

## The Books of 1 and 2 Samuel, Teacher's Guide

### Lesson 18: David King Over All Israel; Jerusalem Taken

#### 2 Samuel 4:1-5:25

##### Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

The aim of this lesson is to let the class see a kingdom established by God and a king who keeps depending on Him. David is finally made king over all Israel, takes Jerusalem, grows great, and yet keeps inquiring of the LORD. Lead the class to fix on the controlling sentence, the LORD God of hosts was with him, and to learn that all true growth and success in God's service flow from His presence, not our ability.

Press the shepherd-king theme and let it open onto Christ. David is called to feed God's people, and the city he takes becomes the place where God sets His name and where the Christ is at last revealed. Point the class forward, reverently and carefully, to the greater Son of David, who reigns now at God's right hand over His kingdom, the church (Acts 2; Colossians 1:13), and who is the good Shepherd of His flock.

Guard against two errors. First, do not let the taking of Jerusalem become a charter for premillennial or political hopes; the kingdom Christ established is His church, and He reigns now, not from a future earthly throne (Acts 2:29-36; Colossians 1:13). Second, do not read New Testament specifics anachronistically into David's life. Hold up the abiding lessons, written for our instruction, of clean hands, dependence on God, and the danger of presuming on Him once we feel strong.

##### Question 1

##### Student Question:

*When two captains murdered Ishbosheth and brought his head to David expecting reward, David executed them instead (4:5-12). What does this repeated refusal to build his kingdom on bloodshed reveal about God and the way He establishes His purposes?*

##### Commentary and Teaching Notes

Chapter 4 gives us one final test of David's heart before the crown comes to him whole. With Abner dead, the house of Saul is collapsing. Two captains, Rechab and Baanah, slip into Ishbosheth's house at noon, murder him in his bed, and carry his head all the way to David at Hebron, presenting it as a service: "the LORD hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his seed" (4:8). They expect gratitude and reward.

They have made the Amalekite's mistake all over again. David's answer is swift and unsparing. He reminds them that he had already executed the man who merely claimed to have killed Saul,

how much more wicked men who have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed (4:11). He has them put to death.

Once again David refuses to let his kingdom be built on a single act of treachery. The path to the throne is now clear, the last rival is gone, but David will not profit from murder or let murderers imagine they are doing God's will. He guards the throne God is giving him from being stained at its very foundation.

The deep lesson is that God does not need our sin to accomplish His purposes. He had promised David the kingdom; He did not need Rechab and Baanah's knives to deliver it. God establishes His will in His own righteous way, and those who try to help Him along by wicked means find themselves opposed, not rewarded.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- David again refused to build his kingdom on treachery, executing the murderers (4:9–12).
- Rechab and Baanah repeated the Amalekite's error, assuming David wanted his rival dead by any means.
- God does not need our sin to accomplish His promises and purposes.
- Those who try to advance God's will by wicked means set themselves against Him.
- David guarded the throne God was giving him from being stained at its foundation.

### **Discussion Prompts**

- Discuss why David executed the murderers rather than rewarding them.
- Ask what it means that God does not need our sin to fulfill His promises.
- Explore how David kept the foundation of his throne clean.

### **Question 2**

#### **Student Question:**

*Have you ever been tempted to use a wrong means to reach a good or even God-given end? How does David's refusal challenge the way you pursue what you want?*

### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

This question turns David's refusal toward a temptation we all know: using a wrong means to reach a good end. The captains were not pursuing an evil goal; clearing the way for God's anointed king might even sound noble. Their sin was in the means, murder, treachery, blood. And David condemned them for it.

We are remarkably skilled at justifying wrong means when the end seems good. A small lie to protect a relationship. A shady shortcut to provide for the family. A bit of manipulation to advance a cause we believe is the Lord's. The goal blinds us to the wrongness of the road we take to reach it.

But God cares as much about the how as the what. He will not be served by sin. The end does not sanctify the means; a good destination reached by a sinful road is still sin, and God is not honored by it. David understood this, and it kept his hands clean even when wrong means would have served his interests.

Press the class gently here. Where are we tempted to do a small wrong to reach a good end? The answer is almost always to refuse the wrong means and trust God with the end, exactly as David did. We are responsible for our obedience; God will take care of the outcome.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- We are skilled at justifying wrong means when the end seems good or even godly.
- God cares as much about the means as the end; the end does not sanctify the means.
- A good goal reached by a sinful road is still sin and does not honor God.
- Our task is obedience; the outcome belongs to God.

### **Discussion Prompts**

- Ask members to name a time they were tempted to use a wrong means for a good end.
- Discuss why the end never justifies sinful means.
- Explore how trusting God with outcomes frees us to refuse wrong shortcuts.

### **Question 3**

#### **Student Question:**

*All the tribes came to David at Hebron and anointed him king, recalling that the LORD had said, "Thou shalt feed my people Israel" (5:1-5). What does it mean that a king is to feed, to shepherd, God's people, and how does this shape our understanding of godly leadership?*

### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

Now the long-awaited moment arrives. All the tribes of Israel come to David at Hebron, acknowledging their kinship with him and recalling that even in Saul's day David had led Israel out and in. And they rehearse the word of the LORD: "Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel" (5:2). They anoint him king over all Israel; he is thirty, and will reign forty years.

Notice the verb the LORD chose: feed. The king is not primarily to dominate, tax, and command; he is to shepherd. The word recalls David's own beginnings as a shepherd of literal sheep, and it sets the pattern for what a godly ruler is, a shepherd who guides, protects, and provides for the flock entrusted to him.

This is a radically different vision of leadership from the kings of the nations, who lorded it over their people. Israel had once asked for a king like the nations and gotten Saul. Now God gives

them a shepherd-king, and in so doing He reveals His own heart, for the LORD Himself is the Shepherd of Israel.

This shepherd-king points straight to Christ. Ezekiel would later promise one Shepherd, My servant David, to feed God's flock (Ezekiel 34:23), a promise fulfilled in Jesus, the good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep (John 10:11) and the chief Shepherd over His church (1 Peter 5:4). Godly leadership, in every sphere, is shepherding after the pattern of Christ.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- The king's calling was to feed, to shepherd, God's people, not merely to rule them (5:2).
- Shepherd-leadership guides, protects, and provides, in contrast to the domineering kings of the nations.
- The shepherd-king reflects God's own heart as the Shepherd of Israel.
- David the shepherd-king points forward to Christ, the good and chief Shepherd (John 10:11; 1 Peter 5:4).
- Godly leadership in every sphere follows the shepherding pattern of Christ.

### **Discussion Prompts**

- Discuss the difference between shepherding people and merely ruling them.
- Ask how the verb feed reshapes our picture of godly leadership.
- Explore how David's shepherd-kingship points to Christ the good Shepherd.

### **Question 4**

#### **Student Question:**

*Whom has God given you to care for, in your family, the church, or your circle, and what would it look like to shepherd them rather than merely manage or rule them?*

### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

This question brings the shepherd-king ideal home to ordinary believers. Most of us are not kings, but God has placed people in our care, children, a spouse, a class, younger Christians, a team at work, neighbors, fellow members. Over each of these we exercise some kind of influence, and the question is whether we shepherd them or merely manage and rule them.

To shepherd is to know the people in our care, to go before them by example, to protect them from harm, to provide for their good, and to lead them gently toward God. To merely rule is to use people for our ends, to command without caring, to drive rather than lead. The difference is the difference between Saul and David, and ultimately between the hireling and the good Shepherd.

This is especially the calling of those who lead in the Lord's church. Elders are explicitly called to shepherd the flock, taking the oversight not by constraint but willingly, not as lords over God's

heritage but as examples (1 Peter 5:2–3). But the shepherd's heart is asked of every believer who has anyone in their care.

Invite the class to name one person or group God has given them, and to consider one concrete way to shepherd rather than merely rule them this week, perhaps by knowing them better, serving them, protecting them, or leading them gently toward Christ.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- God has given every believer some people to care for and influence.
- Shepherding knows, protects, provides, and leads gently toward God; ruling merely commands.
- Elders especially are called to shepherd, not lord over, the flock (1 Peter 5:2–3).
- The shepherd's heart is the heart of Christ reproduced in His people.

### **Discussion Prompts**

- Ask each member to name someone God has given them to care for.
- Discuss the practical difference between shepherding and merely managing people.
- Explore one concrete way to shepherd that person or group this week.

### **Question 5**

#### **Student Question:**

*Scripture says of David's rise, "David went on, and grew great, and the LORD God of hosts was with him" (5:10). What does this teach us about the true source of any growth, strength, or success in God's service?*

### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

At the center of these chapters stands a sentence that interprets everything else: "And David went on, and grew great, and the LORD God of hosts was with him" (5:10). David is rising, taking Jerusalem, establishing his throne, gaining power and renown. But the writer will not let us credit David's talent. The reason for all of it is tucked into the last clause: the LORD was with him.

This is the quiet secret of David's whole life. As a boy facing Goliath, the difference was that the battle was the LORD's. As a fugitive, he survived because God preserved him. Now as a king he grows great, and the explanation is the same. The greatness is real, but its source is the presence of God, not the strength of David.

It is worth pausing over how easily this clause could be lost. The world would write the story differently, the brilliant general, the shrewd king, the man who seized his moment. Scripture insists on a different reading. The decisive factor was never David; it was God with David.

This is the true source of any growth, strength, or success in God's service. Whatever good we accomplish, whatever fruit we bear, whatever influence we gain, the explanation that matters is that the Lord was with us. Jesus said it plainly: without Me ye can do nothing (John 15:5). The honest believer learns to read his own life the way Scripture reads David's.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- The decisive factor in David's rise was the presence of God, not David's ability (5:10).
- Scripture deliberately credits God where the world would credit human talent.
- All true growth and fruit in God's service flow from His presence with us (John 15:5).
- The same was true of David as a boy, a fugitive, and a king; God with him was always the reason.
- The honest believer learns to read his own successes as evidence that the Lord was with him.

### **Discussion Prompts**

- Discuss how the world would tell David's story versus how Scripture tells it.
- Ask what it means that without Christ we can do nothing (John 15:5).
- Explore how to read our own successes as evidence of God's presence.

### **Question 6**

#### **Student Question:**

*When you succeed at something, how readily do you give God the credit, and how might you cultivate a heart that says, like David, the LORD was with me?*

#### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

This question presses the great sentence into our own hearts. When something goes well for us, a project succeeds, a child turns out well, a goal is reached, where does our mind run first? Honesty usually finds it running to ourselves, to our effort, our planning, our ability. The instinct to take the credit is deep and quiet.

David's life invites a different reflex. Imagine reaching the end of a good day or a hard accomplishment and saying, with David, the LORD God of hosts was with me. Not as false modesty, but as honest theology. Our gifts, our opportunities, the strength to work, the favorable circumstances, every bit of it came from God, and apart from His presence none of it would have borne fruit.

Cultivating this heart is mostly a matter of practiced gratitude. We can train ourselves, at the moment of success, to pause and trace the good thing back to God, thanking Him specifically. Over time the reflex shifts from self-congratulation to thanksgiving, and pride loses its foothold.

Ask the class what would change if they truly believed their best successes were because the Lord was with them. It would dissolve both pride in success and despair in failure, anchoring the whole of life in the faithful presence of God rather than the fragile strength of self.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- Our instinct is to credit ourselves when things go well.
- Saying the LORD was with me is honest theology, not false modesty.
- Practiced, specific gratitude trains the heart to trace good things back to God.
- Believing our successes are God's presence dissolves both pride and despair.

### **Discussion Prompts**

- Ask members where their minds run first when something goes well.
- Discuss how to cultivate the reflex of crediting God for success.
- Explore what would change if we truly believed our successes show God was with us.

### **Question 7**

#### **Student Question:**

*David captured the stronghold of Zion, and it became the city of David (5:6–9), the place where God would set His name and where, in time, the Christ would be revealed. How does the taking of Jerusalem point us forward to the greater Son of David and His kingdom?*

#### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

David's first major act as king over all Israel is to take Jerusalem. The Jebusites held the stronghold of Zion and taunted that even the blind and lame could keep David out (5:6). David captured the fortress, and it became the city of David, his new capital, strategically placed between the tribes and belonging to none of them.

The significance of this city unfolds across the whole of Scripture. To Jerusalem David would bring the ark; here Solomon would build the temple; here God would set His name and dwell among His people. And here, centuries later, the greater Son of David would teach, die, rise, and from here His kingdom would go out to all nations (Luke 24:46–47; Acts 1:8).

So the taking of Zion is more than a military victory; it is a signpost. The city of David points us to the city and kingdom of David's greater Son. We must read this carefully and reverently, without slipping into hopes of a future earthly political kingdom centered on physical Jerusalem. The Scriptures themselves point us higher.

For the writer of Hebrews tells believers, “ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (Hebrews 12:22). The earthly Zion David took foreshadows the heavenly Zion, the church of the living God, over which Christ reigns now. David's city points

us not backward to a rebuilt earthly throne but upward to the King who reigns at God's right hand.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- David captured Zion, which became the city of David and the place where God set His name (5:6–9).
- Jerusalem becomes the stage for the temple, the ark, and ultimately the death and resurrection of Christ.
- The earthly Zion foreshadows the heavenly Zion, the church of the living God (Hebrews 12:22).
- We must not read this as pointing to a future earthly political kingdom in physical Jerusalem.
- The city of David points upward to the kingdom of David's greater Son, who reigns now.

### **Discussion Prompts**

- Discuss the unfolding significance of Jerusalem across Scripture.
- Ask how the earthly Zion foreshadows the heavenly Zion (Hebrews 12:22).
- Explore why we read this as pointing to Christ's present kingdom, not a future earthly one.

### **Question 8**

#### **Student Question:**

*In what ways do you find yourself longing for an earthly kingdom or earthly security, and how does fixing your hope on Christ's present, spiritual kingdom reorder those longings?*

#### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

This question gently confronts a longing we all feel: the pull toward an earthly kingdom, earthly security, earthly permanence. We want a city that cannot be shaken, a place of safety, a settled and visible success. That longing is not wrong in itself, but it is so easily fixed on the wrong object, on the things of this world that cannot finally hold us.

Israel's hope was bound up with the city of David, and there is something in us that still wants a Jerusalem we can see and defend. But the New Testament continually lifts our eyes higher. We are citizens of a kingdom not of this world (John 18:36), translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Colossians 1:13), seeking a city whose builder and maker is God (Hebrews 11:10).

Fixing our hope on Christ's present, spiritual kingdom reorders our earthly longings. We can hold our earthly security loosely because our true citizenship is secure. We need not grasp for a permanence the world cannot give, because we have come to the heavenly Jerusalem already. This frees us from anxiety and from idolizing earthly comfort.

Ask the class to name the earthly kingdoms they are tempted to trust, financial security, a comfortable home, a stable nation, a settled life, and to consider how resting in Christ's unshakable kingdom would loosen the grip of those lesser hopes.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- We naturally long for earthly kingdoms, security, and permanence.
- The New Testament lifts our hope to Christ's kingdom, not of this world (John 18:36; Colossians 1:13).
- Believers seek a city whose builder and maker is God (Hebrews 11:10).
- Resting in Christ's unshakable kingdom loosens the grip of lesser, earthly hopes.

### **Discussion Prompts**

- Ask members which earthly kingdoms or securities they are most tempted to trust.
- Discuss how citizenship in Christ's kingdom reorders earthly longings.
- Explore how resting in an unshakable kingdom frees us from anxiety.

### **Question 9**

#### **Student Question:**

*Even as established king, when the Philistines came up David twice inquired of the LORD before battle and obeyed exactly, even waiting for the sound in the mulberry trees (5:17–25). What does this teach us about the danger of presuming on God once we feel strong, and our continual need to seek Him, especially when the greater Son of David now reigns and calls us to live under His rule?*

#### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

The heaviest question fixes on a striking detail at the chapter's close. David is now king over all Israel, established in his capital, at the height of his power. When the Philistines come up against him, he could easily presume; he is a seasoned warrior and an anointed king. Instead, twice he inquires of the LORD before battle: "Shall I go up to the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand?" (5:19). And twice he obeys exactly what God says.

The two battles are instructive. In the first, God says go up, and David wins. In the second, God gives different instructions, do not charge straight in, but circle around and wait for the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, for then the LORD has gone out before you (5:23–24). David does not assume that what worked last time will work again. He asks afresh, and he waits, even when waiting for a sound in the trees must have tested his nerve.

Here is the great safeguard against the pride that ruined Saul and that threatens every successful person. The danger is that once we feel strong, we stop seeking God. We presume on

past victories, lean on our own competence, and quietly drop the habit of inquiring. David, at his strongest, kept asking. That is why he kept winning, and why his heart stayed soft.

And this points us to our own day. The greater Son of David now reigns at God's right hand, having received all authority (Acts 2:36; Matthew 28:18). We live under His rule, and our whole life is to be lived in dependent obedience to Him, seeking His will in His word, refusing to presume on Him no matter how strong or settled we feel. The proud, self-sufficient heart drifts from God; the dependent, inquiring heart abides in the King and bears fruit (John 15:5).

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- At the height of his power, David still inquired of God before battle rather than presuming (5:19–25).
- David did not assume past success guaranteed the same method; he asked afresh and obeyed exactly.
- The great danger of strength and success is to stop seeking God and lean on ourselves, the very drift that ruined Saul.
- The dependent, inquiring heart abides in God; the self-sufficient heart drifts from Him (John 15:5).
- The greater Son of David now reigns at God's right hand, and we live under His rule in dependent obedience (Acts 2:36; Matthew 28:18).
- This is Christ's present kingdom, the church, not a future earthly throne (Colossians 1:13).

### **Discussion Prompts**

- Discuss why success and strength make us more likely to stop seeking God.
- Ask why David inquired afresh rather than repeating his previous strategy.
- Explore what it means to live in dependent obedience to the reigning Son of David.

### **Question 10**

#### **Student Question:**

*Name one specific way the Lord Jesus, the Son of David who reigns now at God's right hand, is using this passage to form your heart toward dependence, humility, or obedience right now.*

### **Commentary and Teaching Notes**

The capstone gathers the lesson into one present, personal resolve. We have watched David refuse wrong means, receive the kingdom as a shepherd, grow great because God was with him, take Zion, and keep inquiring of God even at his strongest. The point is not to admire David but to be formed into the likeness of the One David foreshadowed.

Jesus is the Son of David who reigns now, not from an earthly palace but from the right hand of God, having received all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28:18; Acts 2:33–36). He is

the good Shepherd who feeds His people, the King of the heavenly Zion, the One in whom we can do all things and without whom we can do nothing. Every thread of this lesson runs to Him.

Ask each member to name one specific way the Lord is using this passage right now. Perhaps it is to refuse a wrong means and trust God with an outcome. Perhaps it is to credit God for a recent success instead of themselves. Perhaps it is to shepherd someone in their care, or to break the habit of presuming on God now that life feels settled and strong.

Becoming like Christ is concrete. It happens as we let a specific truth do specific work in a specific place. Encourage the class to leave with one named way they are surrendering to the shaping hand of the reigning Son of David, learning dependence, humility, and obedience under His rule.

### **Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues**

- The goal is transformation into Christ's likeness, not mere admiration of David.
- Jesus, the Son of David, reigns now at God's right hand over His kingdom, the church (Acts 2:33–36; Colossians 1:13).
- He is the good Shepherd and the King of the heavenly Zion in whom we find all our strength.
- Spiritual formation is concrete, named, and present: dependence, humility, and obedience under Christ's rule.

### **Discussion Prompts**

- Ask each member to name one specific way Jesus is forming them through this lesson.
- Discuss how every thread of this lesson points to the reigning Son of David.
- Close in prayer for dependent, humble, obedient hearts under Christ's rule.