

# LESSON 13

## LAST DAYS OF DAVID (2 SAMUEL 21–24)



### Introduction

David has reached the latter stages of his life. The final four chapters of 2 Samuel recount some of the incidents that occurred during the approximately ten years after the death of Absalom. David's sin had created some very miserable times for him. Throughout 2 Samuel we have seen David's lifetime unfold like a daily newspaper. The headlines have trumpeted David's multiple marriages and concubine encounters. We have read about his act of adultery and his murderous plot to cover an unplanned pregnancy. We have read about the rape of one of David's daughters, an act committed by one of David's own sons. We know about the revenge murder committed by another son. We also know about this son's unremorseful behavior, spiteful jealousy, open rebellion, and murder. Frankly, David's life is more like a television soap opera than the life of a man after God's own heart.

Why would God have Bible readers acquaint themselves with such a tragic hero? There are three reasons. First, God wants us to know how easily sin corrupts. Second, God wants us to see His mercy. David's sin separated David from God, but God through His Word drove him to seek God's forgiveness. Third, through Christ's work at Calvary, God covered David's sins and ours. As God faithfully promised, the forgiveness of sins came through David's Lord, yet also David's offspring—Jesus Christ—some twenty-eight generations later (Matthew 1:6–17).

### David in Later Years

What images come to mind when you think of David? Do you think of the young man who used a simple slingshot to stop Goliath dead in his tracks? Or do you picture David looking down on the bathing Bathsheba? For centuries, artists have sought to capture David. Michelangelo spent three years carving his David, perhaps the most recognized statue in the history of art.

2 Samuel 21:15 presents a different image of David in only four words: "And David grew weary." The sword he once held with ease weighed more than it had previously. David heard the words, "You shall no longer go out with us to battle."

**161.** What comes to mind when you read, "And David grew weary"?

**162.** According to Paul, what does God desire of us although at times we do "grow weary" (Galatians 6:9)?

**163.** What did David learn about prayer that applies to you?



### **Famine and War**

Read 2 Samuel 21. A three-year famine struck the land, and “David sought the face of the LORD.” David persevered through another defining moment in his life.

**164.** What caused the famine? How did David remedy the problem? How did he honor Saul and Jonathan by keeping his word to them?

### **David’s Song and Final Words**

Read 2 Samuel 22:1–23:7. The Lord inspired David to write numerous songs, among them the words recorded in 2 Samuel. Note the intimacy between David and his Lord.

**165.** Can we pray to God with such intimacy? If so, why?

**166.** How does David describe God in 2 Samuel 22:2–4?

**167.** Consider David’s statement, “I was blameless before Him” (2 Samuel 22:24). How is this possible, since we know that David sinned? Consider Psalm 51:7 as you formulate your answer.

**168.** David recalled God’s covenant with him. As he did so, David offered great advice to future kings. What did God make known through David (2 Samuel 23:3–4)?

### **Mighty Men and Repentance**

Read 2 Samuel 23:8–24:17. David loved the men who had fought courageously by his side. At least thirty names are mentioned in this text, along with their deeds. Among those thirty names is Uriah the Hittite.

**169.** The person who insisted that David conduct a census of fighting men during a time of peace is not mentioned in this passage. However, he is mentioned in 1 Chronicles 21:1. Why should we be familiar with his identity?

**170.** When David saw “the angel who was striking the people,” what did he offer as a way of acknowledging his sinfulness?

### **David’s Altar to God**

Read 2 Samuel 24:18–25. The final event of David’s life recorded in the Book of Samuel involved the building of an altar. David built his altar to God for one purpose only—“that the plague may be averted from the people.”

**171.** What do you learn about David’s faith, even as he grows older?

**172.** Why should we consider David a good role model of faith even though he sinned at times, just as you and I do?

### **God’s Word for Today**

David’s life teaches about God’s love and forgiveness. Yes, at times he fell short of God’s expectations, but he never wavered in his love for God—including his need to repent and receive again the joy of God’s forgiveness. David remained a man after God’s own heart.



**173.** David asked God not to put him into the hands of people for judgment. What do you know about people's judgment that might encourage you to make the same request?

**174.** David taught his son Solomon to assume his role. God allowed Solomon to build the temple that David could not. What important information does Solomon pass along to you and me in Proverbs 28:13?

Pray: Everlasting Father, Your Holy Word teaches us of Your forgiving love. Through Baptism, You rescued us from our sin; Your Holy Supper nourishes us. Now, teach us to carry Your Good News to many others. Amen.

### **Who are the "giants" in the Bible? (2 Samuel 21:15ff; Genesis 6:1-6; Numbers 13:33)**

The idea that there were "giants," or Nephilim, around makes us wonder. Many websites and videos contain all kinds of theories about these people, including aliens, a separate race from humanity, or angels bound to earth.

<sup>1</sup> When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, <sup>2</sup> the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. <sup>3</sup> Then the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years." <sup>4</sup> The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.

<sup>5</sup> The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. <sup>6</sup> And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. (Genesis 6:1-6 ESV)

So a couple things to consider in the first 2 verses are who are the "sons of God", and why was it bad to marry these women? What makes sense to me is they are the offspring of Seth (not Cain). In other words, Seth was Abel's replacement after Cain murdered his brother. It seems that some of the offspring of Seth (of course 100's of years later) had decided to marry any woman they chose. These women may have been from the line of Cain or those who would lead them away from the one true God. So, while they were the "sons of God" they were also going off track from God's desire. Later in the Old Testament, God was very clear about how marrying women of other faiths would lead His people astray.

Verse 4 uses the word, Nephilim. The Hebrew word Nephilim comes from the root verb of "to fall" - so it technically means, "fallen ones." But for some strange reason, the Greek translation is gigantes (or where we get our word, gigantic). No one knows why this word was translated this way other than from Numbers 13:33 as the spies came back to report to Moses what they found in the land of Canaan or the Promised Land. "And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them." However, when you consider the context of that



text, the spies were afraid and probably exaggerating what they saw so they wouldn't have to go fight. It's probable that a group of people who were much larger than others genetically (just like certain tribes in Africa produce guys like Manute Bol) were called the Nephilim as a descriptor. People were pretty short back then anyway, so a guy like Shaquille O'Neal or Yao Ming would have been true Goliaths to them. The problem with taking the Nephilim BEFORE the flood who would have been wiped out, then the Nephilim AFTER the flood is that they could not be of the same race and lineage... they had to have come from Noah's line in the Book of Numbers.

So in verse 4, it seems to be saying that the Nephilim were around (big people genetically) and some of God's sons decided to marry women outside of God's will for them. It's very hard to interpret this verse because it seems to speak of the Nephilim, then changes course to the sons of God and daughters of man... then it calls the Nephilim mighty men of old. Anyway, it was saying that the Nephilim were kings and leaders and warriors, and in addition to these "fallen ones" or giant people (whatever we choose to call them) - God's sons and outside women were having children. All of this debauchery and not doing God's will led to their destruction in the flood.

So the Internet has many conspiracy theories (aliens, angels, etc. were these Nephilim). However, I would try to stick to God's Word as much as possible. To use some obscure texts or small sections of the Bible and make a big deal out of them is usually not very helpful, but it's great to dig in and try to determine what was going on and what it means.