

Lessons 81–90

Wisdom from God

Unit

9

Adult

Student Guide



Answers Bible Curriculum

Unit 9 • Adult Student

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Introduction to Answers Bible Curriculum

The Israelites rejected God as king and demanded a man to rule them, so they would be like other nations. God granted their desire, warning them of the dangers of human kings.

The united kingdom of Israel began with Saul, but he disobeyed God and was rejected as king. God sent Samuel to anoint David, a man after God's own heart. David did not become king immediately, and his relationship with Saul was rocky, at best.

But God protected David and prepared him to be king of Israel. Although he was a good and godly king, David had his share of failings, and all of Israel felt the consequences of his sin.

We encourage you to read the Prepare to Learn section before class each week. This will provide important background information, so that you will get more from each lesson.



David Becomes King

Lesson Focus

David went from living in exile with the Philistines to being king over Judah. He waited for God's timing to remove King Saul, who was killed in battle. Eventually, all of Israel crowned David as king, and David chose Jerusalem as his capital city.

Key Passages

1 Samuel 31; 2 Samuel 1:1–27, 2:1–11, 5:1–10

What You Will Learn

- How David became king of Judah and then over all Israel
- How various historical books relate to one another as they give parallel accounts

Memory Verse

Psalm 32:5 I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Prepare to Learn

Scriptural Background

In the previous lesson, David was being pursued by the jealous King Saul. David and his men were forced to hide in caves and strongholds in the wilderness, always on the move. Twice David had the opportunity to kill Saul, once in a cave and once in Saul's camp (1 Samuel 24 and 26), but David refused to take the life of God's anointed king. Finally, David decided to escape Saul by moving to the land of the Philistines and joining himself to Achish, king of Gath (1 Samuel 27:1-3). Saul gave up chasing David, and David and his men and their families were given the city of Ziklag to live. From there, David and his men raided the enemies of Israel but told Achish they were raiding Israelites. They left no survivors in any area they raided so no one could report where they'd been. Achish believed David would always be his servant since the Israelites must hate him for raiding them (1 Samuel 27:8-12). Achish trusted David so much that he included him in his personal bodyguard when the Philistines gathered for battle against the Israelites (1 Samuel 28:1-2).

David faced a dilemma of loyalties as a servant of Achish, who had graciously harbored him, and as an Israelite. God delivered him from this situation by having the Philistine commanders refuse to let David fight with them. Achish may have trusted

David, but they did not. So David and his men returned to Ziklag. But the men discovered that an Amalekite raiding party had overcome the city, burned it, and captured all the people (1 Samuel 30:1-3). Overcome with grief, David's men even spoke of stoning David, but David strengthened himself in the Lord (1 Samuel 30:6). After asking God's direction, David and his men pursued the Amalekites and caught up to them when they were spread out, celebrating their great success. David struck them down, and only 400 young men escaped the vengeance of David and his men. They recovered everything that was taken, and all their wives and children were rescued. They returned to Ziklag, and David sent some of the spoil of the Amalekites to Israelite allies who had helped him during his years on the run.

Meanwhile, King Saul was terrified at the sight of the Philistine army. When God would not answer him by dreams, Urim, or prophets, Saul disguised himself and went to see a medium in En-dor (1 Samuel 28:8). This was directly forbidden by God (Deuteronomy 18:10-12), and Saul had previously removed those who practiced divination from the land. His disobedience and foolish decision-making continued as he vowed not to harm the medium in the Lord's name and asked her to bring up the deceased prophet, Samuel.

Because the medium was startled when Samuel actually appeared, we can deduce that it was the power of God that enabled this supernatural appearance of Samuel. Samuel told Saul that because of his disobedience to the Lord, he would lose the kingdom to David. Samuel also prophesied that the Israelites would lose the battle against the Philistines and Saul and his sons would die (1 Samuel 28:16–19). This came true in the battle on Mount Gilboa when the Israelites were defeated and Saul and three of his sons were killed. Refusing to be captured by his enemies, Saul fell on his own sword, and his armor-bearer did the same (1 Samuel 31:1–7).

2 Samuel begins with David receiving the news of Saul's death from an Amalekite who looted the battlefield and stole Saul's crown. Rather than rewarding the opportunistic Amalekite, David had him struck down for claiming to have killed Saul. David and his men mourned for Saul and Jonathan, and David wrote a lament to remember them in song (2 Samuel 1:19–27).

Again following God's direction, David returned to Judah, and the

leaders of his tribe anointed him king at Hebron (2 Samuel 2:1–4). But Saul's commander and cousin, Abner, placed Saul's remaining son, Ish-bosheth, on the throne, and he set up his capital in Mahanaim on the east side of the Jordan River. War continued for years between the two kings until Ish-bosheth angered Abner, who vowed to turn the kingdom over to David. David asked for his first wife Michal, daughter of Saul, to be returned to him, and Abner agreed. Sometime later, David's commander, Joab, lured Abner to a meeting and murdered him out of revenge for killing his brother in battle. Then Ish-bosheth was murdered in his bed by two of his own captains. With no one left in the house of Saul, the elders of Israel met and made David king of Israel (2 Samuel 5:1–3). David chose Jerusalem as his new capital, and he captured the city from the Jebusites. He added to its defenses and built a palace for himself. David knew that his position was from the Lord (2 Samuel 5:12), and he was called to shepherd the people of Israel (2 Samuel 5:2).

Historical/Apologetics Background

Saul's visit with the medium of En-dor in 1 Samuel 28 shows how he continued to act in disobedience to the Lord and his commands. When Saul faced the Philistine army and wanted the Lord's help, God did not answer with the usual means of revealing his will. Saul had refused to obey God's instructions and Samuel's advice, had killed the priests, and

had sent David into exile. Although he showed no repentance for his actions, Saul still wanted to save his life and his throne. With no prophet or dreams or Urim (one of the stones in the breastplate of the high priest) to guide him, Saul asked his servants to find a medium. Mediums, necromancers (those who talk to the spirits of dead people), and others

who practiced divination, told fortunes, or inquired of the dead were an abomination to the Lord (Deuteronomy 18:10–12). These practices were common in the pagan nations around Israel, but God wanted his people to be holy, set apart (Leviticus 19:31). God declared that he would be against whoever turned to mediums and necromancers, and that person would be cut off from the Israelites (Leviticus 20:6). God commanded that mediums and necromancers should be put to death (Leviticus 20:27). Saul had previously removed the mediums and necromancers (1 Samuel 28:9), which is why the medium feared death if she obeyed Saul's request to bring up a dead spirit. Once Saul swore she would not be punished (in direct disobedience to God's command that she should), the medium called for Samuel. God miraculously allowed the appearance of Samuel, an old man wrapped in a robe, to talk to Saul. Samuel was agitated with Saul for disturbing him, and he reminded Saul of his disobedience against the Lord's command to completely destroy the Amalekites. After Saul heard he and his sons would die the next day, he collapsed because of fear and lack of food. The medium gave him a meal, and Saul was revived. He returned to his camp to await the battle, where he did perish with his three sons.

Skeptics of the Bible and other scholars have claimed that the Bible is full of errors because independent

archaeological evidence had not confirmed specific people mentioned. However, archaeology is not something for the Christian to fear; recent discoveries have confirmed the existence of biblical people. One example is King David. Some claimed that David was not a real, historical figure in Israel's history but a hero invented by Jewish writers centuries after he supposedly lived. However, the Tel Dan stele was discovered in 1993–1994 during the excavation of Tel Dan, a town in northern Israel. The stone fragment, which came from a monument for Hazael king of Aram, is dated between 950–800 BC and has "House of David" inscribed on it. This early reference to the house of David contradicts the skeptics who tried to say he never existed. The stele is currently on display in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.



Photo by Oren Rozen. CC BY-SA 4.0.
Source: commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/
File:JRSLM_300116_Tel_Dan_Stele_02.jpg



Studying God's Word

Why are there three different historical books that give Israel's history?

Take notes as you study the following passage.

Saul's Death

1 Samuel 31

1 Samuel 28:15-19

David Ascends the Throne

2 Samuel 1:1-27

2 Samuel 2:1-4, 8-11

2 Samuel 2:8-11

2 Samuel 5:1–10

Side by Side Activity

The Bible is not arranged in a way that suits our modern sensibilities, especially when it comes to the historical books. There are many events that are recorded in multiple places in the Old Testament, and that doesn't even include the writings of the prophets. So look at the following questions to get a little glimpse at how the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles are related to one another.

1. What event does 1 Samuel end with?
2. What do the first nine chapters of 1 Chronicles explain?
3. What event does 1 Chronicles 10 begin with?
4. Read 1 Kings 1:38–40 and 1 Chronicles 29:22. How do these passages relate to one another?

5. Read 2 Samuel 5:4–5; 1 Kings 2:10–11; 1 Chronicles 3:4, 29:26–30. How do these passages relate to one another?

6. What prophetic book would have occurred during the span of 2 Kings (See 14:23–27)? How close are these books in your Bible?

Application

1. What impressed you most about what we read from the text today?

2. Have you ever lost a loved one and turned to the laments in the Psalms or elsewhere in Scripture for comfort?

3. Does a passage like we read today provide a justification for suicide in desperate situations?

4. Would you still believe that David was king of Israel even if artifacts like the Tel Dan stele had never been found?



Prayer Requests



God's Promise to David

Lesson Focus

King David brought the ark of God to Jerusalem and wanted to build a temple for the Lord. God sent the prophet Nathan to David with a message that he would not build the temple. Instead, God promised that one of David's sons would build it and that a special descendant, the Messiah, would establish an eternal kingdom. This promise was fulfilled when Jesus was born from the line of David.

Key Passages

2 Samuel 6:1–15, 7:1–29; Isaiah 9:6–7; Luke 1:30–33

What You Will Learn

- How the ark of the covenant was lost and then restored to Israel
- How God delivered the message of promise to David

Memory Verse

Psalm 32:5 I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Prepare to Learn

Scriptural Background

David waited many years for God to fulfill his promise to make him king. David reigned over Judah for seven years before he became king over all of Israel and reigned for another 33 years (2 Samuel 5:5). David eventually moved his capital to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 5:6-7) and desired to bring the ark of God from Kiriath-jearim to his city (1 Chronicles 13:5).

The ark of the covenant had been captured by the Philistines during the time of Eli when the Israelites tried to use it in a battle to give them victory (1 Samuel 4). While the ark was with the Philistines, God plagued the people with tumors and terror (1 Samuel 5:6, 5:9, 5:11-12). The Philistines decided to send the ark of God back to Israel with offerings. They placed the ark on a cart pulled by two milk cows and watched to see if God would direct it. Sure enough, God guided the milk cows pulling the ark straight to Beth-shemesh, a Levitical city about 15 miles west of Jerusalem. Convinced that the plagues they experienced were from the God of Israel, the lords of the Philistines returned home (1 Samuel 6:10-12). The Israelites in Beth-shemesh rejoiced to see the ark and offered burnt offerings to the Lord. Later, the men of Kiriath-jearim came and brought the ark to the house of Abinadab (1 Samuel 7:1), where it remained until the time of David.

While David's desire for the ark was good, he and the people failed to follow God's instructions for transporting the ark. Choosing the same method the Philistines used, they placed the ark on a cart pulled by oxen. However innocently this was done, it was in direct violation to the commands God gave Moses for how the Israelites were supposed to move the ark (see Numbers 4:5, 4:15, 7:9). Uzzah, one of the men driving the cart, reached out and touched the ark when the oxen stumbled, and the Lord struck Uzzah so he died. God had warned the people not to touch the holy things or they would die (Numbers 4:15), and Uzzah was punished for his disobedience. David feared the Lord and left the ark at the home of Obed-edom for three months before he gathered the Israelites and tried again. This time David had the priests and Levites consecrate themselves, and the Levites carried the ark on their shoulders using poles as Moses had commanded (1 Chronicles 15:14-15). God blessed the journey, and the ark was brought safely into Jerusalem amidst dancing, celebration, and joyful music (1 Chronicles 15:26-28; 2 Samuel 6:14-15). The ark was placed in the tent David had prepared, and David offered sacrifices to the Lord (2 Samuel 6:17).

With the ark of God in Jerusalem, David wanted to honor God by building a house for the ark

(2 Samuel 7:1–3). However, Nathan the prophet, who played an important role in David’s life, received a vision from God and delivered the message to David. God reminded David of his humble beginnings as a shepherd and of God’s sovereign choice to make him king over Israel. Although David desired to build a house for God, it was God who promised to build a house for David. In his abundant goodness, God revealed to David that his offspring would build the temple and that David’s throne would be established forever. This promise of an enduring throne for David is carried throughout the Old

Testament and points to the Savior who would come (2 Samuel 7:8–17).

This news humbled, overwhelmed, and prompted David to worship God before the ark, extolling his attributes and offering thanks for his goodness (2 Samuel 7:18–19). We know that God was faithful to his promises to David. David’s house would continue forever, just as God had spoken. That promise has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the son of David, our Lord and Savior, who still rules over God’s people. We can be sure that this same God who was faithful to the promises made to David will be faithful to us as we put our trust in him.

Historical/Apologetics Background

One aspect we don’t want to miss is that David is a type of Christ—his life looked forward to the life and person of Christ. We see certain similarities between David and Christ. David was a shepherd; Jesus is the Good Shepherd (John 10:11). David was a king; Christ is the King of kings (Revelation 19:16). David subdued his enemies and consolidated a kingdom; Christ will also subdue his enemies and consolidate his kingdom (1 Corinthians 15:24–26). David offered a sacrifice on Mount Moriah to save Israel, acting as a priest (1 Chronicles 21:18–30; 2 Chronicles 3:1); Jesus Christ, the perfect High Priest, offered himself as a sacrifice on that same mount (Hebrews 7:27). David was also a prophet (2 Samuel 23:1–2; Acts 2:29–31); Christ was the Prophet (Luke 13:33; Matthew 13:57). David served as a prophet, priest, and

king, and Christ is our Prophet, Priest, and King.

Throughout the history of Israel, the Messiah was expected to come from the line of David and take his throne. Scripture revealed early on that the throne of David would one day be occupied by Jesus who would be crucified as the King of the Jews but rise again to be seated at the right hand of the Father.

In the book of Genesis, the blessing Jacob pronounced over Judah referred to the Messiah who would come through the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10), from which David also descended. Isaiah prophesied the same—the Messiah would come from the line of David:

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his
shoulder, and his name shall

be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this (Isaiah 9:6–7).

When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary to announce the coming of the Christ child, he repeated to her the promise given to David in 2 Samuel 7:12.

And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most

High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end” (Luke 1:30–33).

This truth is also verified in Scripture through the genealogy recorded in Matthew. Matthew begins his writing by identifying Jesus as “the son of David, the son of Abraham” (Matthew 1:1). He then shows the line from Abraham in three sets of 14 generations, from Abraham to David, from David to the captivity, and from the captivity to Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus (Matthew 1:1–17). And in the Gospel of Luke, we see that through the line of his mother, Mary, Jesus is in the line of David (Luke 3:31).

We can’t help but marvel at God’s wisdom and control over the universe and the care that he took to leave us such a detailed record confirming Jesus as the ultimate Redeemer and King.

Studying God’s Word

How holy is God?

 Take notes as you study the following passages.

The Ark Returns

2 Samuel 6:1–15

A King Forever

2 Samuel 7:1–17

Scripture Interprets Scripture Activity

In this activity, you are going to be using the cross-references in your Bible to help you identify other passages of Scripture that are connected to or quote from 2 Samuel 7. Using other passages of Scripture, we can be sure that the ideas we are formulating are coming from the text and not from our own ideas. We are trying to use Scripture to understand verses 13 and 14.

Can you think of any passages or concepts from Scripture that tie to the idea of David's throne being eternal or of someone sitting on a throne eternally? Record them here.

Find the cross-references in your Bible that correspond to 2 Samuel 7:13–14. Record them here with a short summary of how they connect to verses 13 and 14.

- Passage 1:

- Passage 2:

- Passage 3:

Application

1. How can you use the tools in your Bible to understand God's Word better?

2. What have you learned or had confirmed about God as we studied this passage?

3. How does thinking about God's dealing with Uzzah help us see ourselves in a proper light?

4. Knowing that God the Father has made his Son, Jesus, the King to rule forever, how should each of us respond to our King?



Prayer Requests

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David Disobeys God

Lesson Focus

David fell into temptation and sinned by taking another man's wife and having the man killed. Nathan the prophet confronted David with his sin by telling him a parable, and David repented. God forgave David, but David faced punishment for his sin. His baby died and his family would have troubles as a consequence.

Key Passages

2 Samuel 11:1–17, 12:1–25; Psalm 51

What You Will Learn

- How David descended into sin
- How God responded to David's sin

Memory Verse

Psalm 32:5 I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Prepare to Learn

Scriptural Background

God had made David king over Israel and promised that his throne would be an enduring one that would one day lead to the Savior (2 Samuel 7:12–17). But David's life was about to change. And as we move further into 2 Samuel and David's life, we witness the reality that the human heart, if left to itself, will always fall to the desires of the flesh (Galatians 5:17). Many find it difficult to think of David as a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22) while reading the account in 2 Samuel 11 of his fall into serious moral failure.

Throughout this account of adultery, deceit, and murder, God gives a glimpse into our hearts and his grace. David's descent began when he shirked his kingly duty as leader and chose to stay behind while he sent his army off to war against the Ammonites (2 Samuel 11:1). This first offense brought about the occasion that led to lusting after the woman Bathsheba from the roof of his palace (2 Samuel 11:2). He was completely enticed by his own fleshly desires and pursued the woman who was the wife of one of his trusted soldiers. David's sinful manipulation and misuse of her resulted in a baby being conceived (2 Samuel 11:4–5).

We can only imagine what raced through David's mind upon hearing that news! Fearful of being found

out, we do know that his immediate reaction was to cover up his sexual sin, and he again used his influence to manipulate the circumstances he found himself in. David ordered Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, back from war, thinking that he would sleep with his wife so it would appear the child was Uriah's (2 Samuel 11:6–10). After this attempt failed, David got Uriah drunk in the hope that drunkenness would break Uriah's resolve not to lie with his wife (2 Samuel 11:12–13). Again, Uriah foiled David's plan, and in desperation, David ordered that Uriah be placed at the forefront of battle and abandoned there to die (2 Samuel 11:15). After mourning her husband's death, Bathsheba moved into the palace, became one of David's many wives, and bore a son (2 Samuel 11:26–27).

It seemed as though David would get away with his sin against God. And yet, the thing that David had done displeased the Lord (2 Samuel 11:27). And in his displeasure, God acted severely but mercifully to David. Through his prophet Nathan, God convicted David—not through thundering condemnation but through a parable of a rich man who took a poor man's pet lamb for dinner (2 Samuel 12:1–4).

David reacted indignantly toward this story—incensed at the idea that a rich man with many flocks would

steal the only sheep of a poor man. In fact, David demanded that this rich man should die for his unjust behavior (2 Samuel 12:5). This indignation turned quickly to repentance when Nathan proclaimed, “You are the man!” (2 Samuel 12:7).

David thought he had concealed his sin from public exposure, but God would not let David’s sin go undetected. And through the prophet Nathan, God called David to sincere repentance. God showed grace and mercy through the message of Nathan—grace to reveal that David’s sin could not be concealed, and mercy that allowed David to continue to live, sure of God’s forgiveness.

Psalm 51 gives a closer look at David’s repentance and God’s forgiveness. David cried out for mercy, begging to be washed, forgiven, and restored to the joy of his salvation. Because God is faithful to forgive, he cleansed David of the guilt of his sin.

Historical/Apologetics Background

There should be no doubt in our minds that David’s string of sins was truly heinous—lust, adultery, deceit, murder. But we can be assured that God has forgiven him of those sins in Christ. David offered a sincere prayer of repentance in Psalm 51, and he trusted that God would cleanse him from sin. Although David did not know the name of Jesus, he could look forward to the Messiah, who would come through his lineage, to take away the sin he had committed. In fact, many of the psalms that David wrote have clear messianic language. Jesus quoted

But David’s sin had to be judged. And God accomplished that when he justly atoned for all the sins of every believer through Jesus Christ who presented his life as the perfect sacrifice for sin once for all (Hebrews 10:10–12).

One lesson to be learned from this account of man’s deceit and God’s forgiveness is that sin rarely happens in a moment but follows a certain progression. Like David, we are tempted by our own lusts and drawn away by our desires. Then desire gives birth to sin, and sin finally brings forth death (James 1:13–15).

In the end, this account with all of its sordid details gives us great hope. We, too, are sinners with hearts that seek our own pleasures. But God will not allow us to conceal sin. If we are children of God, he will graciously reveal our sin, bring us to repentance, and forgive us through the Redeemer and Savior who died in our place.

from Psalm 22 on the cross, and we see the fulfillment of its prophetic portion in those who mocked Jesus while he was hanging there in our place (Matthew 27).

Even though David had been cleared of the guilt of his sin and faced no eternal condemnation (Romans 8:1–2; 1 John 4:17–19), he still had to face temporal consequences for his sin. God announced through Nathan that David’s first child with Bathsheba would die, that David’s house would be plagued by violence, and that his wives would be violated in the full view of Israel.

All of these consequences related to the sins David had committed. Like David, we can go to God for forgiveness of our sins, and he will freely forgive us (1 John 1:8–10). We are assured that there is no eternal condemnation because our lives have been hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3). Yet, we can expect

to receive discipline for our sins because the heavenly Father chastens his children (Hebrews 12:5–6). In spite of the consequences brought on by sin, we can be sure that God’s forgiveness of our sins will lead to eternal life through Jesus Christ. For this we can praise the Creator and Redeemer forever and ever.

Studying God’s Word

What does the descent into sin look like?

Sin’s Progression Activity

David is described as a man after God’s own heart, yet his life is marked with episodes of sin—several of them very deplorable. In the book of James, God gives us a clear pattern of the slippery slope into sin.

1. Read James 1:12–15 and write down the steps in the progression of sin:
2. According to this passage, where does temptation come from?
3. Now read 2 Samuel 11 and try to identify these elements in the account of King David.
4. Think about a sin that you are prone to commit (lying, gossiping, overeating, lustful thoughts, etc.). Can you identify a pattern in your slide into sin that fits these three steps from James 1?

5. How could understanding this pattern help you to overcome this sin as you cooperate with the Holy Spirit to put this sin to death?

Take notes as you study the following passages.

Your Sin Will Find You Out

2 Samuel 12:1–25

Psalm 51

Application

1. How could using a parable or a parallel example help you to approach another believer about a sin (Galatians 6:1)?

2. How does knowing that there is a progression of sin from temptation to action to death help you to battle the sin that tempts your flesh even though you have a new heart as a believer?
3. How can you use Psalm 51 as a model for repenting when you sin?
4. Have you ever been confronted by a “Nathan” or been able to play that role in someone else’s life?
5. How has the passage in James about diagnosing sin helped you to appreciate the sufficiency of Scripture more?
6. What would we have missed if we had read through this account and concluded our lesson with: “The moral of the story is, ‘Don’t commit adultery and murder, or bad things will happen in your life’”?



Prayer Requests



Absalom Rebels

Lesson Focus

Conflict came into David's family as a result of his sin with Bathsheba. His son Absalom committed murder and led an army of supporters against David to gain the throne. God protected David and gave him victory over Absalom. When David sinned by taking a census of the men of Israel, God sent a plague as punishment.

Key Passages

2 Samuel 14:21–33, 15:1–17, 18:15–17, 18:28–33, 24:1–17

What You Will Learn

- How Absalom rebelled against David
- How David sinned by taking a census

Memory Verse

Psalm 32:5 I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Prepare to Learn

Scriptural Background

After David's sin with Bathsheba, God told him through the prophet Nathan that the sword would never depart from his house and evil would come against him from his own house. David's sin was done in secret but his punishment would be public (2 Samuel 12:10–14). David's child with Bathsheba also died as a consequence of his sin. David comforted Bathsheba after the loss of their child, and she had another son named Solomon, whom God loved (2 Samuel 12:24–25).

2 Samuel 13 begins the sordid account of David's adult children. It began with David's oldest son Amnon lusting after his beautiful half-sister Tamar. Tamar was the daughter of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur (2 Samuel 3:3) and the full sister of David's third son Absalom. Amnon plotted to get Tamar alone with him in his home and cruelly raped her then sent her away. Absalom took his disgraced sister into his home and hated Amnon for what he'd done. David was furious when he heard what happened, but he failed to punish Amnon (2 Samuel 13:20–22). Two years later Absalom got his revenge when he hosted all his brothers then ordered his servants to kill Amnon, which they did. Fearing punishment for his premeditated murder, Absalom escaped to his mother's relatives in Geshur.

David was eventually persuaded to bring Absalom back to Jerusalem and forgive him. But Absalom used his father's mercy to steal the hearts of the people. Absalom was handsome, proud, and persuasive, and he used his good looks and popularity to gain supporters (2 Samuel 15:1–6). Absalom made his move for the throne in Hebron. He invited men from Jerusalem and gathered supporters from across Israel. Even David's close counselor Ahithophel supported Absalom. When David heard of Absalom's pending attack, he chose to flee with his household and guards rather than see war come to Jerusalem. David wept and prayed as he went, and God answered his prayer to thwart Absalom's counselors. David's friend Hushai and the priests stayed in Jerusalem to report to David and give bad advice to Absalom. Due to their intervention, David was able to make it safely across the Jordan River to Mahanaim. Meanwhile, in fulfillment of God's judgment (2 Samuel 12:11–12), Absalom slept with the concubines David left in Jerusalem in full view of the people.

Absalom gathered an army and came to fight his father. The battle between the supporters of David and of Absalom took place in the forest of Ephraim, a dense forest that claimed more lives than the sword (2 Samuel 18:6–8). Absalom's neck or his long hair, of which he was so

proud, got caught in the branches of an oak tree while his mule ran out from under him—leaving him dangling helplessly. David’s commander Joab and his armor-bearers came to the rebellious son as he hung there and killed him (2 Samuel 18:14–15). David grieved for his son and struggled to reunite the divided tribes. God did restore David to the throne, but he endured another short-lived rebellion from a Benjamite named Sheba (2 Samuel 20).

The account of David’s sinful decision to count the fighting men of Israel is given in 2 Samuel 24 and 1

Chronicles 21. Joab was ordered to go throughout the land and bring back the numbers to David. Then David recognized his sin and repented. God sent the prophet Gad to David with three choices for his punishment: 1) three years of famine; 2) three months of fleeing from enemies; 3) three days of pestilence. David chose the pestilence from God. The plague killed hundreds of thousands of Israelite men, and David asked God to punish him instead of the people. God stopped the plague, and David offered sacrifices at a threshing floor just outside Jerusalem.

Historical/Apologetics Background

One question that arises from David’s census of Israel is who incited him to do it? 2 Samuel 24:1 says that the Lord incited David to number the people while 1 Chronicles 21:1 names Satan as the inciter. How do we reconcile these two accounts of the same event? First, we know that God is not the author of sin and tempts no one to sin (James 1:13). Second, we know that Satan must have God’s permission to act against God’s people (see Job 1–2). Third, we know that God is sovereign and controlling all events to accomplish his purposes. This apparent conflict is resolved when we understand that all temptation is permitted but not caused by God. Satan provoked David to number the people, and God allowed him to do so. David gave in to the temptation and chose to sin.

Moses had recorded instructions for how a census was to be taken (Exodus 30:12–16), so the census

itself was not a sin. However, God allowed the census to punish Israel for some unspecified sins. The people at this time were ungrateful for the leadership of King David and were quick to join in Absalom’s and then Sheba’s rebellion. The armies of Israel and Judah were often in conflict with each other, and so were their commanders. David may also have been guilty of wrong motives in ordering the census, such as trust in the size of his army rather than God or ambition to take over more territory.

God often used famine, enemies, and plagues to punish his people with the goal of leading them to repent and obey. The three-day plague that God brought as punishment for the census was intended to purge the sin from his people. The author of 2 Samuel chose to view the census from God’s perspective in control of all things while the author of 1 Chronicles ascribes the census

temptation to Satan, the enemy of God and his people. What Satan intended for evil for David and the Israelites God meant for good in the future of the nation. They needed to learn to recognize divine punishment and repent and seek the Lord. And the Lord showed mercy and stopped the plague before it

reached Jerusalem (2 Samuel 14:16 & 25). Where the plague stopped, David bought the threshing floor and built an altar and offered sacrifices (2 Samuel 24:24–25; 1 Chronicles 21:25–26). This land David purchased on Mount Moriah would become the site for Solomon’s temple (2 Chronicles 3:1).



Studying God’s Word

How can sin bring consequences later in life?

Take notes as you study the following passage.

Absalom Rebels

2 Samuel 14:21–33

2 Samuel 15:1–6, 13–17

2 Samuel 18:15–17, 28–33

Painful Prophecies Activity

When Nathan confronted David for his sin with Bathsheba and against Uriah, he made several statements about David’s future. There are also other passages describing the general state of

the kings of Israel given by other prophets. Using the following passages, describe the connection between the verses as they explain how these prophecies were fulfilled.

1. 2 Samuel 12:10 / 13:28–29 / 18:14–15
2. 2 Samuel 12:11 / 15:7–12
3. 1 Samuel 8:11 / 2 Samuel 15:1
4. 2 Samuel 12:11–12 / 16:20–22

How did David’s previous sins lead to the mess we read about?

Take notes as you study the following passage.

David’s Census

2 Samuel 24:1–17

Exodus 30:12

1 Chronicles 21:1–2

Application

1. As you consider how God brought judgment to David many years later, what does this teach you about God's character?
2. Have you ever committed a sin and faced consequences for it years later? What did you learn from that experience?
3. How can we connect the idea of people receiving consequences for the sins of others to the redemption offered in Christ?
4. How does the responsibility for sin intersect with the actions and decrees of God in the passages we discussed today?
5. As you consider the apparent contradiction that we briefly examined in 2 Samuel 24 and 1 Chronicles 21, what resources do you have to help think through these differences in the text?



Prayer Requests



Praises to God

Lesson Focus

God alone is worthy of our praise. We can praise and thank him for who he is and for the great things he has done. We can also cry out to him when we are sad, afraid, or discouraged, and he hears us.

Key Passages

Psalm 3:1–8, 43:1–5, 136:1–3, 150:1–6

What You Will Learn

- How to identify different types of psalms: lament, thanksgiving, and praise
- How to identify different authors of the psalms

Memory Verse

Psalm 32:5 I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,” and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Prepare to Learn

Scriptural Background

Psalms is a book of prayers and hymns meant to draw our attention from ourselves and to our mighty God. The beautiful poetic structure of the psalms allows their impact to be felt across the language barrier. Rather than the rhyming structure we are so familiar with in the West, these poems are written with structural elements that often occur in couplets that compare or contrast ideas. This is called parallelism since the ideas run parallel to one another.

One example of this occurs in Psalm 106, which is a psalm of thanksgiving. Verse 2 declares, “Who can utter the mighty deeds of the LORD, or declare all his praise?” Notice that the same idea of uttering and declaring praise is repeated in the couplet. In Psalm 106:5–7, each verse illustrates a triplet—the idea is restated three times. As you study the psalms, you will notice some of the parallels will be opposites of one another.

Through all of the poetic language, the psalms are meant to offer praise to God. The psalms teach us how to worship God with our words. The psalms made up the “hymnbook” for Jews. To the Jews, the title simply meant “praises,” and that is what the psalms were used for—songs of praise. Most of the psalms emphasize man’s position before the incomprehensible, holy God. This sets God in his rightful place—as ruler over the affairs of the world and all mankind.

As the psalmist speaks, God and his attributes are exalted.

God’s sovereignty is constantly affirmed by the psalmists as they offer him thanks and praise, as they cry out to him for help, or as they boldly claim their confidence in what he will do in the future. The psalms have been classified into various groupings, but the lesson today will look at three common types of psalms: lament (Psalm 3, 43), thanksgiving (Psalm 136), and praise (Psalm 150).

The Bible is an honest book that looks frankly at the hearts of men—through good and bad circumstances—and the emotions that are often revealed through these occasions. The psalms cover the entire range of human emotions. In Psalm 3, written when David was fleeing from Absalom, David felt overwhelmed by his foes. But he cried out to God to save him, for “salvation belongs to the LORD” (Psalm 3:8). In Psalm 43, the psalmist asks God many “why” questions as he seeks to understand the situation he finds himself in. His plea is urgent and his heart seems to be desperate, but he does not lose sight of the fact that because God is his exceeding joy, his hope must rest in him (Psalm 43:4–5).

Undoubtedly, Psalm 136 is a psalm of thanksgiving to God for his steadfast love. This is made clear in the call to praise in verses 1–3

with the command to give thanks to the Lord in each verse. The psalmist rejoices at God's care as he is reminded of God as Creator and as Deliverer of the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt. The repeated refrain "his steadfast love endures forever" may have been spoken by the people in responsive worship. We, too, ought to give thanks to God for delivering us from our bondage to sin through Christ's work on the cross! For those who are in Christ, his love truly endures forever.

The book of Psalms ends with a series of songs dedicated to praising the sovereign creator God (Psalms 146–150). Psalm 150 shouts that all things should praise the Lord. It lists

where to praise him—in his sanctuary and in his mighty heavens. Then it tells us what to praise him for (his mighty deeds and excellent greatness) and how to praise him with music, song, and dance (Psalm 150:2–4). The psalmist then declares that everything that has breath should praise the Lord! God's honor and majesty have been presented throughout this book, leading to the wonderful conclusion, "Praise the LORD!"

The different types of psalms show us how to offer worship to God. Whether we are praising and thanking him in the good times, recalling his faithfulness and love, or crying out to him in times of anguish, he alone is worthy of our praise.

Historical/Apologetics Background

The psalms were originally organized into five books, but they have been assembled into one book today, often referred to as the Psalter. Many of the psalms include inscriptions that tell us who wrote the poem, who was to perform, when it was to be performed, what tune they were to be set to, and occasionally the circumstances under which it was written. Psalms is the longest book in the Bible—150 chapters—and some say the most diverse. As you read this book, you will see many different subjects discussed, including God, war, sin and evil, judgment, worship, praise, repentance, and prophecies of the Messiah. It is also the most quoted Old Testament book in the New Testament.

Among the writers are David, Asaph, the sons of Korah, and

Solomon. A few writers, such as Heman, Ethan, and Moses are mentioned with only one psalm (see Psalms 88–90). Some of the psalms have been attributed to Ezra, even though he is not named as the writer. Although there were many human writers, we know that the ultimate author was the Holy Spirit. This is clearly affirmed by Peter when he spoke of the Spirit's role in guiding holy men to record these words (2 Peter 1:19–21).

With at least 73 psalms attributed to David, he is the most prolific of the writers. In 2 Samuel 23:1, David is referred to as the "sweet psalmist of Israel." Knowing that David was a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22), we can look to these writings as a model for our own worship of the Lord. They

can be used to praise and thank God in times of personal devotion as well as to minister to the souls of others as you “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching

and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God” (Colossians 3:16).

Studying God’s Word

If the psalms are poetry, why don’t they rhyme?

Take notes as you study the following passages.

Psalms of Praise

Psalm 150

Psalms of Thanksgiving

Psalm 136

Psalms of Lament

Psalm 43

Sampling the Psalms Activity

The psalms are a blend of many types of songs to be sung in worship to God. Within the 150 psalms, we find different types, different authors, and different instructions. Your job is to randomly sample five psalms and complete the information in the sections below. Be prepared to share your findings with the rest of the class. Don't expect to find information for all of the blanks, but fill in everything you can find.

Psalm _____

Author _____

Instructions _____

Occasion _____

Parallelism _____

Theme _____

Psalm _____

Author _____

Instructions _____

Occasion _____

Parallelism _____

Theme _____

Psalm _____

Author _____

Instructions _____

Occasion _____

Parallelism _____

Theme _____

Psalm _____

Author _____

Instructions _____

Occasion _____

Parallelism _____

Theme _____

Psalm _____

Author _____

Instructions _____

Occasion _____

Parallelism _____

Theme _____

Application

1. What have you learned today about the psalms, and how will it help you understand them better?
2. How do you use the psalms in your times of personal study or devotion?
3. How does knowing that there are different types of psalms help us in reading and applying the ideas presented?
4. If the psalms are poetry, do they still contain truth?



Prayer Requests



Solomon Asks for Wisdom

Lesson Focus

King David chose his son Solomon to be king after him and told him to obey God's laws. When God offered to give Solomon whatever he asked for, Solomon asked for understanding to rule his people. God granted his request, making Solomon wiser than anyone before or after him.

Key Passages

1 Kings 1:28–37, 2:10–12, 3:1–28, 4:20–34

What You Will Learn

- The source of Solomon's wisdom
- How Solomon used his wisdom as king

Memory Verse

James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

Prepare to Learn

Scriptural Background

The book of 1 Kings begins at the end of King David's life. After ruling over Israel for 40 years, David died, and his son by Bathsheba, Solomon, became the next king (1 Kings 2:10–12). This was according to God's perfect purpose and plan. David knew that the Lord had ordained this son to be the next king, that this son would have rest from his enemies, and that he would be the one to build a house for God's name (1 Chronicles 22:7–11).

This transition from David to Solomon was not without drama. In opposition to God's will and David's desires, another son of David, Adonijah, presumed to be king. Born next after Absalom but to a different mother, Adonijah shared Absalom's handsome appearance, desire for the throne, and pride (1 Kings 1:5–6). He took over the role without his father's knowledge—through treacherous means (1 Kings 1:18–19). In response to Adonijah's attempted coup, David called for Nathan the prophet, Zadok the priest, and Benaiah, who was over David's bodyguard (1 Chronicles 11:22–25). David commanded that they take Solomon and anoint him as king (1 Kings 1:32–35). Adonijah's supporters left him, and Adonijah fled to the altar, fearing that Solomon would put him to death. Solomon let him go to his house with a warning to show himself worthy (1 Kings 1:49–53).

Adonijah was later put to death when he tried to usurp the throne by asking to marry one of David's concubines (1 Kings 2:13–25).

After Solomon had become king, God appeared to him in a dream and said, "Ask what shall I give you." Solomon's reply reflected his humility and dependence on God. As a young king, Solomon requested an understanding mind from the Lord (1 Kings 3:5–9). He knew that in order to judge the people according to God's will, he must be able to discern between good and evil. Only godly wisdom could accomplish that. God was pleased to give Solomon a wise and understanding heart, making him the wisest man who ever lived (1 Kings 3:12).

An example of Solomon's wisdom is given in the account of the two women who came to Solomon for a verdict. Each woman bore a son, but one baby died. Both women claimed the living baby was hers. Solomon ordered the living baby be cut in half, knowing that the lying woman would not object, but the real mother would. Sure enough, the real mother said to give the baby to the other woman but spare his life, while the lying woman wanted the baby killed. Solomon restored the baby to his true mother, and the people stood in awe of his God-given wisdom (1 Kings 3:16–28).

In addition to wisdom, God promised to give Solomon riches and honor and long life. But long life came with a condition—Solomon was to walk in God’s ways, keeping his commands and statutes as David his father had (1 Kings 3:13–14). God demanded obedience from Solomon, and God demands obedience from us. We have the perfect

example in Jesus, who stands as the model of humble obedience to God’s will—obedient to the point of death on a cross (Philippians 2:3–8).

We serve the same God as the one who abundantly blessed Solomon. And he promises to give us the desires of our hearts as we align our hearts with his (Psalm 37:4).

Historical/Apologetics Background

Have you ever told someone that he or she had the wisdom of Solomon, or have you ever been given that compliment? This is only one of a multitude of phrases in our language drawn from the Bible, and one of several related to Solomon. These phrases, adopted by the world and incorporated into our everyday conversations, illustrate the influence God’s Word has had on the cultures of the past and today.

Solomon’s wisdom was a blessing from God and not the sole product of his own efforts to learn. As such, he was wiser than all of the people of the east and Egypt (1 Kings 4:30). Hearing of the fame of Solomon’s wisdom from the Lord, the queen of Sheba visited him:

Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to test him with hard questions. She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels bearing spices and very much gold and precious stones. And when she came to Solomon, she told

him all that was on her mind. And Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing hidden from the king that he could not explain to her. And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, the food of his table, the seating of his officials, and the attendance of his servants, their clothing, his cupbearers, and his burnt offerings that he offered at the house of the LORD, there was no more breath in her (1 Kings 10:1–5).

The queen blessed the Lord for giving Israel a wise king to execute justice and righteousness. She gave abundant gifts to Solomon, received gifts from Solomon, and returned to her own land.

In 1 Kings 4:29–34, we also learn that Solomon spoke proverbs, wrote many songs, and studied the natural world. God’s gift of wisdom to him was applied to these areas, much of which was recorded in Scripture for our benefit. Solomon’s writings (much of the books of Proverbs,

Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, and some of the psalms) remain an abundant source of wisdom and instruction. Although Solomon failed to heed much of his own advice, it seems that at the end of his life he had come to understand that chasing after anything but God was to

chase a vain thing (see the book of Ecclesiastes). We can learn a valuable lesson from Solomon's life and seek, by God's grace, to be doers of the words recorded in Scripture and not just learn about them in a superficial way that, in the end, will only lead to vanity.

Studying God's Word

Where does wisdom come from?

Take notes as you study the following passages.

Solomon Becomes King

1 Kings 1:28–37

Solomon Receives Wisdom

1 Kings 2:10–12

1 Kings 3:1–28

1 Kings 4:20–34

John 14:9–21

True Wisdom Activity

Examine each of the following passages of Scripture and write a biblical definition of wisdom from the truths you find there. After each reference, record what you learn about wisdom. If needed, read the surrounding context of the references so that you are careful not to take the ideas out of context.

- Proverbs 2:6
- Proverbs 4:7
- Proverbs 9:10
- Psalm 19:7
- James 3:13–17
- 2 Timothy 3:15
- Romans 11:33
- Colossians 2:3
- Colossians 4:5–6

- 1 Corinthians 2:4-5, 2:14

Wisdom:

Application

1. Why is it important to remember that wisdom only comes from God?

2. What are some practical ways that we can seek wisdom?

3. In what ways has the account of Solomon influenced Western society?

4. What relationship between wisdom and obedience can we draw from this lesson?



Prayer Requests



Solomon Builds God's Temple

Lesson Focus

David helped his son Solomon by giving him plans and gathering materials for the temple. Solomon completed the temple building in seven years. When the ark of the covenant was brought to the temple, God sent his cloud to signify his presence dwelling at the temple.

Key Passage

2 Samuel 7:12–13; 1 Chronicles 28:9–19; 1 Kings 6:1–14, 8:1–13, 8:54–61

What You Will Learn

- How the tabernacle compares to the temple
- The importance of God's temple to Israel

Memory Verse

James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

Prepare to Learn

Scriptural Background

You might be able to imagine how David felt. He was living in an opulent palace as king while God's presence was in a tent (2 Samuel 7:1-7). He wanted to honor God by building a temple where God could be worshipped. But God had other plans—David's son Solomon was to build the temple (2 Samuel 7:12-13). David had shed much blood in many wars. Because of this, God did not want him to build his temple (1 Chronicles 22:7-8). However, David did have a part in the building of the temple; he collected gold, silver, and bronze (1 Chronicles 22:1-6). God gave David the understanding and instructions in writing on how to build the temple, and David passed the plans on to Solomon (1 Chronicles 28:11-19).

Like the plans for the tabernacle God gave to Moses, the instructions that David received from God described in amazing detail every pattern and design to be included in the construction of the temple and its fixtures. Take a few minutes to read through 1 Kings 6 and 7:13-51. Imagine yourself walking through this majestic building and examining all the ornate details described. How would you feel standing in a place that was designed by God for his own worship?

The tabernacle was temporary and portable. It was used for worship by the Israelites while they

were wandering in the desert and for another 440 years after that. The temple, however, was a permanent structure built atop a mountain (2 Chronicles 3:1). All the details of the temple, from the towering pillars in the front to the large cherubim in the inner sanctuary, pointed to a God who was majestic and worthy of praise. Stone walls replaced the fabrics and skins that composed the tabernacle, and the interior was paneled with the finest cedar and sculpted with exquisite reminders of God's providence. Rather than one table and lampstand, the temple had 10 of each made of solid gold (2 Chronicles 4:7-8). The altar of incense, also made of solid gold, stood outside the doors to the Most Holy Place. The temple was a constant reminder that God's holiness and majesty demanded a very specific pattern of worship.

Imagine the splendor of the massive rooms, their walls completely covered with gold, carvings, chains, pomegranates, and palms. The light from the 10 lampstands would have danced around the room in brilliant splendor. But that was not so in the Most Holy Place—the only light there would have come from the presence of God dwelling above the ark of the covenant.

When the temple was finally dedicated, the ark of the covenant, containing only the two tablets of

the law given to Moses, was placed in the shadow of the wings of the cherubim (1 Kings 8:6–9). After the priests had placed the ark in the Most Holy Place, God's presence was seen as the cloud of his glory filled not only the space above the mercy seat but the entire temple (1 Kings 8:10–11). God was pleased to dwell among his people in this temple.

For now, this would be the center of worship for the Jews. Here, they would celebrate the feasts, offer their gifts and sacrifices to God, fulfill the national sacrifice on Yom Kippur (The Day of Atonement), and worship God with songs of praise and thanksgiving. Sadly, all of this came to an end 424 years later when God sent Nebuchadnezzar's army to sack Jerusalem in 588 BC because of Israel's sin. The Babylonians leveled the temple, taking its great wealth as a trophy back to Babylon (2 Chronicles 36:17–19).

So, despite all the pageantry and majesty of this first temple, it would not last forever. In fact, the temple would be rebuilt by the exiles under Zerubbabel and completed in

515 BC and then rebuilt again by Herod around 17 BC. The temple that existed during Jesus' ministry was the one restored by Herod, but it was destroyed in AD 70. But God does not demand ornate temple worship today. Jesus made this point clear when he spoke to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. He told her plainly that the place of worship would no longer be in Jerusalem, but true worshippers—those who worship God through his Son, the Savior Jesus Christ—would worship in spirit and truth (John 4:20–24). In fact, the New Testament teaches that we—the church, Christ's body—are the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19; Ephesians 2:19–22).

So, rather than trekking to Jerusalem, Christians are privileged and invited to approach God's throne of grace with great boldness (Hebrews 4:14–16). Because of Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection from the dead, all believers may offer prayers directly to God and receive the grace and mercy he promises. What a glorious truth to share with the whole world!

Historical/Apologetics Background

Four hundred and eighty years after the Israelites left Egypt (1 Kings 6:1), Solomon began building the temple. The foundation was put in place in the fourth year of his kingship and the work was completed seven years later (1 Kings 6:37–38). The temple was constructed of the finest stone. Lumber was imported from around the region, and the finest craftsmen were employed in

the work. Nothing less would be worthy of use in the temple of the Most High God.

Many critics of the Bible suggest that there is no way that Solomon could have amassed so much wealth. Just the amount of gold needed to plate all the walls and ceilings of the temple is staggering, and that is not to mention the tables and lampstands. The amount of bronze for the

pillars, tools, and other furnishings was so vast that its weight was not even recorded (1 Kings 7:47). Skeptics reject the Bible as a source of truth and as a revelation from God, so they naturally discount things they think are absurd. But that is just the point—it is just their opinion. They have no evidence to support their claims apart from their own conjecture.

But those of us who believe the Bible is God’s infallible Word can simply turn there and read that God gave Solomon both riches and honor that exceeded any other king (1 Kings 3:13). In addition to that,

when we consider the friendship between David and Hiram of Tyre (2 Samuel 5:11; 1 Kings 5:1), the treasures that David intentionally stored up during his reign (1 Kings 7:51), and the opulent gifts given to Solomon by the queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:10–12), we see that there was enough wealth at Solomon’s disposal to accomplish the task. God wanted the temple built—and he orchestrated history so that the supplies would be available when the time came. His sovereign hand was at work to supply everything needed to fulfill his plans.

Studying God’s Word

Where is the temple today?

Take notes as you study the following passages.

God’s Promise to David

1 Chronicles 28:9–19

Exodus 25:8–9

Solomon Builds the Temple

1 Kings 6:1–14

1 Kings 8:10–11

The Temple Today Activity

While Solomon’s temple was a glorious structure, it is not with us today. In its time, the temple was the center of all of the worship and sacrifice offered to God. However, it was utterly destroyed in 588 BC by the Babylonians. So, where is the temple today where we are to worship?

Read these passages and answer the question below:

1 Corinthians 3:16

2 Corinthians 6:16

Ephesians 2:20–22

1 Peter 2:4–5

Hebrews 3:4–6

John 4:19–24

What do these passages teach us about worshipping at a temple today?

Application

1. What do the similarities in the temple and the tabernacle tell us about the character of God?

2. Many skeptics doubt the details of the building of the temple based on the amount of wealth involved. Is this a reasonable objection to trusting the Bible?

3. If you have never thought of yourself as a priest or a temple, how might adopting that perspective help you to honor God more with your life?

4. God set out a very specific pattern of worship for the Israelites, involving many details. Would following that type of pattern make you a more fervent worshipper of God?



Prayer Requests



Wisdom from God

Lesson Focus

True wisdom comes only from God. God gave Solomon wisdom, and Solomon wrote many proverbs, which are wise sayings to help us live in a way that pleases God. The book of Proverbs gives good advice on many practical subjects, such as being a good friend, honoring parents, choosing our words wisely, working hard, and being humble.

Key Passages

Proverbs 1:1–7, 2:1–9, 9:10, 19:1–29; Colossians 2:1–3, 2 Timothy 3:16, 1 Corinthians 2:10–15

What You Will Learn

- The source of all wisdom
- Different things we can learn from Proverbs

Memory Verse

James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

Prepare to Learn

Scriptural Background

God blessed Solomon with wisdom. In fact, God gave Solomon a wise and understanding heart such that he was the wisest man who ever lived (1 Kings 3:12). This wisdom came in response to Solomon's request as a young king for wisdom from God to judge the people properly and according to God's will. As a young king, he demonstrated his humble dependence on God. He knew that in order to properly discern between good and evil he would need godly wisdom (1 Kings 3:6–9).

Using the wisdom he gave to Solomon, God inspired the writing of the book of Proverbs, most of which was written by Solomon. The proverbs give us basic godly principles for life in simple, straightforward language. They deal with all aspects of life: money, time, friendships, lust, murder, laziness, theft, personal habits, faith, trusting God, etc. These statements are often not meant as absolutes but as general principles and instructions from God.

Care should be taken while studying the proverbs to compare scripture with scripture before conclusions are drawn. For example, Proverbs 22:4 says, "The reward for humility and fear of the LORD is riches and honor and life." But is every humble Christian rich? Unfortunately, many teachers take passages like this and teach them as absolute promises of

material wealth. We must be careful that our understanding of each of these nuggets of wisdom is applied alongside the whole counsel of God.

The opening lines from Solomon make it clear that it is the fear of the Lord that brings knowledge and understanding, which we need to interpret Scripture (Proverbs 1:7). Solomon repeatedly instructs his sons, the immediate audience of much of the book of Proverbs, to seek wisdom and understanding from God—the source of all wisdom. He tells them to call out, to raise their voice, to seek, and to search for wisdom as for hidden treasures (Proverbs 2:1–5). The truths contained in God's Word are there, but we must be diligent to search them out, to understand them, to meditate on them, and to apply them to our lives. None of this can happen apart from God's grace, which gives us the desire and ability to understand his truths.

As stated above, Proverbs teaches repeatedly that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 1:7, 2:5, 3:7, 9:10). That same fear of the Lord—reverence for who God is and fear of his wrath and judgment—will lead us to Christ in whom we find all the treasures and fullness of understanding and wisdom (Colossians 2:2–3). As we set our minds on Christ and meditate on how he is the perfect example of wisdom, we begin to understand better how

to behave in a way that will honor God. Ultimately, true godly wisdom will come in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. And this will happen only through searching the Scriptures in a way that will show ourselves approved to God (2 Timothy 2:15).

Apart from faith, nothing that we do pleases God (Hebrews 11:6). The proverbs offer wise and universal principles for living that people can put into practice, regardless of whether they have submitted their lives to Christ or not. And in many cases, according to God's goodness, living by these principles will provide benefits to both Christians and non-Christians. However, these blessings rendered to non-Christians are temporary.

Historical/Apologetics Background

Much of the book of Proverbs was likely written early in Solomon's reign. Scripture tells us that Solomon often failed to heed his own advice, and later in life, his heart was disloyal to the Lord (1 Kings 11:4). You might think that, being the wisest man on the planet, he would never make a mistake. Well, that just wasn't the case. Have you ever done something that you knew wasn't what God intended for you? Have you ever offered someone advice and then done the opposite yourself? This seems to be the case with Solomon. He knew it was wrong to offer sacrifices to other gods, but he did it (1 Kings 3:3). He knew God forbade the king to have multiple wives, but he married many (1 Kings 11:1-10). He knew that God

The proverbs instruct on moral and right behavior. We must be aware that our behavior is not what brings us favor in the eyes of God. Nothing we do can commend us to God. It is only through the perfect obedience of Christ on our behalf that we are considered righteous in his eyes.

Obedience to God through works is pleasing to him, but our salvation is founded solely on the grace of God through the gift of faith—not by works (Ephesians 2:8-10). Gratitude for our salvation based on what Christ has done, and the fact that we are new creatures in Christ with new desires that want to honor and please him, will encourage (and enable) right behavior lived out according to the wisdom of Proverbs.

himself was the only true source of fulfillment, yet he sought it within God's creation. We see in his later writing, the book of Ecclesiastes, that Solomon lamented the time and energy he squandered pursuing the things of the world and neglecting the things of God (Ecclesiastes 2). In fact, Solomon strongly warned the next generations to follow God to avoid the sinful mistakes he had made.

As you examine cultures around the world, you will find the wisdom of the ages preserved in various forms. Proverbs have been passed down through the generations in verbal and written form. You can find an example by simply visiting your local Chinese restaurant! While there may be some truth to many of

these proverbs, they are born out of experience rather than wisdom from God. Because they are not grounded in a fear of the Lord (Proverbs 1:7, 2:5-6), those proverbs are worldly wisdom, not godly wisdom.

Another problem with many cultural proverbs is that they are often equated with biblical proverbs. If you took a survey, many people would not be able to tell the difference. For example, the phrase “God

helps those who help themselves,” is thought by many to be from the Bible when, in fact, it is the worldly wisdom found in *Poor Richard's Almanac*. This is why we must constantly check everything that we hear against Scripture and equip others to do the same. Only as we look to Christ and the truths found in the Word of God can we truly exercise wisdom.

Studying God's Word

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step – Proverbs 32:7

Take notes as you study the following passages.

Where Wisdom Comes From

Proverbs 1:1-7

Proverbs 9:10

How We Get Wisdom

Proverbs 2:1-9

2 Timothy 3:16

Colossians 2:1–3

1 Corinthians 2:10–15

Mining for Truth Activity

Many people doubt that the Bible is useful today. After all, it was written thousands of years ago, so how could it have any real application today? Read through Proverbs 19. In the space below, write down the different topics that you find addressed.

Application

1. What has changed in your understanding of the proverbs as a result of this lesson?

2. How could memorizing a proverb about a specific sin you are struggling with help you to overcome that sinful pattern?
3. Since the book of Proverbs is not arranged topically, how would you go about finding proverbs that deal with various ideas?
4. What sources of counterfeit wisdom—the wisdom that comes from the world, not Christ—have you been attracted to in the past (or present)? How can you distinguish between godly wisdom and worldly wisdom?



Prayer Requests



Israel Is Divided

Lesson Focus

Solomon disobeyed God's commands and let his many wives turn him to idolatry. As punishment, God said that his kingdom would be torn away. This happened when Solomon's son Rehoboam lost the kingdom to Jeroboam. The nation was divided into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah.

Key Passages

Deuteronomy 17:15–17; 1 Kings 11:1–4, 11:11–13, 12:13–15, 12:20–21, 12:24

What You Will Learn

- Why God became angry with Solomon
- How the kingdom was divided

Memory Verse

James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

Prepare to Learn

Scriptural Background

God warned them it would happen. Before the Israelites even came into the promised land, God commanded that the future king should not gather wives and horses for himself or amass great wealth (Deuteronomy 17:14–17). When the people cried out for a king, God warned them through Samuel that a king would abuse them, making their sons and daughters his servants and taking their land and its produce (1 Samuel 8:9–18). God had been their king, but now they would be ruled by a descendant of Adam—a man with a sinful heart.

Although Solomon's reign started off well, he eventually fell into sin. He disobeyed God and did all the things God had warned that the king should not do. Solomon had many horses imported from Egypt and Kue (1 Kings 10:28). He gathered massive amounts of gold into his treasury, counting silver as a common metal (1 Kings 10:16–23). As a way to secure alliances, Solomon married women from all the lands surrounding his kingdom and loved many who were from the foreign nations with whom God had prohibited the Israelites to intermarry. In fact, he had 700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Kings 11:1–3). Solomon's sinful heart led him to violate God's clear commands, and the result was just as God had said—Solomon turned to worshipping the gods of his wives

(1 Kings 11:4). Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord. Sadly, this phrase would become a common refrain regarding the kings of Israel.

As a result of his polygamous relationships and idolatrous sin, God appeared to Solomon to deliver a message of judgment: the kingdom would be torn away from him and given to his servant (1 Kings 11:9–11). And yet, even in this punishment, God demonstrated his mercy and faithfulness. For the sake of God's promise to David, God would wait until after Solomon's death. Solomon's son would be the one from whom the kingdom would be taken, yet one tribe would remain under his rule for David's sake (1 Kings 11:12–13).

After Solomon's death, his son Rehoboam took his place on the throne (1 Kings 11:43). Jeroboam, a servant who had fled to Egypt to escape Solomon, returned. Ahijah, a prophet from Shiloh, had told Jeroboam that the kingdom would be divided and that 10 tribes would be given to him (Jeroboam) and only one tribe would remain with Rehoboam (Solomon's son) (1 Kings 11:29–32). Jeroboam returned to Israel to serve as the advocate and spokesperson for the people before Rehoboam. The people requested that Rehoboam lighten the burdensome service his father, Solomon, had put on them (1 Kings 12:1–5).

King Rehoboam sought counsel. He received differing opinions from the old men who counseled his father and the young men who grew up with him, and his answer revealed just how dark his heart was. Rejecting the counsel of the old men, he announced that he would not lighten the load but would add to their burdens and oppress them even more wickedly than Solomon had (1 Kings 12:5–11).

The people would have served a just leader, but they rebelled against Rehoboam because of the severity of his answer. We see a vivid picture of God’s sovereignty in the affairs of men as we read that “the king did not listen to the people, for it was a turn of affairs brought about by the LORD that he might fulfill his word, which the LORD spoke by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat” (1 Kings 12:15).

This was God’s plan. God was the one who orchestrated these events. God used Rehoboam’s foolish actions to cause the people to rebel against his kingship. God used the sinful heart of man to bring about

his purpose in the world. How reassuring it is to know that in a world tossed to and fro by many different political leaders, God controls the hearts of the kings. He holds those hearts in his hands—and he turns them wherever he wishes (Proverbs 21:1). What a relief to know that God is in the heavens and he is doing whatever he pleases (Psalm 115:3), and whatever he pleases is just (Genesis 18:25).

From this point forward, the Israelites would be divided and ruled by different kings. Only the tribe of Judah remained under the authority of the line of David, and its capital was Jerusalem (1 Kings 12:20–21). The southern kingdom is usually referred to as Judah throughout the rest of the Old Testament. The northern kingdom—consisting of the remaining 10 tribes—became known as Israel. The tribe of Benjamin had divided land (and loyalties). And since the Levites did not acquire tribal land but resided in the Levitical cities, both kingdoms contained descendants from the tribe of Levi.

Historical/Apologetics Background

Polygamy was not uncommon at the time of Solomon. Indeed, it was a sign of wealth and status. Solomon would have taken many of his wives as symbols of treaties with other nations or tribes, but this was against God’s commands to him. Solomon had written in the book of Proverbs about avoiding the sexual temptations of women, but he fell into a sinful pattern and

was led to worship the gods that his wives served. He built places of worship for Ashtoreth, the fertility goddess of the Canaanites; Molech, the Ammonite god who received child sacrifice; and Chemosh, the Moabite god who also received child sacrifice. It is clear that Solomon engaged not only in marital polygamy but also in spiritual polygamy.

On top of those sins, Solomon had taken much of his wealth from the people. His son Rehoboam compounded that sin by seeking to oppress the people even more. From that point forward, there was constant strife between the north and the south. As we move forward through Israel's history, we will get a brief overview of some of the troubles in each of the kingdoms as different men come and go as kings and

as God calls his prophets to deliver his word. Like Solomon, the kings of Israel and Judah will be remembered in Scripture for how they obeyed God's laws—if they were faithful or unfaithful, righteous or evil. Through all of Israel's tumultuous history, we see that God is in control and that he was working all of these events together in a way that would ultimately lead to the coming of the perfect king—Jesus.

Studying God's Word

Who would be the perfect king?

Take notes as you study the following passages.

Solomon's Disobedience

1 Kings 11:1–13

Deuteronomy 17:14–17

1 Kings 11:41–43

Rehoboam's Foolishness

1 Kings 12:1–20

Object Lessons Activity

Read 1 Kings 11:26–40 and answer the following questions.

1. Who was Jeroboam?
2. Who was Ahijah?
3. What object did Ahijah use to prophesy about the future?
4. Why was it torn into 12 pieces?
5. What is important about Jerusalem?
6. Why did Jeroboam go to Egypt?
7. In light of all that we have studied today, how was Rehoboam's harsh response to the Israelites "a turn of affairs brought about by the Lord" (1 Kings 12:15)?

Application

1. How do the actions of Solomon and Rehoboam expose their sin of unbelief?
2. What are some of the things in your life (or in our society) that you know are forbidden, but you keep toying with in unbelief, thinking that they will bring pleasure rather than destruction?
3. Knowing that Rehoboam's bad decision brought about war and division among the Israelites for centuries to come, how can we draw an analogy to help people understand the universal effects of sin that came through Adam to all his descendants?
4. Why do we, as people, tend to put so much trust in what a new king (president/governor/senator/council member) can do to change the future?
5. How does knowing that King Jesus is coming back to fully establish his kingdom give you hope for the future?



Prayer Requests
