high purposes of God, to instruct Israel in their devotions, and to rule them as a generous and wise monarch.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, p. 377.

“His life record declares that sin can bring only shame and woe, but that God’s love and mercy can reach to the deepest depths, that faith will lift up the repenting soul to share the adoption of the sons of God. Of all the assurances which His word contains, it is one of the strongest testimonies to the faithfulness, the justice, and the covenant mercy of God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 754.

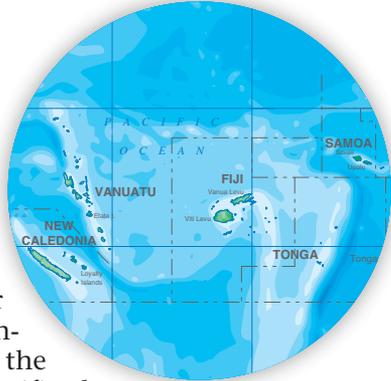
“When trees without fruit are cut down as cumberers of the ground, when multitudes of false brethren are distinguished from the true, then the hidden ones will be revealed to view, and with hosannas range under the banner of Christ. Those who have been timid and self-distrustful will declare themselves openly for Christ and His truth. The most weak and hesitating in the church will be as David—willing to do and dare.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 81.

It is our prayer that the Spirit of Christ may guide our studies of David’s life and works during this quarter. May we fortify our minds with a deeper understanding of the perfectly balanced justice and mercy of our Creator and God!

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

First Sabbath Offering for the South Pacific Union Mission Center

The Pacific Ocean is the world's largest ocean—covering 1/3 of the earth's surface—and is home to hundreds of island nations. Historically, many of these nations in the South Pacific were well known for heathen practices, including witchcraft and cannibalism. Not a few of the early missionaries to these islands sacrificed their lives trying to spread the gospel message. Today, although some of those practices still remain, Christianity has made a large impact on these nations, giving the light and hope of the gospel in place of the darkness of various heathen practices.



The message of reformation touched some countries of the South Pacific in the 1970's and 80's but was more firmly established when missionaries from Australia and the General Conference travelled and reached our shores in the late 1990's.

In December 2013, representatives from the seven mission fields in the countries where the work was established organized together to become the South Pacific Union Mission. Though challenged by vast distances and not rich in this world's goods, we praise God that the work is spreading across the South Pacific and many souls are being reached by the truth.

Our need of a multi-purpose center for worship, conferences, youth conventions, and for training our youth to be missionaries plus provide an office for our Union has been keenly realized. Land has been acquired in a rural area in easy access from Port Vila in Vanuatu, a nation of roughly 80 islands. Vanuatu is a central location where people from the mission fields of Fiji, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Samoa can gather together.

Looking at the great work before us and the many unreached islands and countries in the South Pacific, we see that the work truly is great! The message of salvation must go to all lands, yet we have the assurance that the Lord "shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law" (Isaiah 42:4).

We kindly ask for your financial assistance to help us in our need by giving generously to this project, which will help spread the gospel to the souls in this vast oceanic expanse.

Your brethren in the South Pacific

A Quiet, Unassuming Youth

“The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

“David was susceptible to the influence of the Holy Spirit, and the Lord in His providence trained him for His service, preparing him to carry out His purposes. Christ was the Master-builder of his character.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 2, p. 1018.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 637–642.

Sunday

December 27

1. IN NATURE’S SOLITUDE

- a. What did David realize from his early surroundings in the countryside? Romans 1:20; Psalm 8:3–9. How is such an environment conducive to spiritual development? Psalm 24:1.

“David, in the freshness of boyhood, kept watch of his [father’s] flocks as they grazed on the hills surrounding Bethlehem.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 637.

“It was Christ who spoke . . . with the boy David as he watched his flocks.”—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 290, 291.

- b. How can young people today benefit from an early education similar to David’s? Psalms 19:1–3; 119:9, 97, 113.

“The heavens may be to [the youth] a study-book, from which they may learn lessons of intense interest. The moon and the stars may be their companions, speaking to them in the most eloquent language of the love of God.”—*The Youth’s Instructor*, October 25, 1900.

2. THE HEART OF THE PSALMIST

- a. What was God's purpose in bestowing upon David poetic and musical gifts? Psalms 105:1, 2; 66:16, 17.

"The simple shepherd boy sang the songs of his own composing, and the music of his harp made a sweet accompaniment to the melody of his fresh young voice. The Lord had chosen David, and had ordered his life that he might have an opportunity to train his voice, and cultivate his talent for music and poetry. The Lord was preparing him in his solitary life with his flocks, for the work He designed to commit to his trust in afteryears."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 2, p. 1018.

- b. Explain how the faithful in all ages have reaped a great spiritual blessing from David's experience as a shepherd. Psalms 66:1–6; 100:3.

"[David] was daily coming into a more intimate communion with God. His mind was constantly penetrating into new depths for fresh themes to inspire his song. . . .

"Who can measure the results of those years of toil and wandering among the lonely hills? The communion with nature and with God, the care of his flocks, the perils and deliverances, the griefs and joys, of his lowly lot, were not only to mold the character of David and to influence his future life, but through the psalms of Israel's sweet singer they were in all coming ages to kindle love and faith in the hearts of God's people, bringing them nearer to the ever-loving heart of Him in whom all His creatures live."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 642.

"The psalmist connects the law of God in the natural world with the laws given to His created intelligences."—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 3, p. 1144.

"[Psalm 66:1–5 quoted.] This psalm and portions of the sixty-eighth and seventy-second psalms were often sung by Christ."—*Ibid.*, p. 1148.

"With patient calmness [Christ] met the sneers, the taunts, and the ridicule of His fellow workers at the carpenter's bench. Instead of retorting angrily, He would begin to sing one of David's beautiful psalms; and His companions, before realizing what they were doing, would unite with Him in the hymn."—*Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 936.

3. REALIZING OUR FINITE PERSPECTIVE

- a. Explain the limited understanding of Samuel the prophet when God sent him to anoint one of the sons of Jesse to be king. 1 Samuel 16:1–6.
-

“As Samuel looked upon [Eliab’s] princely bearing, he thought, ‘This is indeed the man whom God has chosen as successor to Saul,’ and he waited for the divine sanction that he might anoint him. But Jehovah did not look upon the outward appearance. Eliab did not fear the Lord. Had he been called to the throne, he would have been a proud, exacting ruler.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 638.

- b. What should we learn from this experience of Samuel—especially when choosing various kinds of leaders and in looking to the future of the youth in our midst? Verse 7; John 7:24.
-

“We may learn from the mistake of Samuel how vain is the estimation that rests on beauty of face or nobility of stature. We may see how incapable is man’s wisdom of understanding the secrets of the heart or of comprehending the counsels of God without special enlightenment from heaven. The thoughts and ways of God in relation to His creatures are above our finite minds; but we may be assured that His children will be brought to fill the very place for which they are qualified, and will be enabled to accomplish the very work committed to their hands, if they will but submit their will to God, that His beneficent plans may not be frustrated by the perversity of man.”—*Ibid.*

“‘Will not the thorough education of a few answer every essential requirement?’

“No, I answer, most decidedly not. What selection would we be able to make from our youth? How could we tell who would be the most promising, who would render the best service to God? In our human judgment we might do as did Samuel, who, when sent to find the anointed of the Lord, looked upon the outward appearance. . . . Who can determine which one of a family will prove to be efficient in the work of God? All the youth should be permitted to have the blessings and privileges of an education at our schools, that they may be inspired to become laborers together with God.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 197.

4. A SURPRISE CHOICE

- a. Describe God's choice and the wisdom of His plan. 1 Samuel 16:8–12.
-

“When God called David from his father’s sheepfold to anoint him king of Israel, He saw in him one to whom He could impart His Spirit.”—*Christ Triumphant*, p. 146.

“David was not of lofty stature, but his countenance was beautiful, expressive of humility, honesty, and true courage. The angel of God signified to Samuel that David was the one for him to anoint, for he was God’s chosen. From that time the Lord gave David a prudent and understanding heart.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4A, p. 78.

- b. What should parents and teachers understand in seeking to guide the youth under their care? Proverbs 15:33; Ecclesiastes 7:8.
-

“The elder brothers, from whom Samuel would have chosen, did not possess the qualifications that God saw to be essential in a ruler of His people. Proud, self-centered, self-confident, they were set aside for the one whom they lightly regarded, one who had preserved the simplicity and sincerity of his youth, and who, while little in his own sight, could be trained by God for the responsibilities of the kingdom. So today, in many a child whom the parents would pass by, God sees capabilities far above those revealed by others who are thought to possess great promise.

“And as regards life’s possibilities, who is capable of deciding what is great and what is small? How many a worker in the lowly places of life, by setting on foot agencies for the blessing of the world, has achieved results that kings might envy! Let every child, then, receive an education for the highest service.”—*Education*, pp. 266, 267.

“‘Not to be ministered unto, but to minister’ is the great lesson which we are to learn and to teach.

“Let the youth be impressed with the thought that they are not their own. They belong to Christ. They are the purchase of His blood, the claim of His love. They live because He keeps them by His power. Their time, their strength, their capabilities are His, to be developed, to be trained, to be used for Him.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 396, 397.

5. HUMBLE AND MODEST AS BEFORE

- a. What was reflected in the attitude of young David? Psalm 23:1–6; 71:5.

“How sweetly are [David’s] experiences as a shepherd lad reflect in the words: [Psalm 23:1–4 quoted].”—*Education*, p. 164.

- b. Explain the aim and result of Samuel’s secret mission. 1 Samuel 16:13.

“Samuel had not made known his errand, even to the family of Jesse, and the ceremony of anointing David had been performed in secret. It was an intimation to the youth of the high destiny awaiting him, that amid all the varied experiences and perils of his coming years, this knowledge might inspire him to be true to the purpose of God to be accomplished by his life.

“The great honor conferred upon David did not serve to elate him. Notwithstanding the high position which he was to occupy, he quietly continued his employment, content to await the development of the Lord’s plan in His own time and way. As humble and modest as before his anointing, the shepherd boy returned to the hills and watched and guarded his flocks as tenderly as ever.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 641.

“David, in the beauty and vigor of his young manhood, was preparing to take a high position with the noblest of the earth. His talents, as precious gifts from God, were employed to extol the glory of the divine Giver. . . . As he beheld the love of God in all the providences of his life, his heart throbbed with more fervent adoration and gratitude, his voice rang out in a richer melody, his harp was swept with more exultant joy; and the shepherd boy proceeded from strength to strength, from knowledge to knowledge; for the Spirit of the Lord was upon him.”—*Ibid.*, p. 642.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain the spiritual benefits of spending time in God’s creation in nature.
2. What personal benefits can I derive from the psalms of David?
3. What should we all learn from the lesson given to Samuel?
4. Name some significant point from the experience in Jesse’s home.
5. How can we be inspired by David’s response to his quiet anointing?

Overcoming Giants

“And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord’s” (1 Samuel 17:47, first part).

“Those who bear the most solemn message ever given to our world must lay off the pugilistic armor, and put on the armor of Christ’s righteousness.”—*Evangelism*, p. 166.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 212–221.

Sunday

January 3

1. LEARNING DEEPER TRUST

- a. How did David cooperate with God’s providences to gain wisdom and experience to handle future challenges? 1 Samuel 16:14–23.

“In the providence of God, David, as a skillful performer upon the harp, was brought before the king. The shepherd boy was employed to play before the ruler of Israel, and, if possible, to charm away the brooding melancholy which had settled, like a dark cloud, over the mind of Saul.”—*The Signs of the Times*, August 3, 1888.

“David was growing in favor with God and man. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he now set his heart more fully to do the will of God than ever before. He had new themes for thought. He had been in the court of the king and had seen the responsibilities of royalty. He had discovered some of the temptations that beset the soul of Saul. . . . But while he was absorbed in deep meditation, and harassed by thoughts of anxiety, he turned to his harp, and called forth strains that elevated his mind to the Author of every good, and the dark clouds that seemed to shadow the horizon of the future were dispelled.

“God was teaching David lessons of trust. As Moses was trained for his work, so the Lord was fitting the son of Jesse to become the guide of His chosen people. In his watchcare for his flocks, he was gaining an appreciation of the care that the Great Shepherd has for the sheep of His pasture.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 643, 644.

2. PRIORITIES REVEALED IN CRISIS

a. What serious problem befell all Israel at this time? 1 Samuel 17:1–11.

“The Philistines propose their own manner of warfare, in selecting a man of great size and strength, whose height is about twelve feet.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 2, p. 1018.

“For forty days the host of Israel had trembled before the haughty challenge of the Philistine giant. Their hearts failed within them as they looked upon his massive form. . . . Upon his head was a helmet of brass, he was clothed with a coat of mail that weighed five thousand shekels, and he had greaves of brass upon his legs. The coat was made of plates of brass that overlaid one another, like the scales of a fish, and they were so closely joined that no dart or arrow could possibly penetrate the armor.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 646.

b. What was David’s main concern in the crisis? Verses 21–26.

“[David] was fired with zeal to preserve the honor of the living God, and the credit of the children of Israel. He could not endure to see this bold idolater permitted day after day to mock the chosen of the Lord, without making an effort to overthrow his proud vaunting and derision.”—*The Signs of the Times*, August 3, 1888.

c. Contrast the attitude of David’s eldest brother, Eliab. Verses 28, 29.

“Eliab, David’s eldest brother . . . knew well the feelings that were stirring the young man’s soul. Even as a shepherd of the flocks of Bethlehem he had manifested daring, courage, and strength not easily accounted for; and the mysterious visit of Samuel to their father’s house, and his silent departure, had awakened in the minds of the brothers suspicions of the real object of his visit. Their jealousy had been aroused as they saw David honored above them, and they did not regard him with the respect and love due to his integrity and brotherly tenderness. They looked upon him as merely a stripling shepherd, and now the question which he asked was regarded by Eliab as a censure upon his own cowardice in making no attempt to silence the giant of the Philistines.”—*Ibid.*

3. DAVID AND GOLIATH

- a. How can we incorporate into our own experience the faith manifested by David? 1 Samuel 17:32–37.
-

“Whenever a special deliverance is wrought in our behalf, or new and unexpected favors are granted us, we should acknowledge God’s goodness.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 187, 188.

“Our preparation to meet opponents or to minister to the people must be obtained of God at the throne of heavenly grace. Here, in receiving the grace of God, our own incompetence is seen and acknowledged. The dignity and glory of Christ is our strength.”—*Evangelism*, pp. 166, 167.

- b. How did David reveal the secret of victory? Verses 38–40, 43–51.
-

“Goliath trusted in his armor. He terrified the armies of Israel by his defiant, savage boastings, while he made a most imposing display of his armor, which was his strength. David, in his humility and zeal for God and his people, proposed to meet this boaster. Saul consented and had his own kingly armor placed upon David. But he would not consent to wear it. He laid off the king’s armor, for he had not proved it. He had proved God and, in trusting in Him, had gained special victories. To put on Saul’s armor would give the impression that he was a warrior, when he was only little David who tended the sheep. He did not mean that any credit be given to the armor of Saul, for his trust was in the Lord God of Israel. He selected a few pebbles from the brook, and with his sling and staff, his only weapons, he went forth in the name of the God of Israel to meet the armed warrior.

“Goliath disdained David, for his appearance was that of a mere youth untaught in the tactics of warfare. . . . He felt that it was an insult upon his dignity to have a mere stripling, without so much as an armor, come to meet him. He made his boast of what he would do to him. David did not become irritated because he was looked upon as so inferior, neither did he tremble at his terrible threats, but replied: ‘Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts.’ ”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 218, 219.

4. FAITH DESPITE APPEARANCES

- a. **What can we learn from David's deep and abiding trust in God and His law? Psalms 19:7–11; 20:5–9.**
-

“The Lord would have us awake to our true spiritual condition. He desires that every soul shall humble heart and mind before Him. The words of inspiration found in the nineteenth and twentieth psalms are presented to me for our people. It is our privilege to accept these precious promises, and to believe the warnings. . . .

“In the night season I seemed to be repeating these words to the people: There is need of close examination of self. We have no time now to spend in self-indulgence. If we are connected with God, we shall humble our hearts before Him, and be very zealous in the perfecting of Christian characters. We have a grand and solemn work to do, for the world is to be enlightened in regard to the times in which we live; and they will be enlightened when a straight testimony is borne. They will be led to earnest examination of self.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary*, [E. G. White Comments], vol. 3, pp. 1145, 1146.

“We should examine our own hearts, and see that everything that is not in accordance with God's will is separated from us.”—*The Review and Herald*, May 10, 1887.

- b. **How did Jesus confirm that through His power, His people can overcome the seemingly insurmountable giants of sin and selfishness? Mark 10:26, 27; 11:22, 23; Philipians 1:6.**
-

“In Christ, God has provided means for subduing every sinful trait, and resisting every temptation, however strong. But many feel that they lack faith, and therefore they remain away from Christ. Let these souls, in their helpless unworthiness, cast themselves upon the mercy of their compassionate Saviour. Look not to self, but to Christ. He who healed the sick and cast out demons when He walked among men is the same mighty Redeemer today. Faith comes by the word of God. Then grasp His promise, ‘Him that cometh to Me I will in nowise cast out’ (John 6:37). Cast yourself at His feet with the cry, ‘Lord I believe; help *Thou* mine unbelief.’ You can never perish while you do this—never.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 429. [Italics in the original.]

5. THE FINAL WORK

- a. **How must all entrusted with the present truth in the last days learn from Jesus and avoid falling prey to the spirit of Goliath? Jude 9.**

“In the presentation of unpopular truth, which involves a heavy cross, preachers should be careful that every word is as God would have it. Their words should never cut. They should present the truth in humility, with the deepest love for souls and an earnest desire for their salvation, and let the truth cut. They should not defy ministers of other denominations and seek to provoke a debate. . . . The defying, the boasting, and the railing must come from the opposers of truth, who act the Goliath. But none of this spirit should be seen in those whom God has sent forth to proclaim the last message of warning to a doomed world.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 218.

- b. **What hope does God offer His tiny remnant in the last days? Zechariah 4:10 (first part); Luke 17:6. What is to enlighten the earth? Revelation 18:1.**

“In this last generation the parable of the mustard seed is to reach a signal and triumphant fulfillment. The little seed will become a tree. The last message of warning and mercy is to go to ‘every nation and kindred and tongue,’ ‘to take out of them a people for His name’ (Acts 15:14; Revelation 18:1). And the earth shall be lightened with His glory.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 79.

“The revelation of His own glory in the form of humanity will bring heaven so near to men that the beauty adorning the inner temple will be seen in every soul in whom the Saviour dwells. Men will be captivated by the glory of an abiding Christ.”—*Ibid.*, p. 420.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How did David grow while soothing Saul with his harp?
2. How did the attitude of David differ from that of his brothers?
3. Why did David refuse to wear Saul’s armor?
4. How can we apply this lesson in confronting today’s figurative “giants”?
5. Differentiate between the spirit of David and that of Goliath today.

Crisis

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12).

“When shadows encompass the soul, when we want light and guidance, we must look up; there is light beyond the darkness.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 657.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 649–654, 659.

Sunday

January 10

1. FACING PERSECUTION

- a. **What triggered jealousy in Saul’s heart against David? 1 Samuel 18:5–9. Name a principle which explains why Saul’s actions followed his sentiments. Verse 11; 1 John 3:15.**

“It was the ambition of Saul to be first in the estimation of men; and when this song of praise was sung, a settled conviction entered the mind of the king that David would obtain the hearts of the people and reign in his stead. Saul opened his heart to the spirit of jealousy by which his soul was poisoned.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 650.

- b. **Why does God allow Christians to undergo situations such as the one David now experienced—and what did David learn through his connection with Saul? 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 4:12–17.**

“David’s position at court would give him a knowledge of affairs, in preparation for his future greatness. It would enable him to gain the confidence of the nation. The vicissitudes and hardships which befell him, through the enmity of Saul, would lead him to feel his dependence upon God, and to put his whole trust in Him.”—*Ibid.*, p. 649.

2. SERIOUS DANGER

- a. When Saul saw that God had protected David, what other plans did he arrange in seeking to destroy him? 1 Samuel 18:12, 13, 17, 20, 21, 25. What preserved the life of God's faithful servant? Verses 14, 30.
-

- b. How did Saul's worst nature again recur—and what arrested his pursuit of David at Ramah? Chapter 19:9, 10, 23, 24; 20:1 (first part).
-

"[Saul] was determined to wait for no further chance to kill David; as soon as he should come within reach of him, he intended with his own hand to slay him, whatever might be the consequences.

"But an angel of God met him on the way and controlled him. The Spirit of God held him in Its power, and he went forward uttering prayers to God, interspersed with predictions and sacred melodies. He prophesied of the coming Messiah as the world's Redeemer. When he came to the prophet's home in Ramah, he laid aside the outer garments that betokened his rank, and all day and all night he lay before Samuel and his pupils, under the influence of the divine Spirit. The people were drawn together to witness this strange scene. . . .

"David had little confidence in the king's repentance. He took this opportunity to escape, lest the mood of the king should change, as formerly."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 654.

- c. Describe the deadly nature of envy and jealousy. Proverbs 6:34, 35; 27:4.
-

"Envy is one of the most despicable traits of Satanic character. It is constantly seeking the lifting up of self, by casting slurs upon others. A man who is envious will belittle his neighbor, thinking to exalt himself."—*The Signs of the Times*, August 17, 1888.

"Envy is not merely a perverseness of temper, but a distemper, which disorders all the faculties. . . .

"If an attempt be made to convince the envious person of his sin, he becomes even more bitter against the object of his passion, and too often he remains incurable."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 56.

3. THE TERRIBLE RESULTS OF PANIC

- a. Relate the wrongs of David in his flight to Nob. 1 Samuel 21:1–6.
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“[David] was in constant fear of discovery, and . . . in his extremity he resorted to deception. . . . David told the priest that he had been sent by the king to accomplish some secret business which required that he should go alone. He asked the priest for five loaves of bread. There was nothing but hallowed bread in the possession of the man of God; David succeeded, however, in removing his scruples, and obtained the bread to satisfy his hunger.”—*The Signs of the Times*, August 31, 1888.

- b. How did David’s failure to be honest and forthright with Ahimelech trigger a tragic series of events? Verses 7; 22:6–11, 16–19.
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“Had the facts been plainly stated, Ahimelech would have known what course to pursue to preserve his life.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 656.

“Doeg was a slanderer, and Saul had such a spirit of envy and hatred and murder, that he desired the report to be true. The partial and exaggerated statement of the chief of the herdsmen, was suited for the use of the adversary of God and man. It was presented to the mind of Saul in such a light that the king lost all control of himself, and acted like a madman. If he had but calmly waited until he could have heard the whole story, and had exercised his reasoning faculties, how different would have been the terrible record of that day’s doings!

“How Satan exults when he is enabled to set the soul into a white heat of anger! A glance, a gesture, an intonation, may be seized upon and used, as the arrow of Satan, to wound and poison the heart that is open to receive it. If the Spirit of Christ possesses us wholly, and we have been transformed by His grace, there will be no disposition to speak evil, or to bear reports freighted with falsehood. The falsifier, the accuser of the brethren, is a chosen agent of the great deceiver.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 2, p. 1020.

“This deed [of slaying the priests] filled all Israel with horror. It was the king whom they had chosen that had committed this outrage. . . . The ark was with them, but the priests of whom they had inquired were slain with the sword. What would come next?”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 659.

4. FRENZY IN FEAR

- a. What was David forgetting when in a state of panic? Psalm 23:4.
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“[David], when in a great emergency, had looked up to God with the steady eye of faith, and had met the proud, boasting Philistine. He believed in God, he went in His name. He trusted in His power to do the work of defeating the armies of the Lord’s enemies. But as he had been hunted and persecuted, perplexity and distress had nearly hidden his heavenly Father from his sight. He seemed to think that he was left alone, to fight his own battles. He was confused, and knew not which way to turn. . . .

“We must learn to trust our heavenly Father, and not allow the soul to be defiled with the sin of unbelief. In trying to save ourselves, we do not commit the keeping of our souls to God, as unto a faithful Creator. We do not expect Him to work for us, but frantically beat about in our own finite strength to break through some wall of difficulty which God alone can remove for us. . . . When man relies implicitly upon God, he will be true to himself; and he can hope and rejoice in the God of his salvation, though every friend on earth becomes a foe.”—*The Signs of the Times*, August 31, 1888.

- b. How should we take warning—even when in danger—from David’s other wrong committed in his desperate flight? 1 Samuel 21:10–13.
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“God requires that truthfulness shall mark His people, even in the greatest peril. . . .

“David fled to Achish, the king of Gath; for he felt that there was more safety in the midst of the enemies of his people than in the dominions of Saul. But it was reported to Achish that David was the man who had slain the Philistine champion years before; and now he who had sought refuge with the foes of Israel found himself in great peril. But, feigning madness, he deceived his enemies and thus made his escape.

“The first error of David was his distrust of God at Nob, and his second mistake was his deception before Achish. . . . As trial came upon him, his faith was shaken, and human weakness appeared. He saw in every man a spy and a betrayer.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 656, 657.

5. TRUE FAITH . . . TRUSTS

- a. How did David humbly acknowledge his partial guilt in the tragic matter of the slain priests? 1 Samuel 22:20–23.
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- b. How does our Lord Jesus Christ reprove the type of fear that too often paralyzes us from trusting God as we should? Mark 4:40.
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“Wherever the children of God make a failure, it is due to their lack of faith. When shadows encompass the soul, when we want light and guidance, we must look up; there is light beyond the darkness.”—*The Signs of the Times*, August 31, 1888.

- c. Name one promise that echoes down through the centuries to every faithful child of God in times of desperate need. Isaiah 54:10.
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“Oh, how precious is the sweet influence of the Spirit of God as it comes to depressed or despairing souls, encouraging the fainthearted, strengthening the feeble, and imparting courage and help to the tried servants of the Lord! Oh, what a God is ours, who deals gently with the erring and manifests His patience and tenderness in adversity, and when we are overwhelmed with some great sorrow!”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 657.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why does God hate it so much when we indulge in envy and jealousy?
2. Why couldn't David trust Saul, even after he seemed peaceable at times?
3. How might I be in danger of making mistakes like David in such trials?
4. How does the Lord want us to handle matters when our life is in peril?
5. Under what types of circumstances do I really need to trust God more?

Brotherly Love

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

“There are many cords which unite us to our fellow men, to humanity, and to God, and this relationship is solemn with its weight of responsibility.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 184.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 654–660.

Sunday

January 17

1. HIDING IN DENS AND CAVES

- a. Name one instance that reveals David’s nobility of character—and the source of it. 1 Samuel 22:1, 3, 4; Psalm 57:2, 3.

“David’s anxiety was not all for himself, although he realized his peril. He thought of his father and mother, and he concluded that he must seek another refuge for them. . . . From this history, we may all learn precious lessons of filial love. . . .

“[The family of David] concluded that they would be safer with him whom the prophet Samuel had anointed to be king of Israel, even though he was a fugitive in a lonely cave, than exposed to the insane madness of a jealous king. . . .

“In the cave of Adullam, the family were at last united in sympathy and affection. The son of Jesse could make melody with voice and harp as he sang, ‘Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!’ [Psalm 133:1.] He had tasted the bitterness of suspicion and distrust from his brethren; and the harmony that had taken the place of discord, brought joy and comfort to the exile’s heart. It was here that David composed the fifty-seventh psalm.”—*The Signs of the Times*, September 7, 1888.

“When by the jealousy of Saul driven a fugitive into the wilderness, David, cut off from human support, leaned more heavily upon God.”—*Education*, p. 152.

2. TEAMING UP IN TRIAL

- a. **Who else fled to follow David in the cave—and how was this an educational experience for the anointed fugitive? 1 Samuel 22:2.**
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“It was not long before David’s company was joined by others who desired to escape the exactions of the king. There were many who had lost confidence in the ruler of Israel, for they could see that he was no longer guided by the Spirit of the Lord. [1 Samuel 22:2 quoted.] Here David had a little kingdom of his own, and in it order and discipline prevailed. . . .

“God was giving [David] a course of discipline to fit him to become a wise general as well as a just and merciful king.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 658.

“The uncertainty and unrest of the wilderness life, its unceasing peril, its necessity for frequent flight, the character of the men who gathered to [David] there, . . . all rendered the more essential a stern self-discipline. These experiences aroused and developed power to deal with men, sympathy for the oppressed, and hatred of injustice.”—*Education*, p. 152.

- b. **Describe the predicament that many faithful followers of Christ will have undergone by the time the Lord returns—and the hope that shines through in the midst of it. Zephaniah 3:12; Hebrews 11:37–40.**
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“From garrets, from hovels, from dungeons, from scaffolds, from mountains and deserts, from the caves of the earth and the caverns of the sea, Christ will gather His children to Himself. On earth they have been destitute, afflicted, and tormented. Millions have gone down to the grave loaded with infamy because they refused to yield to the deceptive claims of Satan. By human tribunals the children of God have been adjudged the vilest criminals. But the day is near when ‘God is judge Himself’ (Psalm 50:6). Then the decisions of earth shall be reversed. ‘The rebuke of His people shall He take away’ (Isaiah 25:8). . . .

“Whatever crosses they have been called to bear, whatever losses they have sustained, whatever persecution they have suffered, even to the loss of their temporal life, the children of God are amply recompensed. [Revelation 22:4 quoted.]”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 179, 180.

3. A COURAGEOUS PRINCE

- a. **Who was faithful Jonathan, and for what qualities had he already been distinguished in Israel? 1 Samuel 13:5; 14:1, 6, 13–15, 20, 23.**
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“In Jonathan, the son of Saul, the Lord saw a man of pure integrity—one to whom He could draw nigh, and upon whose heart He could move.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 208.

“Jonathan, the king’s son, a man who feared the Lord, was chosen as the instrument to deliver Israel. Moved by a divine impulse, he proposed to his armor-bearer that they should make a secret attack upon the enemy’s camp. ‘It may be,’ he urged, ‘that the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few.’ . . .

“Angels of heaven shielded Jonathan and his attendant, angels fought by their side, and the Philistines fell before them. The earth trembled as though a great multitude with horsemen and chariots were approaching. Jonathan recognized the tokens of divine aid, and even the Philistines knew that God was working for the deliverance of Israel. Great fear seized upon the host, both in the field and in the garrison. In the confusion, mistaking their own soldiers for enemies, the Philistines began to slay one another.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 623.

- b. **What had revealed that Jonathan was not only faithful and brave, but was also beloved among the people, thus showing strong suitability as the natural heir to his father’s throne? Chapter 14:24, 27, 43–45.**
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“Saul could not claim the honor of the victory, but he hoped to be honored for his zeal in maintaining the sacredness of his oath. Even at the sacrifice of his son, he would impress upon his subjects the fact that the royal authority must be maintained. . . . Though the command was unreasonable and had been violated through ignorance—the king and father sentenced his son to death.

“The people refused to allow the sentence to be executed. . . . [1 Samuel 14:45 quoted.] The proud monarch dared not disregard this unanimous verdict, and the life of Jonathan was preserved.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 625.

4. UNSELFISH LOYALTY

- a. Explain the depth of admiration that Jonathan had shown for David—and God’s purpose in this friendship. 1 Samuel 18:1–4.**
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“Especially was the heart of Jonathan knit with David’s, and there was a most sacred bond of union established between them, which remained unbroken till the death of Saul and Jonathan. This was the Lord’s doing, that Jonathan might be the means of preserving the life of David, when Saul would try to kill him.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4A, p. 79.

- b. How had Jonathan interceded in David’s behalf? Chapter 19:1–7.**
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- c. How had Jonathan then placed his own life at risk? Chapter 20:4, 13–17, 27–34. Describe the poignant moment when Jonathan and David grieved together over Saul’s hardness of heart. Verses 41, 42.**
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“Jonathan, by birth heir to the throne, yet knowing himself set aside by the divine decree; to his rival the most tender and faithful of friends, shielding David’s life at the peril of his own; . . . the name of Jonathan is treasured in heaven, and it stands on earth a witness to the existence and the power of unselfish love.”—*Education*, p. 157.

- d. What later brought David comfort in the wilderness of Ziph—and how did this inspire his heart? Chapter 23:14–18; Psalm 11:1–5.**
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“At this time, when there were so few bright spots in the path of David, he was rejoiced to receive an unexpected visit from Jonathan. . . .

“After the visit of Jonathan, David encouraged his soul with songs of praise, accompanying his voice with his harp as he sang: [Psalm 11:1–5 quoted.]”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 660, 661.

5. SELFISHNESS SUBDUED

- a. **What do we as families need to realize about true biblical friendship—and the effects of real Christian love? John 13:34, 35; 15:13.**
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“Our love is frequently selfish, for we confine it to prescribed limits. When we come into close union and fellowship with Christ, our love and sympathy and our works of benevolence will reach down deeper and will widen and strengthen with exercise. The love and interest of Christ’s followers must be as broad as the world. Those who live merely for ‘me and mine’ will fail of heaven. God calls upon you as a family to cultivate love, to become less sensitive in regard to yourselves and more sensitive to the griefs and trials of others.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 530.

- b. **Name some important fruits of genuine love. 1 Corinthians 13:4, 5.**
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“All who are imbued with [Christ’s] Spirit will love as He loved. The very principle that actuated Christ will actuate them in all their dealing one with another. . . .

“When men are bound together, not by force or self-interest, but by love, they show the working of an influence that is above every human influence. Where this oneness exists, it is evidence that the image of God is being restored in humanity, that a new principle of life has been implanted. It shows that there is power in the divine nature to withstand the supernatural agencies of evil, and that the grace of God subdues the selfishness inherent in the natural heart. This love, manifested in the church, will surely stir the wrath of Satan.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 678.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **Why might God be taking me through experiences similar to David’s?**
2. **When does a bleak, dark cave fill up with light in a spiritual sense?**
3. **Why was Jonathan confident that the Philistines could be defeated?**
4. **Whom might God want me to visit as Jonathan to David in the cave?**
5. **What type of love—and toward whom—is God calling me to cultivate?**

Developing Character

“He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city” (Proverbs 16:32).

“No form of vice has a more baleful effect upon the character than has human passion not under the control of the Holy Spirit. No other victory we can gain will be so precious as the victory gained over self.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 485.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 661–668.

Sunday

January 24

1. IN TUNE WITH GOD’S SPIRIT

- a. How did God help David at Keilah and Maon—and what is noticeable about David’s prayer life at this difficult time? 1 Samuel 23:1, 2, 5, 10–14, 26–28.

- b. What happened when Saul entered the cave of Engedi? Verse 29; 24:1–6.

“David had only six hundred men in his company, while Saul advanced against him with an army of three thousand. In a secluded cave the son of Jesse and his men waited for the guidance of God as to what should be done. As Saul was pressing his way up the mountains, he turned aside, and entered, alone, the very cavern in which David and his band were hidden. When David’s men saw this they urged their leader to kill Saul. The fact that the king was now in their power was interpreted by them as certain evidence that God Himself had delivered the enemy into their hand, that they might destroy him. David was tempted to take this view of the matter; but the voice of conscience spoke to him, saying, ‘Touch not the anointed of the Lord.’

“David’s men were still unwilling to leave Saul in peace, . . . [1 Samuel 24:4 quoted]. But his conscience smote him afterward, because he had even marred the garment of the king.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 661.

2. RETURNING GOOD FOR EVIL

- a. **What can we learn from David’s act of merciful restraint toward Saul? Proverbs 16:32; Romans 12:19–21.**
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“The conduct of David toward Saul has a lesson. By command of God, Saul had been anointed king over Israel. Because of his disobedience the Lord declared that the kingdom should be taken from him; and yet how tender and courteous and forbearing was the conduct of David toward him!”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 484.

“The course of David made it manifest that he had a Ruler whom he obeyed. He could not permit his natural passions to gain the victory over him; for he knew that he that ruleth his own spirt, is greater than he who taketh a city. If he had been led and controlled by human feelings, he would have reasoned that the Lord had brought his enemy under his power in order that he might slay him, and take the government of Israel upon himself. Saul’s mind was in such a condition that his authority was not respected, and the people were becoming irreligious and demoralized. Yet the fact that Saul had been divinely chosen king of Israel kept him in safety, for David conscientiously served God, and he would not in any wise harm the anointed of the Lord.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 2, p. 1021.

- b. **Describe how David appealed to the heart of Saul. 1 Samuel 24:7–15.**
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- c. **What should we learn from David’s caution regarding Saul’s apparently warm response to his mercy? Verses 16–22; Matthew 10:16.**
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“When Saul heard the words of David he was humbled, and could not but admit their truthfulness. His feelings were deeply moved as he realized how completely he had been in the power of the man whose life he sought. . . .

“Knowing what he did of Saul’s past course, David could put no confidence in the assurances of the king, nor hope that his penitent condition would long continue. So when Saul returned to his home David remained in the strongholds of the mountains.

“The enmity that is cherished toward the servants of God by those who have yielded to the power of Satan changes at times to a feeling of reconciliation and favor, but the change does not always prove to be lasting.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 662.

3. MORE DISAPPOINTMENTS

- a. **What occurred at a time when Israel seemed most in need of guidance and security? 1 Samuel 25:1 (first part).**
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“It was when the nation was racked with internal strife, when the calm, God-fearing counsel of Samuel seemed to be most needed, that God gave His aged servant rest. Bitter were the reflections of the people as they looked upon his quiet resting place, and remembered their folly in rejecting him as their ruler; for he had had so close a connection with Heaven that he seemed to bind all Israel to the throne of Jehovah. It was Samuel who had taught them to love and obey God; but now that he was dead, the people felt that they were left to the mercies of a king who was joined to Satan, and who would divorce the people from God and heaven.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 664.

“As the people contrasted the course of Saul with that of Samuel, they saw what a mistake they had made in desiring a king. . . .

“The people felt now that God was forsaking them. The king seemed little less than a madman. Justice was perverted, and order was turned to confusion”—*Ibid.*, p. 663.

- b. **Where did David flee following the death of Samuel, and what was on his heart there? Verse 1 (last part); Psalms 120:1, 2; 121:2, 7, 8.**
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“David took the opportunity to seek a place of greater security; so he fled to the wilderness of Paran. It was here that he composed the one hundred and twentieth and twenty-first psalms.”—*Ibid.*, p. 664.

- c. **How was David’s kind spirit put to the test in Paran? 1 Samuel 25:4–12.**
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“David and his men had been like a wall of protection to the shepherds and flocks of Nabal; and now this rich man was asked to furnish from his abundance some relief to the necessities of those who had done him such valuable service. David and his men might have helped themselves from the flocks and herds, but they did not. They behaved themselves in an honest way. Their kindness, however, was lost upon Nabal.”—*Ibid.*, p. 665.

4. A SOFTENING INFLUENCE

- a. Describe David’s reaction to Nabal’s ingratitude. 1 Samuel 25:13, 21, 22.

“[David] commanded his men to equip themselves for an encounter; for he had determined to punish the man who had denied him what was his right, and had added insult to injury. This impulsive movement was more in harmony with the character of Saul than with that of David, but the son of Jesse had yet to learn lessons of patience in the school of affliction.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 665.

- b. How did Nabal’s wife, Abigail, respond? Verses 14–20.

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- c. What can we learn from Abigail as she met David? Verses 23–31.

“The piety of Abigail, like the fragrance of a flower, breathed out all unconsciously in face and word and action. The Spirit of the Son of God was abiding in her soul. Her speech, seasoned with grace, and full of kindness and peace, shed a heavenly influence. Better impulses came to David, and he trembled as he thought what might have been the consequences of his rash purpose. ‘Blessed are the peace makers: for they shall be called the children of God’ (Matthew 5:9). Would that there were many more like this woman of Israel, who would soothe the irritated feelings, prevent rash impulses, and quell great evils by words of calm and well-directed wisdom.

“A consecrated Christian life is ever shedding light and comfort and peace. It is characterized by purity, tact, simplicity, and usefulness. It is controlled by that unselfish love that sanctifies the influence. It is full of Christ, and leaves a track of light wherever its possessor may go. Abigail was a wise reprover and counselor. David’s passion died away under the power of her influence and reasoning. He was convinced that he had taken an unwise course and had lost control of his own spirit.

“With a humble heart he received the rebuke, in harmony with his own words, ‘Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil’ (Psalm 141:5).”—*Ibid.*, p. 667.

5. RECEIVING REPROOF GRATEFULLY

- a. Explain the depth of David's appreciation for the softening spirit of Abigail and the lesson in it for us. 1 Samuel 25:32–35.
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“There are many who, when they are reproved, think it praiseworthy if they receive the rebuke without becoming impatient; but how few take reproof with gratitude of heart and bless those who seek to save them from pursuing an evil course.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 667.

- b. How was David growing in all these experiences? Romans 5:3–5.
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“David had taken an oath that Nabal and his household should perish; but now he saw that it was not only wrong to make such a vow, but it would be wrong to keep it.”—*The Signs of the Times*, October 26, 1888.

- c. Although Abigail's influence had had beautiful results, what next step did David take that was not right—and why not? 1 Samuel 25:38–44.
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“David afterward married Abigail. He was already the husband of one wife, but the custom of the nations of his time had perverted his judgment and influenced his actions. Even great and good men have erred in following the practices of the world. The bitter result of marrying many wives was sorely felt throughout all the life of David.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 668.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How has God many times protected me the way He did David?
2. What held David back from harming Saul—and how did Saul respond?
3. How did the untimely death of a prophet also occur in a time of spiritual crisis in Seventh-day Adventism?
4. What should I learn from times I've had to deal with someone like Nabal?
5. What should I remember the next time I am reproved for something?

First Sabbath Offering for North Kivu, DRC

North Kivu is a province of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), located in central Africa. Situated as it is on the eastern end of the DRC, North Kivu borders with the Republics of Rwanda and Uganda, and as such, is associated with the SDARM Rwanda Union Mission.

In 2006, brethren from Rwanda came to North Kivu where they distributed pamphlets and gave Bible studies with excellent results.

A year later, a group of 156 souls joyfully united with the church through baptism. Currently there are 750 baptized members. The work continues to grow steadily in this region.

Sadly, among those who joined were 14 teachers from other denominations who had been disfellowshipped from their church for their faith and automatically lost their jobs. They've been at home, surviving by planting just enough to feed their families. Our children have not been able to attend school because of the Sabbath, a problem affecting 80% of our young people.

The brethren would be able to manage in order to survive, but because of the wars going on all the time in this area, they cannot keep their home in the same place for too long. Even when the season comes to plant seeds, the brethren have fled when bands of soldiers come and take away everything grown in the soil.

In light of all this, we purchased 4 hectares of land for the brethren to do agriculture together as well as build a primary school and chapel. By God's providence, we already have the teachers and students eager to obtain an education while still upholding His principles. We are told "to establish schools for the education and training of our children, and to urge the youth to attend these schools. In our education institutions must be teachers who fear God and keep His commandments."—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 4, p. 109. This is why we are appealing to all our brethren, sisters, and friends around the world for your kind help. We pray that God may impress your hearts so that the donations for this project may be abundant—that the Lord may be glorified and the message of salvation may be carried to all tribes, peoples, and languages.

We thank you in advance for your generous contribution toward this building project.

Your brethren from the Northern Region of Africa



David and Saul

“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” (Psalm 27:1).

“Those who are true to God need not fear the power of men nor the enmity of Satan.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 356.

Suggested Reading: *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 484–493.

Sunday

January 31

1. IN THE WILDERNESS OF ZIPH

a. Describe David’s attitude toward his predator. 1 Samuel 26:2, 7–16.

“When Saul was repeatedly placed in [David’s] power, and his followers would have killed him, David would not permit them to do so, although he was in continual fear of his own life, and was pursued like a wild beast by Saul.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4A, p. 91.

b. Why was Saul so dangerous, even now? Verses 17–21.

“After evil-minded men have engaged in doing and saying wicked things against the Lord’s servants, the conviction that they have been in the wrong sometimes takes deep hold upon their minds. The Spirit of the Lord strives with them, and they humble their hearts before God, and before those whose influence they have sought to destroy, and they may change their course toward them. But as they again open the door to the suggestions of the evil one, the old doubts are revived, the old enmity is awakened, and they return to engage in the same work which they repented of, and for a time abandoned. Again they speak evil, accusing and condemning in the bitterest manner the very ones to whom they made most humble confession. Satan can use such souls with far greater power after such a course has been pursued than he could before.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 662, 663.

2. THE EVIL OF ENVY

- a. **To what extent could Saul's response to David's mercy be trusted—and why? 1 Samuel 26:23–25; 27:1.**
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“This second instance of David's respect for his sovereign's life made a still deeper impression upon the mind of Saul and brought from him a more humble acknowledgement of his fault. He was astonished and subdued at the manifestation of such kindness. . . . But the son of Jesse had no hope that the king would long continue in this frame of mind.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 671, 672.

“[Saul] listened to every false witness, eagerly receiving anything that was detrimental to the character of David, hoping that he might find an excuse for manifesting his increasing envy and hatred of him who had been anointed to the throne of Israel. Every rumor was credited, no matter how inconsistent and irreconcilable it was with the former character and custom of David.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 2, p. 1019.

- b. **Explain how the envy which spoiled Saul's life is a common cause of wretchedness in many today. Proverbs 14:30 (last part); 27:4.**
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“It was envy that made Saul miserable and put the humble subject of his throne in jeopardy. What untold mischief has this evil trait of character worked in our world! . . . Envy is the offspring of pride, and if it is entertained in the heart, it will lead to hatred, and eventually to revenge and murder. Satan displayed his own character in exciting the fury of Saul against him who had never done him harm.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 651.

“Envy and jealousy are like two sisters who blend together in their workings. Envy will lead a man to desire some good which another possesses, and will urge him to use every means in his power to bring down and injure the character and reputation of one in whose place he desires to be. Falsehood, hearsays, and slanderous reports are circulated, and everything that can be made use of will be employed to place the envied man in an unfavorable light before the people. Jealousy leads a man to suspect another of seeking to deprive him of advantages and position. Saul had both envy and jealousy.”—*The Signs of the Times*, November 2, 1888.

3. SPEEDING DOWNHILL

- a. Besides envy, name another characteristic of Saul to avoid. John 12:43.
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“One great defect in the character of Saul was his love of approbation. This trait had had a controlling influence over his actions and thoughts; everything was marked by his desire for praise and self-exaltation. His standard of right and wrong was the low standard of popular applause. No man is safe who lives that he may please men, and does not seek first for the approbation of God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 650.

- b. What fate from the tragic experience of Saul should cause every God-fearing soul to take warning? Proverbs 26:24–27.
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“It was not the man David, who had done him no harm, against whom the king was contending. He was in controversy with the King of heaven; for when Satan is permitted to control the mind that will not be ruled by Jehovah, he will lead it according to his will, until the man who is thus in his power becomes an efficient agent to carry out his designs. So bitter is the enmity of the great originator of sin against the purposes of God, so terrible is his power for evil, that when men disconnect from God, Satan influences them, and their minds are brought more and more into subjection, until they cast off the fear of God, and the respect of men, and become bold and avowed enemies of God and of His people.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 2, p. 1019.

- c. How did bitterness cherished in Saul work against himself and affect the whole nation? Psalm 52:2–5; Isaiah 3:12 (second half).
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“What an example was Saul giving to the subjects of his kingdom in his desperate, unprovoked persecution of David! What a record he was making to be placed upon the pages of history for future generations! He sought to turn the full tide of the power of his kingdom into the channel of his own hatred in hunting down an innocent man. All this had a demoralizing influence upon Israel.”—*Ibid.*

4. UNVEILING THE ROOT

- a. What is the real source of envy? Luke 4:5–8; Matthew 27:17, 18, 29–31.
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“Christ’s betrayal, trial, and crucifixion were all planned by the fallen foe. His hatred, carried out in the death of the Son of God, placed Satan where his true diabolical character was revealed to all created intelligences that had not fallen through sin.

“The holy angels were horror-stricken that one who had been of their number could fall so far as to be capable of such cruelty.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3, p. 183.

- b. Describe the enemy’s distinct tactics against us today. James 3:14–16.
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“It is Satan’s work to tempt minds. He will insinuate his wily suggestions and stir up doubting, questioning, unbelief, and distrust of the words and acts of the one who stands under responsibilities and who is seeking to carry out the mind of God in his labors. It is the special purpose of Satan to pour upon and around the servants of God’s choice, troubles, perplexities, and opposition, so that they will be hindered in their work and, if possible, discouraged. Jealousies, strife, and evil surmising will counteract, in a great measure, the very best efforts that God’s servants, appointed to a special work, may be able to put forth.

“Satan’s plan is to drive them from the post of duty by working through agents. All whom he can excite to distrust and suspicion he will use as his instruments. . . . There is in the nature of man, when not under the direct influence of the Spirit of God, a disposition to envy, jealousy, and cruel distrust, which, if not subdued, will lead to a desire to undermine and tear down others, while selfish spirits will seek to build themselves up upon their ruins.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 343.

“Perilous times are upon us. In the world, destruction and violence are increasing. In the church, man power is gaining the ascendancy; those who have been chosen to occupy positions of trust think it is their prerogative to rule.

“Men whom the Lord calls to important positions in His work are to cultivate a humble dependence upon Him. They are not to seek to embrace too much authority; for God has not called them to a work of ruling, but to plan and counsel with their fellow laborers. Every worker alike is to hold himself amenable to the requirements and instructions of God.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 270.

5. HOPE AMID THE STORM

- a. In contrast to Saul, how can we be inspired by the attitude of David in the wilderness, even in his most disheartening times? Psalms 27:1–3; 59:1–3, 17.
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“David composed many of the psalms in the wilderness, to which he was compelled to flee for safety. . . . While David was thus passing through severe trials and hardships, he manifested an unwavering trust in God, and was especially imbued with His Spirit as he composed his songs which recount his dangers and deliverances, ascribing praise and glory to God, his merciful preserver. In these psalms is seen a spirit of fervor, devotion and holiness.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, pp. 386, 387.

- b. What hope encouraged David’s heart in the cave—and how can this hope be reflected in our life as well? Psalms 142:1–7; 31:23, 24.
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“You need not be surprised if everything in the journey heavenward is not pleasant. . . . Go forth daily, expressing the prayer of David, ‘Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.’ All the paths of life are beset with peril, but we are safe if we follow where the Master leads the way, trusting the One whose voice we hear saying, ‘Follow me.’ ”—*The SDA Bible Commentary*, [E. G. White Comments], vol. 3, p. 1143.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How can I cultivate a spirit like David’s toward those who may hate me?
2. How is jealousy different from envy—and why must I avoid either one?
3. What drove Saul to resort to such determination to destroy his rival?
4. Describe how Satan uses envy as a weapon against God’s people today.
5. Just as God did for David in the cave, how has He often comforted me?

Danger in Compromise

“In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me” (Psalm 56:11).

“So long as the soul rests with unshaken confidence in the virtue and power of the atonement, it will stand firm as a rock to principle, and all the powers of Satan and his angels cannot sway it from its integrity.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 357, 358.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 672–674, 690–696.

Sunday

February 7

1. WITH ACHISH AT GATH

- a. Why was the way David chose to free himself from the pressure of Saul contrary to the will of God? 1 Samuel 27:1–4.

“David’s conclusion that Saul would certainly accomplish his murderous purpose was formed without the counsel of God. Even while Saul was plotting and seeking to accomplish his destruction, the Lord was working to secure David the kingdom. God works out His plans, though to human eyes they are veiled in mystery. Men cannot understand the ways of God; and, looking at appearances, they interpret the trials and tests and provings that God permits to come upon them as things that are against them, and that will only work their ruin. Thus David looked on appearances, and not at the promises of God. He doubted that he would ever come to the throne. Long trials had wearied his faith and exhausted his patience.

“The Lord did not send David for protection to the Philistines, the most bitter foes of Israel. This very nation would be among his worst enemies to the last, and yet he had fled to them for help in his time of need. . . . God had appointed him to set up his standard in the land of Judah, and it was want of faith that led him to forsake his post of duty without a command from the Lord.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 672.

2. WRONG PLACE/WRONG SPEECH

- a. How was David received by Achish, and in what ways might we also be in danger of making the same mistake as David? 1 Samuel 27:5–7.
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“God was dishonored by David’s unbelief. The Philistines had feared David more than they had feared Saul and his armies; and by placing himself under the protection of the Philistines, David discovered to them the weakness of his own people. Thus he encouraged these relentless foes to oppress Israel. David had been anointed to stand in defense of the people of God; and the Lord would not have His servants give encouragement to the wicked by disclosing the weakness of His people or by an appearance of indifference to their welfare. Furthermore, the impression was received by his brethren that he had gone to the heathen to serve their gods. By this act he gave occasion for misconstruing his motives, and many were led to hold prejudice against him. The very thing that Satan desired to have him do he was led to do; for, in seeking refuge among the Philistines, David caused great exultation to the enemies of God and His people. David did not renounce his worship of God nor cease his devotion to His cause; but he sacrificed his trust in Him to his personal safety, and thus tarnished the upright and faithful character that God requires His servants to possess.

“David was cordially received by the king of the Philistines. The warmth of this reception was partly due to the fact that the king admired him and partly to the fact that it was flattering to his vanity to have a Hebrew seek his protection.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 672, 673.

- b. What evil resulted from David’s misleading words? Verses 8–12.
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“While dwelling in this isolated town [Ziklag] David made war upon the Geshurites, the Gezrites, and the Amalekites, and he left none alive to bring tidings to Gath. When he returned from battle he gave Achish to understand that he had been warring against those of his own nation, the men of Judah. By this dissembling he was the means of strengthening the hand of the Philistines. . . . David knew that it was the will of God that those heathen tribes should be destroyed, and he knew that he was appointed to do this work; but he was not walking in the counsel of God when he practiced deception.”—*Ibid.*, p. 673.

3. NEED FOR GOD'S DELIVERANCE

- a. How did David slip into deeper trouble? 1 Samuel 28:1, 2. What prayer of his reveals that he eventually learned from such mistakes? Psalm 141:3.
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“David had no intention of lifting his hand against his people; but he was not certain as to what course he would pursue, until circumstances should indicate his duty. He answered the king evasively, and said, ‘Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do’ [1 Samuel 28:2]. Achish understood these words as a promise of assistance in the approaching war, and pledged his word to bestow upon David great honor, and give him a high position at the Philistine court.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 674.

- b. Despite David's error, how did the Lord mercifully deliver him out of his predicament with Achish? 1 Samuel 29:1–5.
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“Far better would it have been for [David] to find refuge in God's strong fortresses of the mountains than with the avowed enemies of Jehovah and His people. But the Lord in His great mercy did not punish this error of His servant by leaving him to himself in his distress and perplexity; for though David, losing his grasp on divine power, had faltered and turned aside from the path of strict integrity, it was still the purpose of his heart to be true to God. While Satan and his host were busy helping the adversaries of God and of Israel to plan against a king who had forsaken God, the angels of the Lord were working to deliver David from the peril into which he had fallen. Heavenly messengers moved upon the Philistine princes to protest against the presence of David and his force with the army in the approaching conflict.”—*Ibid.*, p. 690.

- c. Describe the attitude of Achish when sending David home. Verses 6–11. What feelings must this have aroused in David?
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“The reply of Achish must have sent a thrill of shame and remorse through David's heart, as he thought how unworthy of a servant of Jehovah were the deceptions to which he had stooped.”—*Ibid.*, p. 691.

4. THE ONLY HOPE

- a. How important is it that our speech be pure, especially in these last days—and how only is this possible? Revelation 14:1, 5; James 4:8.

“Let your life be free from deceitful practices.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 150.

- b. Describe what David faced back at Ziklag. 1 Samuel 30:1–6 (first part).

“Here again David was chastened for the lack of faith that had led him to place himself among the Philistines. He had opportunity to see how much safety could be found among the foes of God and His people.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 692.

- c. What did David determine in this hour of crisis? Verse 6 (last part); Psalm 56:1–3, 10–12.

“How could [David] expect that the God of Israel would give him protection, when he had placed himself with the bitterest foes of his people? . . . Could he reasonably hope to save himself by seeking an asylum with a people whom God had appointed to extinction?”—*The Signs of the Times*, November 9, 1888.

“David seemed to be cut off from every human support. All that he held dear on earth had been swept from him. Saul had driven him from his country; the Philistines had driven him from the camp; the Amalekites had plundered his city; his wives and children had been made prisoners; and his own familiar friends had banded against him, and threatened him even with death. In this hour of utmost extremity David, instead of permitting his mind to dwell upon these painful circumstances, looked earnestly to God for help. He ‘encouraged himself in the Lord’ [1 Samuel 30:6]. He reviewed his past eventful life. Wherein had the Lord ever forsaken him? His soul was refreshed in recalling the many evidences of God’s favor. The followers of David, by their discontent and impatience, made their affliction doubly grievous; but the man of God, having even greater cause for grief, bore himself with fortitude. ‘What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee’ (Psalm 56:3), was the language of his heart. Though he himself could not discern a way out of the difficulty, God could see it, and would teach him what to do.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 692, 693.

5. OUR BOUNTIFUL PROVIDER

- a. How did the Lord honor David's prayer? 1 Samuel 30:7–9, 16–19.

“[The Amalekites had] decided to spare the captives, desiring to heighten the honor of the triumph by leading home a large number of prisoners, and intending afterward to sell them as slaves. Thus, unwittingly, they fulfilled God's purpose, keeping the prisoners unharmed, to be restored to their husbands and fathers.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 694.

- b. What spiritual lesson is contained in David's decision regarding the bounties reaped? Verses 20–26; John 4:36–38.

“The more selfish and unruly of the four hundred urged that those who had had no part in the battle should not share the spoils; that it was enough for them to recover each his wife and children. But David would permit no such arrangement. [1 Samuel 30:23, 24 quoted.] Thus the matter was settled, and it afterward became a statute in Israel that all who were honorably connected with a military campaign should share the spoils equally with those engaged in actual combat.”—*Ibid.*, p. 694.

“Today in His great harvest field God has need of sowers and of reapers. Let those who go forth into the work, some to sow and some to reap, remember that they are never to take to themselves the glory for the success of their work. . . .

“ ‘He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.’ [John 4:36.] Read these words carefully. Study their meaning; for they outline God's plan.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 409.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How can we avoid adopting David's logic in going to Gath?
2. Explain the dangers inherent in the worldly style of diplomacy.
3. Consider ways by which God delivers sincere souls in trouble.
4. Describe the background of Psalm 56.
5. What are the rewards of spiritual sowing and reaping?

The Humble Exalted

“For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Luke 14:11).

“Israel had a king by divine appointment. He who had waited patiently for the Lord, beheld the promise of God fulfilled.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 702.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 675–689, 697–706.

Sunday

February 14

1. ROYALTY DEVoured BY ENVY

- a. Explain the results of king Saul’s neglect of his leadership duties—and the depths of evil to which he sank. 1 Samuel 28:1 (first part), 5–7.

“While the king and his councillors were planning for the capture of David, the affairs of the nation were being mismanaged and neglected. . . . By following the dictates of Satan, Saul was himself hastening the very result which, with unsanctified ability, he was endeavoring to avert.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary*, [E. G. White Comments], vol. 2, p. 1019.

“[Saul] has forsaken God, and at length seeks one who has made a covenant with death and an agreement with hell, for knowledge.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4A, p. 84.

- b. How do we know it was a deception of Satan that enticed the king to his ruin? Verses 8, 11, 13–20; Job 7:9.

“It was not God’s holy prophet that came forth in the spell of a sorcerer’s incantation. Samuel was not present in that haunt of evil spirits. That supernatural appearance was produced solely by the power of Satan. He could as easily assume the form of Samuel as he could assume that of an angel of light, when he tempted Christ in the wilderness.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 679.

2. THE THRONE VACATED

- a. What finally killed king Saul? 1 Samuel 31:1–6; 1 Chronicles 10:13, 14.
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“All through his course of rebellion Saul had been flattered and deceived by Satan. It is the tempter’s work to belittle sin, to make the path of transgression easy and inviting, to blind the mind to the warnings and threatenings of the Lord. Satan, by his bewitching power, had led Saul to justify himself in defiance of Samuel’s reproofs and warnings. But now, in his extremity, he turned upon him, presenting the enormity of his sin and the hopelessness of pardon, that he might goad him to desperation. Nothing could have been better chosen to destroy his courage and confuse his judgment, or to drive him to despair and self-destruction. . . .

“By consulting that spirit of darkness Saul had destroyed himself.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 680, 681.

“Saul knew that in this last act, of consulting the witch of Endor, he cut the last shred which held him to God. . . . The cup of his iniquity was full.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4A, p. 85.

- b. What clear prohibition does God give against supposed communication with the dead (necromancy)? Deuteronomy 18:10–12; Leviticus 20:27.
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- c. What should we learn from the way David responded to Saul’s death? 2 Samuel 1:4, 11, 12, 17–21; Matthew 5:43–45.
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“David’s grief at the death of Saul was sincere and deep, evincing the generosity of a noble nature. He did not exult in the fall of his enemy. The obstacle that had barred his access to the throne of Israel was removed, but at this he did not rejoice. Death had obliterated the remembrance of Saul’s distrust and cruelty, and now nothing in his history was thought of but that which was noble and kingly. The name of Saul was linked with that of Jonathan, whose friendship had been so true and so unselfish.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 695, 696.

3. GRACIOUSNESS TOWARD ENEMIES

- a. Relate David's activities after his period of mourning. 2 Samuel 2:1–7.
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- b. Who was Abner, and how did he cause David problems? Verses 8–11.
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“The circumstances under which Abner was placed served to develop his real character and showed him to be ambitious and unprincipled. He had been intimately associated with Saul and had been influenced by the spirit of the king to despise the man whom God had chosen to reign over Israel. His hatred had been increased by the cutting rebuke that David had given him at the time when the cruse of water and the spear of the king had been taken from the side of Saul as he slept in the camp. . . . [1 Samuel 26:15, 16 quoted.] This reproof had rankled in his breast, and he determined to carry out his revengeful purpose and create division in Israel, whereby he himself might be exalted.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 698, 699.

- c. How was the throne settled—and how did David touch the hearts of Israel by his nobility toward another who had been a foe? Chapter 3:1, 30–37.
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“David's magnanimous recognition of one who had been his bitter enemy won the confidence and admiration of all Israel. . . .

“[Abner] had persistently opposed the king of God's appointment, in the expectation of securing honor to himself. . . . Had he succeeded in his purpose, his talents and ambition, his great influence and want of godliness, would have endangered the throne of David and the peace and prosperity of the nation.”—*Ibid.*, p. 700.

- d. How did David react to the actions of some who wished to gain his favor by slaying Saul's son, Ishbosheth, his potential rival? Chapter 4:5, 6, 9–12.
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“David, whose throne God Himself had established, and whom God had delivered from his adversaries, did not desire the aid of treachery to establish his power.”—*Ibid.*, p. 701.

4. LESSONS LEARNED

- a. **How did David, through the character he had developed, receive the support of all Israel? 2 Samuel 5:1–5, 10; Luke 14:11 (last part).**
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“Through the providence of God the way had been opened for [David] to come to the throne. He had no personal ambition to gratify, for he had not sought the honor to which he had been brought.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 701.

“[David’s] firmness, humility, love of justice, and decision of character, qualified him to carry out the high purposes of God. . . .

“His religious character was sincere and fervent. It was while David was thus true to God, and possessing these exalted traits of character, that God calls him a man after His own heart.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4A, pp. 85, 86.

- b. **How did David plan to acknowledge God’s supremacy? 2 Samuel 6:1, 2.**
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- c. **What happened to Uzzah, and why? Verses 3–7; Numbers 4:15; 7:6–9.**
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“The fate of Uzzah was a divine judgment upon the violation of a most explicit command. Through Moses the Lord had given special instruction concerning the transportation of the ark. . . . In the bringing of the ark from Kirjath-jearim there had been a direct and inexcusable disregard of the Lord’s directions.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 705.

“Upon Uzzah rested the greater guilt of presumption. Transgression of God’s law had lessened his sense of its sacredness, and with unconfessed sins upon him he had, in face of the divine prohibition, presumed to touch the symbol of God’s presence. God can accept no partial obedience, no lax way of treating His commandments. By the judgment upon Uzzah He designed to impress upon all Israel the importance of giving strict heed to His requirements. Thus the death of that one man, by leading the people to repentance, might prevent the necessity of inflicting judgment upon thousands.”—*Ibid.*, p. 706.

5. AVOIDING PRESUMPTION

- a. What warnings must we heed against the bold and prideful human tendency to various forms of presumption? Acts 17:30, 31; James 4:17.

“David and his people had assembled to perform a sacred work, and they had engaged in it with glad and willing hearts; but the Lord could not accept the service, because it was not performed in accordance with His directions. The Philistines, who had not a knowledge of God’s law, had placed the ark upon a cart when they returned it to Israel, and the Lord accepted the effort which they made. But the Israelites had in their hands a plain statement of the will of God in all these matters, and their neglect of these instructions was dishonoring to God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 705, 706.

“It is not enough to have good intentions; it is not enough to do what a man thinks is right or what the minister tells him is right. His soul’s salvation is at stake, and he should search the Scriptures for himself.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 598.

“The Lord has not placed any one of His human agencies under the dictation and control of those who are themselves but erring mortals. . . . [God] will judge those who assume this authority. They have somewhat of the same spirit that led Uzzah to lay his hand on the ark to steady it, as though God was not able to care for His sacred symbols. Far less of man’s power and authority should be exercised toward God’s human agencies. Brethren, leave God to rule.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 347, 348.

“God manages His own work, and woe to the man who puts his hand to the ark of God.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 16, p. 114.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

- Trace the downfall of King Saul.
- How can I become more like David when he heard the news of Saul’s death?
- How can I become more like David as he related to Abner and Ish-bosheth?
- What could cause me to be in spiritual danger as Uzzah was?
- Name some ways in which I might be guilty of the sin of Uzzah today.

Growing in God's Wisdom

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding” (Proverbs 9:10).

“[David] learned that only by God’s power could he come to the throne; only in His wisdom could he rule wisely.”—*Education*, p. 152.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 706–713.

Sunday

February 21

1. TO BE IN AWE OF THE SACRED

- a. After Uzzah was struck dead for touching the ark, what did David—as should each of us—learn about the holiness of God’s law? 2 Samuel 6:8–10. How and why was Obed-edom rewarded? Verse 11; Proverbs 9:10.

“David was astonished and greatly alarmed, and in his heart he questioned the justice of God. He had been seeking to honor the ark as the symbol of the divine presence. Why, then, had that fearful judgment been sent to turn the season of gladness into an occasion of grief and mourning?”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 705.

“Feeling that his own heart was not wholly right with God, David, seeing the stroke upon Uzzah, had feared the ark, lest some sin on his part should bring judgments upon him. But Obed-edom, though he rejoiced with trembling, welcomed the sacred symbol as the pledge of God’s favor to the obedient. The attention of all Israel was now directed to the Gittite and his household; all watched to see how it would fare with them. [2 Samuel 6:11 quoted.]

“Upon David the divine rebuke accomplished its work. He was led to realize as he had never realized before the sacredness of the law of God and the necessity of strict obedience. . . .

“[David] now gave earnest heed to carry out in every particular the directions of the Lord.”—*Ibid.*, p. 706.

2. A SECOND TRY

- a. **What must we learn from how David now exercised more obedient care and reverence when transporting the ark? 2 Samuel 6:12, 13; Isaiah 52:11.**
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“[David] resolved to make another attempt to remove the ark, and he now gave earnest heed to carry out in every particular the directions of the Lord. Again the chief men of the nation were summoned, and a vast assemblage gathered about the dwelling place of the Gittite. With reverent care the ark was now placed upon the shoulders of men of divine appointment, the multitude fell into line, and with trembling hearts the vast procession again set forth. After advancing six paces the trumpet sounded a halt. By David’s direction sacrifices of ‘oxen and fatlings’ were to be offered.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 706.

“Men and women may be well versed in Bible knowledge, as well acquainted with the Scripture as were the Israelites with the ark, and yet if their hearts are not right before God, success will not attend their efforts. God will not be with them. They do not have a high sense of the obligations of the law of heaven, nor do they realize the sacred character of the truth they are teaching. The charge is, ‘Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord’ [Isaiah 52:11].”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 2, p. 998.

- b. **Describe the way David led the solemn processional—and how he dressed on this occasion. 2 Samuel 6:14.**
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“The king had laid aside his royal robes and had attired himself in a plain linen ephod, such as was worn by the priests. He did not by this act signify that he assumed priestly functions, for the ephod was sometimes worn by others besides the priests. But in this holy service he would take his place as, before God, on an equality with his subjects. Upon that day Jehovah was to be adored. He was to be the sole object of reverence.

“Again the long train was in motion, and the music of harp and cornet, trumpet and cymbal, floated heavenward, blended with the melody of many voices. ‘And David danced before the Lord,’ in his gladness keeping time to the measure of the song.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 706, 707.

3. REVERENT JOY

- a. What must we realize about David's "dancing"? 2 Samuel 6:14 (first part); 1 Thessalonians 5:5.
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"David's dancing in reverent joy before God has been cited by pleasure lovers in justification of the fashionable modern dance, but there is no ground for such an argument. In our day dancing is associated with folly and midnight reveling. Health and morals are sacrificed to pleasure. By the frequenters of the ballroom God is not an object of thought and reverence; prayer or the song of praise would be felt to be out of place in their assemblies. This test should be decisive. Amusements that have a tendency to weaken the love for sacred things and lessen our joy in the service of God are not to be sought by Christians. The music and dancing in joyful praise to God at the removal of the ark had not the faintest resemblance to the dissipation of modern dancing. The one tended to the remembrance of God and exalted His holy name. The other is a device of Satan to cause men to forget God and to dishonor Him."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 707.

- b. Describe the chorus, procession, and ceremony that accompanied the entrance of the sacred ark into the gates of Jerusalem—and the evidence of David's generous hospitality. Psalm 24:7–10; 2 Samuel 6:17–19.
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"The gates were opened wide, the procession entered, and with reverent awe the ark was deposited in the tent that had been prepared for its reception. Before the sacred enclosure altars for sacrifice were erected; the smoke of peace offerings and burnt offerings, and the clouds of incense, with the praises and supplications of Israel, ascended to heaven. The service ended, the king himself pronounced a benediction upon his people. Then with regal bounty he caused gifts of food and wine to be distributed for their refreshment.

"All the tribes had been represented in this service, the celebration of the most sacred event that had yet marked the reign of David. The Spirit of divine inspiration had rested upon the king, and now as the last beams of the setting sun bathed the tabernacle in a hallowed light, his heart was uplifted in gratitude to God that the blessed symbol of His presence was now so near the throne of Israel."—*Ibid.*, p. 708.

4. PRIDE VS. PIETY

- a. Seeing David give all glory to God instead of claiming it for himself as king, what hereditary trait was triggered in Saul's daughter, Michal—and how did God reprove her bitterness? 2 Samuel 6:16, 20–23.
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“The dignity and pride of king Saul’s daughter was shocked that king David should lay aside his garments of royalty, and lay by his royal scepter, and be clothed with the simple linen garments worn by the priest. She thought that he was greatly dishonoring himself before the people of Israel. But God honored David in the sight of all Israel by letting His Spirit abide upon him.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4A, pp. 112, 113.

- b. To what is David’s sacred ceremony bringing the ark to the heart of the nation compared? Revelation 14:12, 13; Daniel 12:2.
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“David humbled himself, but God exalted him. He sung in an inspired manner, playing upon the harp, producing the most enchanting music. He felt in a small degree that holy joy that all the saints will experience at the voice of God when their captivity is turned, and God makes a covenant of peace with all who have kept His commandments.”—*Ibid.*, p. 113.

“[Daniel 12:2 quoted.] All who have died in the faith of the third angel’s message come forth from the tomb glorified, to hear God’s covenant of peace with those who have kept His law.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 637.

- c. After the ark was in place, David’s throne was established, and the king had rest from his enemies. What was his great aspiration? 2 Samuel 7:1–3.
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- d. How did the Lord respond to David’s desire—and why? Verses 4, 5, 12, 13; 1 Chronicles 22:7–10.
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5. A DREAM GIVEN TO ANOTHER

- a. How did David respond to God's verdict? 2 Samuel 7:18–22.
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“David knew that it would be an honor to his name and would bring glory to his government to perform the work that he had purposed in his heart to do, but he was ready to submit his will to the will of God. The grateful resignation thus manifested is rarely seen, even among Christians. How often do those who have passed the strength of manhood cling to the hope of accomplishing some great work upon which their hearts are set, but which they are unfitted to perform! God's providence may speak to them, as did His prophet to David, declaring that the work which they so much desire is not committed to them. It is theirs to prepare the way for another to accomplish it. But instead of gratefully submitting to the divine direction, many fall back as if slighted and rejected, feeling that if they cannot do the one thing which they desire to do, they will do nothing. Many cling with desperate energy to responsibilities which they are incapable of bearing, and vainly endeavor to accomplish a work for which they are insufficient, while that which they might do, lies neglected.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 712, 713.

- b. What must we understand when God declines our wishes? Isaiah 55:8, 9.
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“Our plans are not always God's plans. He may see that it is best for us and for His cause to refuse our very best intentions, as He did in the case of David. . . .

“In His loving care and interest for us, often He who understands us better than we understand ourselves refuses to permit us selfishly to seek the gratification of our own ambition.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 473.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How may God in His Word be seeking to bring me to higher ground?
2. Might God be giving me a second chance to do things better than before?
3. What main characteristic do we notice about the procession of the ark?
4. How is the bringing of the ark similar to the special resurrection in Daniel?
5. How may I be neglecting God's call while busily hoping for something else?

First Sabbath Offering for World Disaster Relief

In the last days, “great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; . . . upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring” (Luke 21:11, 25).

Need we even mention the hurricanes, cyclones, tsunamis, tornadoes, earthquakes, famines and pestilences in this decade? Catastrophes are costing many lives. Tens of thousands of deaths typically occur before a food shortage is even reported by major news sources, over 3,000 from cold, 2,000 from drought, etc. Yet our Father’s heart of infinite love feels it all.

“It is very natural for human beings to think that great calamities are a sure index of great crimes and enormous sins; but men often make a mistake in thus measuring character. We are not living in the time of retributive judgment. Good and evil are mingled, and calamities come upon all. Sometimes men do pass the boundary line beyond God’s protecting care, and then Satan exercises his power upon them, and God does not interpose. Job was sorely afflicted, and his friends sought to make him acknowledge that his suffering was the result of sin, and cause him to feel under condemnation. They represented his case as that of a great sinner; but the Lord rebuked them for their judgment of His faithful servant.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 3, p. 1140.

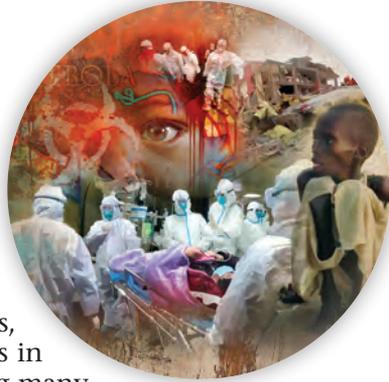
Then what about the souls that suffer under all these calamities? Indeed, the innocent often suffer with the guilty. Houses are destroyed, crops ruined, lives affected. What is our duty?

“To leave a suffering neighbor unrelieved is a breach of the law of God. . . . We are to care for every case of suffering, and to look upon ourselves as God’s agents to relieve the needy to the very uttermost of our ability. . . . We are to do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 52.

“[God] will surely judge those who neglect his purchased possession, who leave the suffering to perish when it is in their power to relieve them.”—*The Review and Herald*, December 10, 1895.

Please, let us all do our utmost when the First Sabbath Offering is gathered for World Disaster Relief, knowing that in ministering God’s suffering ones, we are ministering unto Him.

The General Conference Welfare Department



Secrets of Success

“Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land” (Psalm 85:9).

“It was regard for the law of God that gave Israel strength during the reign of David.”—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 466.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 713–716.

Sunday

February 28

1. A PROMISE KEEPER

- a. Give an example revealing David’s fidelity and justice. 2 Samuel 8:15; 9:1–6.

“David . . . was told of a son of Jonathan, Mephibosheth, who had been lame from childhood. At the time of Saul’s defeat by the Philistines at Jezreel, the nurse of this child, attempting to flee with him, had let him fall, thus making him a lifelong cripple. David now summoned the young man to court and received him with great kindness.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 713.

- b. What missionary lesson can we learn from how David was able to touch the heart of this skeptical grandson of Saul? 2 Samuel 9:7–13.

“Through reports from the enemies of David, Mephibosheth had been led to cherish a strong prejudice against him as a usurper; but the monarch’s generous and courteous reception of him and his continued kindness won the heart of the young man.”—*Ibid.*, p. 713.

“In tender, pitying love, lay hold of the discouraged and helpless ones. Give them your courage, your hope, your strength. By kindness compel them to come.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 235, 236.

2. SERIOUSLY MISUNDERSTOOD

- a. **How did Hanun, king of the Ammonites, totally misinterpret David's gesture of sincerely genuine kindness? 2 Samuel 10:1–4.**
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“[The Ammonites] could have no conception of the generous spirit that had inspired David's message. When Satan controls the minds of men he will excite envy and suspicions which will misconstrue the very best intentions. Listening to his counselors, Hanun regarded David's messengers as spies, and loaded them with scorn and insult.

“The Ammonites had been permitted to carry out the evil purposes of their hearts without restraint, that their real character might be revealed to David. It was not God's will that Israel should enter into a league with this treacherous heathen people.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 714.

- b. **What was Hanun's immediate action when he realized the potential consequences of the insult he had rendered to Israel? 1 Chronicles 19:6, 7.**
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“The Ammonites, knowing that the insult offered to Israel would surely be avenged, made preparation for war. [1 Chronicles 19:6, 7 quoted.]

“It was indeed a formidable alliance. The inhabitants of the region lying between the river Euphrates and the Mediterranean Sea had leagued with the Ammonites. The north and east of Canaan was encircled with armed foes, banded together to crush the kingdom of Israel.”—*Ibid.*, p. 715.

- c. **What did Joab declare to encourage his people? Verses 8, 13. How did David inspire and amaze them also? 2 Samuel 10:17–19.**
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“David, realizing how much depended upon the result of this contest, took the field in person, and by the blessing of God inflicted upon the allies a defeat so disastrous that the Syrians, from Lebanon to the Euphrates, not only gave up the war, but became tributary to Israel. Against the Ammonites David pushed the war with vigor, until their strongholds fell and the whole region came under the dominion of Israel.”—*Ibid.*

3. DELIVERANCE AND THANKS

- a. Although the weapons of our warfare are not carnal today, how can we gain strength by considering the outcome of David's battle against the Ammonites? 1 Samuel 2:30 (second part); 1 John 5:4, 5.
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"The dangers which had threatened the nation with utter destruction proved, through the providence of God, to be the very means by which it rose to unprecedented greatness."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 715.

"The kingdom of Israel had now reached in extent the fulfillment of the promise given to Abraham, and afterward repeated to Moses: 'Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates' (Genesis 15:18). Israel had become a mighty nation, respected and feared by surrounding peoples. In his own realm David's power had become very great. He commanded, as few sovereigns in any age have been able to command, the affections and allegiance of his people. He had honored God, and God was now honoring him."—*Ibid.*, p. 716.

- b. What did David see in his deliverances? Psalms 18:20–22, 35, 46–50; 44:4–8.
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- c. What gratifying opportunities were afforded Israel during this period, and why? Psalm 85:6–9; Proverbs 14:34.
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"In the reign of David and Solomon, Israel became strong among the nations and had many opportunities to wield a mighty influence in behalf of truth and the right. The name of Jehovah was exalted and held in honor, and the purpose for which the Israelites had been established in the Land of Promise bade fair of meeting with fulfillment. Barriers were broken down, and seekers after truth from the lands of the heathen were not turned away unsatisfied. Conversions took place, and the church of God on earth was enlarged and prospered. . . .

"David knew that God's high purpose for Israel could be met only as rulers and people should seek with unceasing vigilance to attain to the standard placed before them."—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 25, 26.

4. DANGER LURKING . . .

- a. How had a seemingly small sin crept into David's life, paving the way for worse temptations? 1 John 2:15, 16; Proverbs 5:18, 19.
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"[David] abhorred idolatry, and zealously kept the people of Israel from being seduced into idolatry by the surrounding nations. He was greatly beloved and honored by his people.

"He often conquered, and triumphed. He increased in wealth and greatness. But his prosperity had an influence to lead him from God. His temptations were many and strong. He finally fell into the common practice of other kings around him, of having a plurality of wives, and his life was imbittered by the evil results of polygamy. His first wrong was in taking more than one wife, thus departing from God's wise arrangement. This departure from right, prepared the way for greater errors. The kingly idolatrous nations considered it an addition to their honor and dignity to have many wives, and David regarded it an honor to his throne to possess several wives. But he was made to see the wretched evil of such a course by the unhappy discord, rivalry and jealousy among his numerous wives and children."—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4A, p. 86.

- b. What unseen foe was stalking David, just as with each one of us? Ephesians 6:12. What is our only defense? Verse 13; 1 Peter 5:8, 9; 4:7.
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"In the midst of prosperity lurked danger. In the time of his greatest outward triumph David was in the greatest peril."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 716.

"In every soul two powers are struggling earnestly for the victory. Unbelief marshals its forces, led by Satan, to cut us off from the Source of our strength. Faith marshals its forces, led by Christ, the author and finisher of our faith. Hour by hour, in the sight of the heavenly universe, the conflict goes forward. This is a hand-to-hand fight, and the great question is, Which shall obtain the mastery? This question each must decide for himself. In this warfare all must take a part, fighting on one side or the other. From the conflict there is no release. . . . We are urged to prepare for this conflict."—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 328.

5. AN INDIVIDUAL WORK

- a. How only can we be victorious in the battle against the foe? James 4:7, 8.

“The work of every soul is to resist the enemy in the power and might of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the promise is that the devil shall flee from us. But let all realize that they are in peril, and there is no assurance of safety except as they comply with the conditions of the text [James 4:7]. The Lord says, ‘Draw nigh to God.’ How?—By secret, earnest examination of your own heart; by childlike, heartfelt, humble dependence upon God, making known your weakness to Jesus; and by confessing your sins. Thus you may draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 346.

- b. What must be our constant prayer—and why? Psalms 119:12–14; 139:23, 24.

“God leads His people on, step by step. He brings them up to different points calculated to manifest what is in the heart. Some endure at one point, but fall off at the next. At every advanced point the heart is tested and tried a little closer.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 187.

“It is not enough for a man to think himself safe in following the dictates of his conscience. . . . The question to be settled is, Is the conscience in harmony with the Word of God? If not, it cannot safely be followed, for it will deceive. The conscience must be enlightened by God. Time must be given to a study of the Scriptures and to prayer. Thus the mind will be stablished, strengthened, and settled.”—*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 1, p. 324.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How can I reach out to bless someone as David did to Mephibosheth?
2. What kind of impression did David give to his own army—and how?
3. Why was Israel able to achieve amazing stature during David’s reign?
4. Name some subtle snares that may be entangling us, as occurred to David.
5. What do I need to realize about my own conscience?

The Exalted Humbled

“The way of transgressors is hard” (Proverbs 13:15, last part).

“Those who, by pointing to the example of David, try to lessen the guilt of their own sins, should learn from the Bible record that the way of transgression is hard.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 724.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 717–726.

Sunday

March 7

1. AT EASE IN THE BROAD WAY

- a. Trace the course which led David to go astray. 2 Samuel 11:1–4. How are we warned against this sin? Hebrews 13:4.

“It was the spirit of self-confidence and self-exaltation that prepared the way for David’s fall. Flattery and the subtle allurements of power and luxury were not without effect upon him. . . . According to the customs prevailing among Eastern rulers, crimes not to be tolerated in subjects were uncondemned in the king; the monarch was not under obligation to exercise the same self-restraint as the subject. All this tended to lessen David’s sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. And instead of relying in humility upon the power of Jehovah, he began to trust in his own wisdom and might. . . .

“David was surrounded by the fruits of victory and the honors of his wise and able rule. It was now, while he was at ease and unguarded, that the tempter seized the opportunity to occupy his mind. The fact that God had taken David into so close connection with Himself and had manifested so great favor toward him, should have been to him the strongest of incentives to preserve his character unblemished. But when in ease and self-security he let go his hold upon God, David yielded to Satan and brought upon his soul the stain of guilt. He, the Heaven-appointed leader of the nation, chosen by God to execute His law, himself trampled upon its precepts.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 717, 718.

2. A DOWNWARD COURSE

- a. How does Jesus explain what makes a person vulnerable to sin? John 15:5 (last part); Romans 8:5, 6.

“Whatever diverts the mind from God, whatever leads to self-exaltation or to self-dependence, is surely preparing the way for our overthrow. . . .

“As soon as Satan can separate the soul from God, the only Source of strength, he will seek to arouse the unholy desires of man’s carnal nature. The work of the enemy is not abrupt; it is not, at the outset, sudden and startling; it is a secret undermining of the strongholds of principle. It begins in apparently small things—the neglect to be true to God and to rely upon Him wholly, the disposition to follow the customs and practices of the world.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 717, 718.

- b. What complicated David’s situation? 2 Samuel 11:5. Explain why God could not prosper David’s attempt to cover his sin. Verses 10–13.

“Every effort which David made to conceal his guilt proved unavailing. He had betrayed himself into the power of Satan; danger surrounded him, dishonor more bitter than death was before him.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 718, 719.

- c. How did David feel when he was induced to add sin to sin—and how did God feel about this? Verses 14–17, 26, 27; Psalm 32:3, 4.

“There appeared but one way of escape [for David], and in his desperation he was hurried on to add murder to adultery. He who had compassed the destruction of Saul was seeking to lead David also to ruin. Though the temptations were different, they were alike in leading to transgression of God’s law.”—*Ibid.*, p. 719.

“[David] had excused his own sinful course to himself, until his ways seemed passable in his own eyes. One wrong step had prepared the way for another. . . .

“When David departed from God, and stained his virtuous character by his crimes, he was no longer a man after God’s own heart.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4A, pp. 86, 87.

3. A SEVERE REBUKE

- a. What message did God send by Nathan the prophet? 2 Samuel 12:1–9.
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“God in His mercy did not leave David to be lured to utter ruin by the deceitful rewards of sin.

“For the sake of Israel also there was a necessity for God to interpose. As time passed on, David’s sin toward Bathsheba became known, and suspicion was excited that he had planned the death of Uriah. The Lord was dishonored. He had favored and exalted David, and David’s sin misrepresented the character of God and cast reproach upon His name. It tended to lower the standard of godliness in Israel, to lessen in many minds the abhorrence of sin; while those who did not love and fear God were by it emboldened in transgression.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 720.

- b. Relate the response of David and the immediate mercy of God. Verse 13. Nevertheless, what were to be some of the bitter consequences of David’s sin? Verses 10–12, 14.
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“David awakens as from a dream. He feels the sense of his sin. He does not seek to excuse his course, or palliate his sin, as did Saul; but with remorse and sincere grief, he bows his head before the prophet of God, and acknowledges his guilt. Nathan tells David that because of his repentance, and humble confession, God will forgive his sin, and avert a part of the threatened calamity, and spare his life. Yet he should be punished, because he had given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. This occasion has been improved by the enemies of God, from David’s day until the present time. Sceptics have assailed Christianity, and ridiculed the Bible, because David gave them occasion. . . .

“God shows His displeasure at David’s having a plurality of wives by visiting him with judgments, and permitting evils to rise up against him from his own house. The terrible calamity God permitted to come upon David, who for his integrity was once called a man after God’s own heart, is evidence to after generations that God would not justify any one in transgressing His commandments, but that He will surely punish the guilty, however righteous, and favored of God they might once have been while they followed the Lord in purity of heart. When the righteous turn from their righteousness and do evil, their past righteousness will not save them from the wrath of a just and holy God.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4A, pp. 86, 87.

4. GENUINE REPENTANCE NEEDED

- a. Describe the depth of David's heartfelt repentance. Psalm 51:1–4, 7, 10–14. Through sacred song, what open appeal does he make to us all?
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“David repented of his sin in dust and ashes. He entreated the forgiveness of God, and concealed not his repentance from the great men, and even servants of his kingdom. He composed a penitential Psalm, recounting his sin and repentance, which Psalm he knew would be sung by after generations. He wished others to be instructed by the sad history of his life.

“The songs which David composed were sung by all Israel. . . . He knew that the confession of his guilt would bring his sins to the notice of other generations. He presents his case, showing in whom was his trust and hope for pardon.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4A, p. 88.

“[David] did not flatter himself that sin was a matter with which he had nothing to do, and that should not concern him. As he saw the depths of deceit in his heart, he was deeply disgusted with himself, and prayed that God would keep him back by His power from presumptuous sins, and cleanse him from secret faults.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 3, p. 1147.

- b. What must we all realize about sin? Ezekiel 33:12, 13, 18; 1 John 3:4.
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“Sin is sin, whether committed by one sitting on a throne, or by one in the humbler walks of life. The day is coming when all who have committed sin will make confession, even though it is too late for them to receive pardon. God waits long for the sinner to repent. He manifests a wonderful forbearance. But He must at last call the transgressor of His law to account. . . .

“The sincere child of God does not make light of any of His requirements. . . .

“It is not safe for us to close our eyes and harden our consciences, that we shall not see or realize our sins. We need to cherish the instruction we have had in regard to the hateful character of sin in order that we may repent.”—*Ibid.*

5. FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- a. How do we know God accepts repentance? Psalms 51:16, 17; 32:1, 2, 5–7.
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“David did not in despair give over the struggle. In the promises of God to repentant sinners he saw the evidence of his pardon and acceptance.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 725.

- b. How can David’s repentance encourage us? Isaiah 55:7; 1 John 1:9.
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“Many have murmured at what they called God’s injustice in sparing David, whose guilt was so great, after having rejected Saul for what appear to them to be far less flagrant sins. But David humbled himself and confessed his sin, while Saul despised reproof and hardened his heart in impenitence.

“This passage in David’s history is full of significance to the repenting sinner. It is one of the most forcible illustrations given us of the struggles and temptations of humanity, and of genuine repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Through all the ages it has proved a source of encouragement to souls that, having fallen into sin, were struggling under the burden of their guilt. Thousands of the children of God, who have been betrayed into sin, when ready to give up to despair have remembered how David’s sincere repentance and confession were accepted by God, notwithstanding he suffered for his transgression; and they also have taken courage to repent and try again to walk again in the way of God’s commandments.

“Whoever under the reproof of God will humble the soul with confession and repentance, as did David, may be sure that there is hope for him. Whoever will in faith accept God’s promises, will find pardon.”—*Ibid.*, p. 726.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What type of environment might make me more likely to fall into sin?
2. When was David a man after God’s own heart—and when was he not?
3. What can I learn from David if someone confronts me as Nathan did?
4. Why is deep, earnest repentance so important for every one of us?
5. How can the tragic history of David’s fall bring us hope?

Heartbreaking Consequences

“Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me” (Micah 7:8).

“[God] caused David to pass under the rod, but He did not destroy him; the furnace is purify, but not to consume.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 738.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 727–738.

Sunday

March 14

1. BITTER EFFECTS OF SIN

- a. Explain the changes that occurred after David’s sin. Proverbs 6:32, 33.

“Though David repented of his sin and was forgiven and accepted by the Lord, he reaped the baleful harvest of the seed he himself had sown. The judgments upon him and upon his house testify to God’s abhorrence of the sin. . . .

“David’s transgression had changed his relation to God. The Lord could not in any wise sanction iniquity. He could not exercise His power to protect David from the results of his sin as he had protected him from the enmity of Saul.

“There was a great change in David himself. He was broken in spirit by the consciousness of his sin and its far-reaching results. He felt humbled in the eyes of his subjects. His influence was weakened. Hitherto his prosperity had been attributed to his conscientious obedience to the commandments of the Lord. But now his subjects, having a knowledge of his sin, would be led to sin more freely. His authority in his own household, his claim to respect and obedience from his sons, was weakened. A sense of his guilt kept him silent when he should have condemned sin; it made his arm feeble to execute justice in his house. His evil example exerted its influence upon his sons, and God would not interpose to prevent the result. He would permit things to take their natural course, and thus David was severely chastised.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 723.

2. WICKEDNESS IN THE SONS

- a. What is written about Amnon, David's first-born son? 2 Samuel 13:1, 2, 10–16. Why did David neglect to carry out his convictions regarding Amnon's violent act? Verse 21; Romans 2:1.
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“The shameful crime of Amnon, the first-born, was permitted by David to pass unpunished and unrebuked. The law pronounced death upon the adulterer, and the unnatural crime of Amnon made him doubly guilty. But David, self-condemned for his own sin, failed to bring the offender to justice.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 727.

- b. What should we realize about the way Amnon had to be brought to justice? 2 Samuel 13:28, 29, 32; Proverbs 29:15.
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“Like other sons of David, Amnon had been left to selfish indulgence. He had sought to gratify every thought of his heart, regardless of the requirements of God. Notwithstanding his great sin, God had borne long with him. For two years he had been granted opportunity for repentance; but he continued in sin, and with his guilt upon him, he was cut down by death, to await the awful tribunal of the judgment. . . .

“When parents or rulers neglect the duty of punishing iniquity, God Himself will take the case in hand. His restraining power will be in a measure removed from the agencies of evil, so that a train of circumstances will arise which will punish sin with sin.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 727, 728.

- c. How did David handle Absalom's crime? 2 Samuel 13:38, 39; 14:21–24, 28.
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“David, feeling that the crime of his son demanded some punishment, refused him permission to return. . . .

“Tenderly as he loved this beautiful and gifted son, [David] felt it necessary, as a lesson both to Absalom and to the people, that abhorrence for such a crime should be manifested. Absalom lived two years in his own house, but banished from the court.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 728, 729.

3. CHARISMA, CHARM . . . AND TREACHERY

- a. What factors made Absalom attractive to the people, and how did he craftily use these to his advantage as the unsuspecting king welcomed him step by step? 2 Samuel 14:25, 26; 15:1–6.

“[Absalom’s] sister dwelt with him, and her presence kept alive the memory of the irreparable wrong she had suffered. In the popular estimation the prince was a hero rather than an offender. . . . It was not wise for the king to leave a man of Absalom’s character—ambitious, impulsive, and passionate—to brood for two years over supposed grievances. And David’s action in permitting him to return to Jerusalem, and yet refusing to admit him to his presence, enlisted in his behalf the sympathies of the people.

“With the memory ever before him of his own transgression of the law of God, David seemed morally paralyzed; he was weak and irresolute, when before his sin he had been courageous and decided. His influence with the people had been weakened. . . .

“Through the influence of Joab, Absalom was again admitted to his father’s presence; but though there was an outward reconciliation, he continued his ambitious scheming. He now assumed an almost royal state, having chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him. And while the king was more and more inclined to desire retirement and solitude, Absalom sedulously courted the popular favor.

“The influence of David’s listlessness and irresolution extended to his subordinates; negligence and delay characterized the administration of justice. Absalom artfully turned every cause of dissatisfaction to his own advantage. Day by day this man of noble mien might be seen at the gate of the city, where a crowd of suppliants waited to present their wrongs for redress. Absalom mingled with them and listened to their grievances, expressing sympathy with their sufferings and regret at the inefficiency of the government. . . . [2 Samuel 15:3, 5 quoted.]

“Fomented by the artful insinuations of the prince, discontent with the government was fast spreading. The praise of Absalom was on the lips of all. He was generally regarded as heir to the kingdom; the people looked upon him with pride as worthy of this high station, and a desire was kindled that he might occupy the throne. [2 Samuel 15:6 quoted.] Yet the king, blinded by affection for his son, suspected nothing. The princely state which Absalom had assumed, was regarded by David as intended to do honor to his court.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 729, 730.

4. RISING TO THE CRISIS

- a. Explain the hypocritical plot of Absalom. 2 Samuel 15:7–12; Psalm 55:21.

“Absalom’s crowning act of hypocrisy was designed not only to blind the king but to establish the confidence of the people, and thus to lead them on to rebellion against the king whom God had chosen.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 730.

- b. Relate the startling news brought to David and the strategic steps he took. 2 Samuel 15:13–17. What was his noble aim in taking this action?

“In his great peril David shook off the depression that had so long rested upon him, and with the spirit of his earlier years he prepared to meet this terrible emergency. Absalom was mustering his forces at Hebron, only twenty miles away. The rebels would soon be at the gates of Jerusalem.

“From his palace David looked out upon his capital—‘beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth . . . the city of the great King’ (Psalm 48:2). He shuddered at the thought of exposing it to carnage and devastation. Should he call to his help the subjects still loyal to his throne, and make a stand to hold his capital? Should he permit Jerusalem to be deluged with blood? His decision was taken. The horrors of war should not fall upon the chosen city. He would leave Jerusalem, and then test the fidelity of his people, giving them an opportunity to rally to his support. In this great crisis it was his duty to God and to his people to maintain the authority with which Heaven had invested Him. The issue of the conflict he would trust with God.”—*Ibid.*, p. 731.

- c. At this tragic hour, how was David comforted, especially by the faith of men such as Ittai the Gittite? Verses 18–23; Micah 7:8.

“David, with characteristic unselfishness, could not consent that these strangers who had sought his protection should be involved in his calamity. . . . These men had been converted from paganism to the worship of Jehovah, and nobly they now proved their fidelity to God and their king. David, with grateful heart, accepted their devotion to his apparently sinking cause.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 731, 732.

5. NOBILITY IN SUFFERING

- a. Though David eagerly yearned to keep God's sacred ark with him, what unselfish decision did he make? 2 Samuel 15:24–29.

“As the appointed ruler of God’s heritage [David] was under solemn responsibility. . . . Without divine authority neither priest nor king had a right to remove therefrom the symbol of His presence. And David knew that his heart and life must be in harmony with the divine precepts, else the ark would be the means of disaster rather than of success. His great sin was ever before him. He recognized in this conspiracy the just judgment of God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 732.

- b. How can every sinner be comforted by the hope David expressed at this dark hour? Verse 30; 16:5–12; Psalm 3:1–3.

“David utters no complaint. The most eloquent psalm he ever sang [Psalm 3] was when he was climbing Mount Olivet.”—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 181.

“When David went up the Mount Olivet, . . . the Lord was looking pityingly upon him. David was clothed in sackcloth, and his conscience was scourging him. The outward signs of humiliation testified of his contrition. In tearful, heartbroken utterances he presented his case to God, and the Lord did not forsake His servant. Never was David dearer to the heart of Infinite Love than when, conscience-smitten, he fled for his life from his enemies, who had been stirred to rebellion by his own son.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 11.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why did normally strong David seem to be in a paralytic stupor?
2. How can we avoid repeating the mistakes of David's family life?
3. What factors can trigger an Absalom in the church?
4. Relate some evidences of David's nobility during this period.
5. Why could David trust in God even at this painful time?

A Legacy of Mercy and Justice

“Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come” (Psalm 71:18).

“Glorious are the promises made to David and his house, promises that look forward to the eternal ages, and find their complete fulfillment in Christ.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 754.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 738–755.

Sunday

March 21

1. REBELLION SQUELCHED

- a. As David prepared for battle, what was his big concern? 2 Samuel 18:1–5. Yet how did Absalom meet his death? Verses 9, 10, 14, 15.

“As the king looked upon the opposing forces, the thought uppermost in his mind was not of the crown and the kingdom, nor of his own life, that depended upon the wage of battle. The father’s heart was filled with love and pity for his rebellious son.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 743.

- b. Why did Joab arrest David’s reaction? Verses 32, 33; 19:1–8.

“God had given them reason for triumph and gladness; the greatest rebellion that had ever been known in Israel had been crushed; and yet this great victory was turned to mourning for him whose crime had cost the blood of thousands of brave men. . . .

“Harsh and even cruel as was the reproof to the heart-stricken king, David did not resent it. Seeing that his general was right, he went down to the gate, and with words of courage and commendation greeted his brave soldiers as they marched past him.”—*Ibid.*, p. 745.

2. BLESSING AND PRESUMPTION

- a. Give some later examples of David's continued nobility of spirit—and God's care for him. 2 Samuel 19:18–23; 23:14–17.
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“After the death of Absalom, God turned the hearts of Israel, as the heart of one man, to David. Shimei, who had cursed David in his humility, through fear of his life, was among the first of the rebellious to meet David on his return to Jerusalem. . . . Those who witnessed his abusive course urged David not to spare his life, because he cursed the Lord's anointed. But David rebuked them. He not only spared the life of Shimei, but mercifully forgave him.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4A, p. 91.

- b. Although the full restoration of David's kingdom was neither immediate nor easy, what was he able to declare? Chapter 22:1–3, 7, 18, 19, 51.
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- c. What error did David commit later in life? 1 Chronicles 21:1–7.
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“It was pride and ambition that prompted this action of the king. The numbering of the people would show the contrast between the weakness of the kingdom when David ascended the throne and its strength and prosperity under his rule. This would tend still further to foster the already too great self-confidence of both king and people. [1 Chronicles 21:1 quoted.] The prosperity of Israel under David had been due to the blessing of God rather than to the ability of her king or the strength of her armies. But the increasing of the military resources of the kingdom would give the impression to the surrounding nations that Israel's trust was in her armies, and not in the power of Jehovah.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 747.

- d. What did David humbly realize about the census? 2 Samuel 24:10. How did he choose from the options God gave him? Verses 11–14.
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“[The people] had themselves cherished the same sins that prompted David's action. As the Lord through Absalom's sin visited judgment upon David, so through David's error He punished the sins of Israel.”—*Ibid.*, p. 748.

3. ACCEPTANCE AND ABDICATION

- a. **Why did so many people have to suffer—and what was the effect of David’s intercession? 2 Samuel 24:15–17, 21, 25.**
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“Swift destruction followed. Seventy thousand were destroyed by pestilence. David and the elders of Israel were in the deepest humiliation, mourning before the Lord. As the angel of the Lord was on his way to destroy Jerusalem, God bids him to stay his work of death. A pitiful God loves His people still, notwithstanding their rebellion. The angel clad in warlike garments, with a drawn sword in his hand, stretched out over Jerusalem, is revealed to David, and to those who were with him. David is terribly afraid, yet he cries out in his distress, and his compassion for Israel. He begs of God to save the sheep. In anguish he confesses, ‘I have sinned, and I have done wickedly. Let thine hand be against me, and against my father’s house, and not upon the people.’ God speaks to David by His prophet, and bids him make atonement for his sin. David’s heart was in the work, and his repentance was accepted.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4A, pp. 92, 93.

- b. **How were David’s prayers for grace in his old age answered in his final challenge? Psalm 71:9, 18; 1 Kings 1:5, 6, 15–21, 32–35, 39.**
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“[Adonijah] now rebelled against the authority of God, who had appointed Solomon to the throne. Both by natural endowments and religious character Solomon was better qualified than his elder brother to become ruler of Israel; yet although the choice of God had been clearly indicated, Adonijah did not fail to find sympathizers. Joab, though guilty of many crimes, had heretofore been loyal to the throne; but he now joined the conspiracy against Solomon, as did also Abiathar the priest. . . .

“David at once abdicated in favor of Solomon, who was immediately anointed and proclaimed king. The conspiracy was crushed. Its chief actors had incurred the penalty of death. . . . Joab and Adonijah were spared for the time, but after the death of David they suffered the penalty of their crime. The execution of the sentence upon the son of David completed the fourfold judgment [2 Samuel 12:5, 6] that testified to God’s abhorrence of the father’s sin.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 749, 750.

4. AN INHERITANCE OF FAITH

- a. Explain David's advice for Solomon—and his deepest concern at the end of his life. 1 Kings 2:1–4; 1 Chronicles 28:9.
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“David feels the greatest solicitude for Solomon. . . . He has learned by experience that the Lord will in no case sanction wrongdoing, whether it be found in the loftiest prince, or the humblest subject, but would visit the leader of His people with as much severer punishment as his position is more responsible than the humble subject's. The sins committed by the leaders of Israel would have an influence to lessen the heinousness of crime on the minds and consciences of the people, and would be brought to the notice of other nations, who fear not God, but who trample upon His authority, and they would be led to blaspheme the God of Israel. David solemnly charges his son to adhere strictly to the law of God, and to keep all His statutes.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4A, pp. 94, 95.

- b. Upon what else did David focus now? Verses 10, 20; 29:3, 9.
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“The Lord, through His angel, instructed David, and gave him a pattern of the house which Solomon should build for Him. An angel was commissioned to stand by David while he was writing out, for the benefit of Solomon, the important directions in regard to the arrangement of the house. David's heart was in the work. He manifested an earnestness and devotion in making extensive preparations for the building, and spared neither labor nor expense, but made large donations from his own treasury, thereby setting a noble example before his people, which they did not hesitate with a willing heart to follow.”—*Ibid.*, p. 94.

- c. How can David's example inspire the aged? Psalms 71:1; 119:132, 133.
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“David, in arranging his business, sets a good example to all who are advanced in years, to settle their matters while they are capable of doing so, that when they shall be drawing near to death, and their mental faculties are dimmed, they shall have nothing of a worldly nature to divert their minds from God.”—*Ibid.*, p. 96.

5. A MESSAGE FOR THE LAST DAYS

- a. How is the promise in 2 Samuel 7:16 fulfilled? Luke 1:30–33; Acts 2:29–36.

- b. What message penned by David is of distinct importance in these last days of earth's history? Psalm 119:17, 18, 33–40, 126, 127.

“It is possible for men to go so far in wickedness, under continual remonstrance, that God sees that He must arise and vindicate His honor. Thus it is at the present period of this earth's history. Crime of every degree is becoming more and more strikingly manifest. The earth is filled with violence of men against their fellowmen.

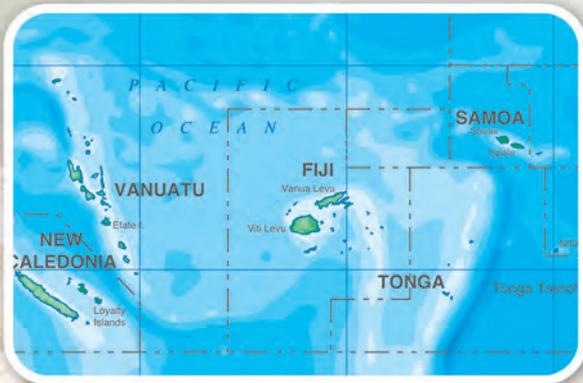
“What position will the church take? Will those who in the past have had respect for the law of God, be drawn into the current of evil? Will the almost universal transgression and contempt of the law of God, darken the spiritual atmosphere of the souls of all alike? Will the disrespect of the law of God sweep away the protecting barriers? Because wickedness and lawlessness prevail, is the law of God to be less highly esteemed? Because it is made void by the great majority of those living on the earth, shall the few loyal ones become like all the disloyal, and act as the wicked act? Shall they not rather offer up the prayer of David, ‘It is time for thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law?’”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 3, p. 1153.

“[Psalm 119:17, 18, 33–40 quoted.] Such prayers as this the Lord's servants should be continually offering to Him. This prayer reveals a consecration to God of heart and mind; it is the consecration that God is asking us to make.”—*Ibid.*, p. 1152.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What can we learn from David's response to Joab's rebuke to him?
2. In what areas of life might I be tempted to commit the same sin as did David in his census?
3. Enumerate the fourfold judgment on David's sons and how it warns us.
4. Like David, how can we all make the best of our older years?
5. What appeal does David, through the psalms, make to each of us today?

First Sabbath Offerings



JANUARY 2
for the South Pacific Union
Mission Center
(see p. 4.)

FEBRUARY 6
for North Kivu, DRC
(see p. 30.)



MARCH 6
for World Disaster Relief
(see p. 51.)

