

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

Lesson 24: David Restored; His Last Words and Mighty Men

2 Samuel 19:1–24:25

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

This is the capstone lesson of the entire study of 1 and 2 Samuel, so the aim is twofold: to teach these closing chapters faithfully, and to help the class look back across the whole sweep of Saul and David and see what God has been showing us. Move through David's restoration, his song and last words, the mighty men, and the census and altar, but keep one eye always on the horizon, on the greater Son of David toward whom every thread is reaching. Let the class feel that they are standing at the end of a long road, looking back with gratitude and forward with hope.

Give the heaviest weight, in Question 9 and throughout, to David's last words and the everlasting covenant. When David speaks of a ruler over men who is just, ruling in the fear of God, like the morning light after rain, he is reaching past himself toward the promised King of 2 Samuel 7. Teach clearly, in a manner consistent with Scripture, that this everlasting covenant is fulfilled in Christ, the greater Son of David, who according to Acts 2 was raised up to sit on David's throne and who reigns now at the right hand of God over His kingdom, the church. This is not a kingdom deferred to some future earthly reign; Christ is King today, and His kingdom has no end.

Finally, let the altar at Araunah's threshing floor carry its weight as both history and foreshadowing. David's sin in numbering the people, the plague, and the costly sacrifice ("neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing") all converge on a hill that would become the temple mount, the place of atonement. Let the history stand on its own, then point reverently forward: the whole story of these books, with all its sin and grace, drives toward the cross, where the true and faithful King offered not an animal but Himself. Bring the class to worship, and to a personal reckoning with how this King is forming them.

Question 1

Student Question:

How does David's gracious treatment of Shimei and Mephibosheth on his return to Jerusalem (chapter 19) display the character of a restored, God-shaped ruler?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

David's return to Jerusalem is a study in the grace of a humbled king. The kingdom is fractured and raw after the rebellion, and David must knit it back together. Watch how he does it. When

Shimei, the man who had cursed and stoned him as he fled, comes groveling for mercy, David spares his life on the day of his return, refusing to let the day of his restoration be stained with vengeance. He has learned that the throne is for serving, not for settling scores.

With Mephibosheth, Saul's crippled grandson, David shows the same generous spirit, restoring him with gracious words even amid a tangle of conflicting stories. And with Barzillai, the old man who had supplied him in exile, David shows honor and gratitude. Through it all we see a ruler shaped by his sufferings, quicker now to mercy, slower to wrath, governing from a chastened and grateful heart rather than wounded pride.

This is what restoration looks like in a real life. David is not the impulsive young hero anymore, nor the self-indulgent king of the Bathsheba years. He is a man who has been broken and put back together, and the mending shows in his mercy. Suffering, rightly received, had softened him. The grace he had received from God was now flowing out of him toward others, even toward those who had wronged him.

We should let this challenge our picture of strength. The world says strength means making enemies pay. David, restored, shows a higher strength: the power to forgive, to be generous, to refuse vengeance when vengeance is in your hand. That kind of strength does not come naturally; it is forged by walking through brokenness with God, and it is the very strength that the greater Son of David would display in perfection.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- A restored, God-shaped ruler governs by mercy rather than vengeance (19:18–23).
- David's sufferings had softened him toward grace, not hardened him toward revenge.
- True restoration shows itself in how we treat those who have wronged us.
- Grace received from God is meant to flow out toward others (Matthew 18:32–33).
- Real strength includes the power to forgive when vengeance lies within reach (Romans 12:19–21).

Discussion Prompts

- How does David's treatment of Shimei reveal the change God had worked in him?
- Why is forgiving when we hold the power to punish a greater strength than vengeance?
- How has God used your own seasons of brokenness to make you more merciful?

Question 2

Student Question:

When you have been wronged and then later held power over the one who wronged you, how have you handled it, and what would mercy like David's require of you?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Most of us, sooner or later, end up holding power over someone who once hurt us. The roles reverse. The person who wounded us now needs something from us, or stands at our mercy, and in that moment our true heart is exposed. Will we use the leverage to make them feel what they made us feel? Or will we, like David with Shimei, choose mercy?

It is a sobering test. The flesh keeps careful accounts and waits for the day of payback. We rehearse the wrong, nurse the grievance, and tell ourselves that justice would be served if we simply gave them what they deserve. But the gospel calls us to a different ledger, to forgive as we have been forgiven, to leave vengeance to God, who alone judges rightly.

This does not mean we deny that real wrong was done, or that we pretend the hurt did not happen. David did not pretend Shimei's cursing was acceptable. It means we refuse to let the wrong define our response, choosing instead the harder, freer path of mercy. Forgiveness is not saying it did not matter; it is releasing our claim to repay, and entrusting the matter to God.

And there is freedom in it. As long as we are waiting to make someone pay, we are still chained to the offense, still living in the wound. Mercy cuts the chain. When David spared Shimei, he was not only being kind to Shimei; he was refusing to let bitterness rule his own heart on the day of his joy. The same freedom is offered to us whenever we choose to forgive.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- When power over a former offender comes to us, our true heart is revealed.
- The flesh keeps accounts and waits for payback; the gospel calls us to release the debt (Ephesians 4:32).
- Forgiveness does not deny the wrong but releases our claim to repay it (Romans 12:19).
- Vengeance keeps us chained to the offense; mercy sets us free.
- Choosing mercy guards our own heart from the rule of bitterness (Hebrews 12:15).

Discussion Prompts

- Have you ever held power over someone who hurt you, and how did you handle it?
- What is the difference between forgiving a wrong and pretending it never happened?
- How does refusing to repay actually free your own heart from the offense?

Question 3

Student Question:

What does David's song of deliverance in chapter 22 reveal about who God is and how He had been faithful across David's whole life?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Chapter 22 is David's great song of deliverance, nearly identical to Psalm 18, and it pours out of a lifetime of being rescued. "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer." The images

tumble out one after another: rock, fortress, shield, horn of salvation, high tower. This is not the theology of a textbook; it is the praise of a man who has actually been pulled out of deep waters again and again, from the lion and the bear, from Goliath, from Saul, from Absalom, from himself.

Notice that David sings this near the end of his life, looking back over the whole journey. He traces the hand of God across decades, naming how the Lord delivered him from his enemies and from the snares of death. The song is an act of memory turned into worship. David refuses to let God's faithfulness be forgotten; he sets it to music so it will be sung and remembered.

The song also reveals who God is. He is not a distant deity but a personal Deliverer who hears, who comes down, who bows the heavens and rides upon the wind to rescue His servant. He is faithful to the faithful, just in His dealings, and mighty to save. David's God is active, near, and committed to His covenant people, and the whole psalm rings with confident, grateful love.

For us, this song is a model and an invitation. We too have a history of deliverances, large and small, if only we will remember them. The God who was David's rock is our rock. And the ultimate deliverance David sang about, rescue from death itself, has been accomplished for us in the resurrection of Christ, the greater Son of David, who has become the horn of our salvation.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- David's song flows from a lifetime of real, personal deliverances (22:2-4).
- God is revealed as a personal, active Deliverer, not a distant deity (22:7-20).
- Worship is fueled by remembering and rehearsing God's faithfulness (Psalm 77:11-12).
- God is faithful, just, and mighty to save His covenant people.
- The ultimate deliverance, rescue from death, is fulfilled in Christ's resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:54-57).

Discussion Prompts

- What images would you reach for to describe how God has been your rock and deliverer?
- How does remembering specific deliverances turn into genuine worship?
- How does the resurrection of Christ deepen David's song of deliverance for us?

Question 4

Student Question:

How well do you remember and rehearse God's deliverances in your own story, and how might doing so reshape your daily walk with Him?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

It is worth asking ourselves how well we remember. David built a memory of God's faithfulness so strong that it became a song. Many of us, by contrast, are quick to forget. We cry out to God

in the crisis, He delivers us, and within weeks we have moved on, the rescue fading from view as the next worry rises. Spiritual forgetfulness is one of the most common and costly diseases of the soul.

Scripture constantly calls God's people to remember, to set up stones of remembrance, to rehearse the mighty acts of the Lord, to tell the next generation. This is not nostalgia; it is fuel. Remembering how God carried us through past valleys gives us courage for present ones. A well-stocked memory of God's faithfulness is one of the believer's greatest defenses against fear and doubt.

There is practical wisdom here. We can keep our own record of God's deliverances, a journal, a list, a regular practice of recounting answered prayers and quiet providences. We can rehearse them in worship and tell them to our children and grandchildren. What we do not record, we tend to lose; what we rehearse, we keep. David's song shows the value of capturing God's faithfulness in a form that endures.

And the practice reshapes our daily walk. A person who regularly remembers how God has come through walks differently into uncertainty, with less panic and more trust. The God who has been faithful is the God who will be faithful. Cultivating a grateful memory is not a sentimental exercise; it is how we keep our hearts steady and our worship warm in the ordinary press of life.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Spiritual forgetfulness is a common and costly disease of the soul (Deuteronomy 8:11–14).
- Scripture repeatedly commands God's people to remember His mighty acts (Psalm 103:2).
- Remembering past deliverances fuels courage for present trials.
- Recording and rehearsing God's faithfulness helps us keep what we would otherwise lose.
- A grateful memory steadies the heart and warms worship in ordinary life.

Discussion Prompts

- How well do you remember and rehearse God's past faithfulness in your life?
- What practical step could help you capture and recall God's deliverances?
- How would a stronger memory of God's faithfulness change the way you face uncertainty?

Question 5

Student Question:

In David's last words (23:1–7), what does he reveal about the everlasting covenant and the just ruler "as the light of the morning," and how is this fulfilled in Christ?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

We now come to the heart of this capstone lesson, David's last words in chapter 23. The aged king, "the sweet psalmist of Israel," gathers his final breath into prophecy. He speaks of a ruler over men who is just, ruling in the fear of God, and he reaches for the most tender image: "he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." This is a portrait of a King whose reign is pure light and life-giving freshness.

Then David anchors his hope in something secure: "he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure." He looks back to the promise of 2 Samuel 7, where God swore that David's throne and house would endure forever. David is dying, his own reign drawing to its flawed close, yet he rests in a covenant that does not depend on him, a covenant that guarantees an everlasting throne and a coming King who will reign in perfect righteousness.

We can say with confidence, in line with the New Testament, where this everlasting covenant lands. The just ruler like the morning light is not finally David, who could only glimpse Him; it is the greater Son of David, Jesus Christ. The angel told Mary that her son would receive "the throne of his father David" and reign over a kingdom with no end. At Pentecost, Peter declared that God had raised Christ up to sit on David's throne, and that this risen and exalted Jesus reigns now at the right hand of God.

This is crucial to grasp rightly. The fulfillment of David's last words is not a future earthly kingdom yet to be set up; it is the present reign of Christ over His kingdom, the church, begun at His resurrection and ascension. Jesus is King today, ruling in righteousness, His kingdom advancing in the world, His throne everlasting. David died looking forward in hope to a King he would not see in his lifetime. We live on the other side of the resurrection, citizens of that very kingdom, under the reign of the just and faithful King whose morning has dawned and will never set.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- David's last words prophesy a just ruler, like the morning light, who reigns in the fear of God (23:3-4).
- The everlasting covenant rests on God's promise in 2 Samuel 7, not on David's own faithfulness (23:5).
- The just King David glimpsed is fulfilled in Jesus, the greater Son of David (Luke 1:32-33).
- The risen Christ reigns now on David's throne at God's right hand, over His kingdom the church (Acts 2:29-36; Colossians 1:13).
- This is a present reign, not a deferred earthly kingdom; Christ is King today and His kingdom has no end (Daniel 2:44; Hebrews 1:8).

Discussion Prompts

- How does the image of the just ruler "as the light of the morning" describe the reign of Christ?

- Why is it good news that the everlasting covenant rests on God's faithfulness rather than ours?
- What does it mean for us to live now under the present reign of the King David could only foresee?

Question 6

Student Question:

What would it mean for you to live today under the reign of the just and faithful King whom David could only glimpse from afar?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

If Christ reigns now as the just King David foresaw, then the question for us is intensely practical: what does it mean to live today under His reign? It is easy to affirm Jesus as King in the abstract and yet live as though we were the rulers of our own lives. The truth of David's last words presses us to actually submit, day by day, to the reign of the righteous King.

Living under His reign means our allegiance has shifted. We belong to His kingdom now, and its claims come before every other loyalty, before nation, family, career, comfort, and self. We order our choices by His will, we measure success by His standards, and we trust His government even when His ways are not our ways. The King who reigns in righteousness asks for our whole-life loyalty.

It also means we live with hope and security. Because the King reigns now and forever, His people are never finally at the mercy of the chaos around us. Kingdoms rise and fall, but His throne is everlasting. When the world feels unstable, we can rest in the unshakable kingdom of which we are citizens, refusing both despair and panic, because our King is on His throne and His covenant is ordered in all things and sure.

And it means we labor with purpose. The kingdom is advancing, and we have been given a part in it, proclaiming the King, living out His righteousness, calling others into His reign. We are not waiting around for the kingdom to begin someday; we are already living in it and serving its King, the just ruler like the morning light, whose reign over our lives is meant to be as real today as it will be in eternity.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Affirming Christ as King in the abstract is not the same as actually submitting to His reign.
- Living under His reign means His kingdom claims priority over every other loyalty (Matthew 6:33).
- The everlasting reign of Christ gives His people hope and security amid worldly chaos (Hebrews 12:28).
- Citizens of the kingdom labor with purpose in its present advance (Matthew 28:18–20).

- His reign over our lives is meant to be a present, daily, practical reality.

Discussion Prompts

- Where are you still living as the ruler of your own life rather than under the reign of Christ?
- How does the everlasting reign of the King steady you amid an unstable world?
- What would deeper, daily submission to the just King look like for you this week?

Question 7

Student Question:

What does the devotion of the mighty men, especially the water from Bethlehem's well (23:13-17), teach us about wholehearted loyalty to God's anointed King?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Chapter 23 also preserves the roll of David's mighty men, and the Spirit took care to record their names and deeds. These were the loyal warriors who stood with David through danger and exile, men of extraordinary courage whose valor was bound up with their devotion to God's anointed king. Their stories shine with a wholehearted loyalty that we are meant to admire and imitate.

The most moving moment is the water from the well of Bethlehem. David, hiding in a cave with the Philistine garrison nearby, sighs aloud for a drink from the well by the gate of Bethlehem. Three of his mighty men hear it, and without being asked, they break through the enemy lines, risking their lives, to draw the water and bring it back. It is a breathtaking act of devotion to their king, born of love rather than duty.

David's response is just as striking. He will not drink it. He pours it out before the Lord, saying it would be like drinking the blood of the men who risked their lives to get it. The water was too costly, too sacred, to consume for himself; it belonged to God. In that gesture David honors both the devotion of his men and the Lord they all served, treating their sacrificial love as something holy.

Here is a portrait of wholehearted loyalty to God's anointed king, and a quiet pointer to our own calling. We serve a greater King than David, the Lord Jesus, the King born in that same Bethlehem. The mighty men show us what undivided devotion looks like: a loyalty that counts no cost too high, that acts out of love, that gives its very best to the King. The question their example raises is whether our devotion to Christ runs that deep.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The mighty men model wholehearted, courageous loyalty to God's anointed king (23:8-12).
- The three who fetched water acted out of love, not mere duty, counting no cost too high (23:13-17).

- David treated their sacrificial devotion as something holy, pouring it out before the Lord.
- Their loyalty to the king was bound up with their devotion to the Lord they served.
- Their example calls us to undivided devotion to the greater King, Christ, born in Bethlehem.

Discussion Prompts

- What strikes you most about the mighty men's devotion to their king?
- Why did David refuse to drink the water, and what does that reveal about him?
- How does the loyalty of the mighty men challenge the depth of your own devotion to Christ?

Question 8

Student Question:

Where is God calling you to a deeper, more sacrificial loyalty to Christ the King, and what is holding you back?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The mighty men press a personal question on us: where is God calling us to deeper, more sacrificial loyalty to Christ the King? It is easy to be a fair-weather follower, devoted when it is convenient and costless. The three who broke through the Philistine lines show us a loyalty that is willing to risk, to sacrifice, to give its best, and that kind of devotion does not come automatically.

We each have our own enemy lines, the points where loyalty to Christ becomes costly. It might be a relationship, a habit, a fear, an ambition, a comfort we are unwilling to surrender. Wholehearted devotion means being willing to break through whatever stands between us and full obedience to our King, to count no cost too high for the One who gave everything for us.

Often what holds us back is not dramatic opposition but quiet self-protection. We keep a part of life walled off, reserved for ourselves, off-limits to the King. We will follow Him here but not there, give Him this but not that. The mighty men held nothing back; they put their lives on the line for a cup of water because their king wanted it. Their abandon exposes the carefulness with which we so often parcel out our devotion.

The call is not to reckless heroics but to a love so real it reorders our priorities and loosens our grip on whatever we have been protecting. The King who reigns is worthy of our whole-hearted, sacrificial loyalty. The honest question is what we are still holding back, and whether His love is enough to make us willing, at last, to break through and give Him all.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Sacrificial loyalty to Christ does not come automatically; it must be chosen (Luke 9:23).
- Each of us has enemy lines where loyalty to Christ becomes costly.

- Self-protection often keeps a part of our life walled off from the King's claim.
- Wholehearted devotion reorders our priorities and loosens our grip on what we protect (Philippians 3:7–8).
- The reigning King is worthy of our complete, sacrificial loyalty.

Discussion Prompts

- Where is loyalty to Christ most costly for you right now?
- What part of your life have you walled off from the King's full claim?
- What is holding you back from giving Christ your whole-hearted, sacrificial devotion?

Question 9

Student Question:

Why was David's numbering of the people sin, and how does the altar at Araunah's threshing floor (24:18–25), where "David built there an altar unto the Lord," point us forward to the atoning work of Christ?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

The book closes with a sobering account: David numbers the people, and it is counted to him as sin. The wrong was not census-taking in itself but the heart behind it, pride and self-reliance, a king tempted to trust in the size of his army and the strength of his kingdom rather than in the Lord who had given the victories. Even in old age, even after all he had learned, David could fall. It is a humbling reminder that no maturity makes us immune to sin, and that a Christian can indeed fall into grievous wrong.

When David's heart smites him, he confesses, and God offers him a choice of judgments. A plague falls upon the land, and many die. David, seeing the devastation, cries out with a shepherd's heart: "Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done?" He pleads that the judgment fall on himself and his house rather than the people. The prophet Gad then directs him to build an altar at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, where the destroying angel had stayed his hand.

What David does next is full of meaning. Araunah offers to give him the threshing floor and the oxen for free, but David refuses: "neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing." He insists on paying the full price, for he knows that true sacrifice must cost the worshiper something. He buys the place, builds the altar, offers burnt offerings and peace offerings, and the Lord is entreated for the land, and the plague is stayed. Atonement is made; mercy triumphs.

And here the story opens onto the largest horizon of all. That threshing floor of Araunah, on Mount Moriah, would become the site of the temple, the place where atonement would be made for the nation for centuries. The whole book of 2 Samuel, with all its sin and grace, ends at

an altar where blood is shed, a price is paid, and judgment is turned away by sacrifice. It is impossible to miss the forward reach: every altar in Israel was pointing toward a greater sacrifice. On a hill near that very place, the greater Son of David would one day offer not an animal but Himself, a sacrifice that cost Him everything, to stay forever the judgment our sin deserved.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- David's census was sin because of the pride and self-reliance behind it, trusting strength over God (24:1–10).
- No spiritual maturity makes us immune to sin; a believer can fall into grievous wrong (1 Corinthians 10:12).
- David's shepherd-heart plea ("these sheep, what have they done?") shows costly intercession (24:17).
- True sacrifice must cost the worshiper something (24:24).
- The altar at Araunah's threshing floor, the future temple site, foreshadows the atoning sacrifice of Christ (Hebrews 9:11–14; Hebrews 10:10–14).

Discussion Prompts

- Why was the sin in David's census a matter of the heart rather than the act itself?
- What does David's insistence on paying full price teach us about real sacrifice and worship?
- How does the altar where the plague was stayed point us forward to the cross of Christ?

Question 10

Student Question:

Looking back across the lives of Saul and David in these two books, name one specific way Jesus, the true and faithful King, has been forming you through this study.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

We have reached the end of the road, and it is time to look back across the whole journey of these two books and ask how the King has been forming us. We began with Hannah's prayer and the boy Samuel, moved through the rise and tragic fall of Saul, and followed the long, complicated, glorious, and broken life of David. Now, standing at the closing altar, we can see the pattern the Spirit has been tracing all along.

Consider the great contrast between Saul and David. Saul looked the part, tall and impressive, but his heart was hollow; when confronted with sin he made excuses, clung to his throne, and slowly hardened. David sinned grievously too, sometimes worse, yet when confronted he broke, repented, and ran back to God. The difference was never sinlessness; it was the heart. David was a man after God's own heart not because he never fell but because he always came home. That contrast has been quietly searching our own hearts for twenty-four lessons.

And through it all, the books have been pointing past both kings to a better one. Saul shows us our need for a king we cannot be; David shows us a foreshadowing of the King we cannot do without. The everlasting covenant, the just ruler like the morning light, the altar where judgment is stayed by sacrifice, all of it reaches toward Jesus, the true and faithful King, the greater Son of David, who reigns now and forever and who offered Himself for us. The whole story has been, in the end, about Him.

So the capstone question is personal and pointed: through this long study of Saul and David, how has Jesus, the true King, been forming you? Perhaps He has been teaching you the difference between mere regret and real repentance, the way He taught it through David. Perhaps He has been pressing you toward wholehearted loyalty, like the mighty men, or toward mercy, like the restored king, or toward worship that remembers His faithfulness, or toward submission to His present reign over your life. Name it. Let the study end not as information stored but as a King received, a heart yielded, and a life increasingly conformed to the One toward whom every page has been pointing.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The whole of 1 and 2 Samuel traces a pattern pointing beyond Saul and David to Christ.
- The decisive difference between Saul and David was not sinlessness but a heart that came home to God (1 Samuel 15:24–30; 2 Samuel 12:13).
- Saul shows our need for a king we cannot be; David foreshadows the King we cannot do without.
- The everlasting covenant, the just ruler, and the atoning altar all point to Jesus, the true and faithful King (Revelation 22:16).
- The aim of the study is not stored information but a King received and a life conformed to Him (Romans 8:29).

Discussion Prompts

- What is the most important difference between Saul and David, and where do you see yourself in that contrast?
- How have these two books, taken as a whole, pointed you to Christ the true King?
- Name one specific way Jesus, the faithful King, has been forming you through this study.