

# LESSON 7

## LAST DAYS OF SAUL

(READ 1 SAMUEL 25-31)



### Introduction

Are you ready to put yourself in David's sandals? "How can we do that?" you may ask. "How can we explore the mind of David at this precise moment in his life?" We can! God told us of David's skill at the lyre when we first met him (1 Samuel 16:14–23). We also know that a great many of the psalms come by David's hand. Is there a psalm that speaks of this time in David's life? Yes! At the heading of Psalm 18 appear these words: "To the Choirmaster. A Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord, who addressed the words of this song to the Lord on the day when the Lord rescued him from the hand of all of his enemies, *and from the hand of Saul*" (emphasis added). This psalm appears in a slightly different form in 2 Samuel 22.

For the sake of brevity, let us look at verses 1–3 of Psalm 18. These verses tell us where David placed his confidence. David's confidence was not self-confidence but God-confidence. God was David's "rock," "fortress," "deliverer," "shield," and "stronghold." David tells us that he called on the Lord and the Lord saved him from his enemies. Any confidence David possessed while fleeing from Saul's spears and threatening messengers came from God. Where do we place our confidence? Is it in our own ability—our self-confidence? Or are we like David, whose confidence rests in God alone?

### Preserving His Lineage

Saul understood the Lord's will for his life. He knew that David would succeed him as Israel's king. In ancient times, it was common for the succeeding king to slay the preceding king's family to stop family members from laying claim to the throne. Saul protected his lineage by asking David to swear to "not cut off my offspring after me" (1 Samuel 24:21). David quickly swore. Just as God kept His promises sworn to David, David remained faithful to this promise sworn to Saul. David swore this same oath to Jonathan and never wavered from it the remainder of his life. This is yet another reason we can say that David was a man after God's own heart.

- 84.** What may be some differences between unhealthy self-confidence and "God-confidence"?
- 85.** Why is it important for everyone, but especially Christians, to keep their word?



### **David, Abigail, and Nabal**

Read 1 Samuel 25. This section of Scripture opens on an ominous note. Samuel, the namesake of these two books of the Bible, has died. Many scholars believe that the prophets Nathan and Gad wrote the remaining sections of 1 Samuel and all of 2 Samuel. David and his men have found employment in southern Judah, serving as flock protectors, Nabal's flock among them.

- 86.** What do we learn about Nabal and his wife, Abigail, in 1 Samuel 25:3?
- 87.** When Abigail learned that Nabal refused to pay David and his men for protecting his flock, what did she do?
- 88.** God gave Abigail remarkable insight. Match Abigail's insights on the left with the corresponding Bible verse on the right.
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|--|-----------------|
| <b>A.</b> David fights the Lord's battles. | _____ verse 30b |
| <b>B.</b> Someone pursues David.           | _____ verse 31  |
| <b>C.</b> God protects David.              | _____ verse 29b |
| <b>D.</b> God keeps His promises to David. | _____ verse 29a |
| <b>E.</b> God has appointed David as king. | _____ verse 28  |
| <b>F.</b> God will grant David success.    | _____ verse 30a |

### **David Again Spares Saul's Life**

Read 1 Samuel 26–27. David married Abigail after Nabal died. Meanwhile, Saul launched another envy-filled attempt to kill David. His hatred had no end.

- 89.** David had opportunity to kill Saul. He removed Saul's spear and water jug as proof of his proximity to him. Do you remember why David consistently spared Saul? What was his reason?

### **The Witch of Endor**

Read 1 Samuel 28. David and his army joined Achish, son of Gath, as a mercenary force. Saul, meanwhile, searched for David. We are now given a view of how far Saul has gone away from God.

- 90.** God warned against spiritualists and mediums (Leviticus 19:31; 20:6; Deuteronomy 18:11). Yet, Saul consulted a spiritualist not long after Samuel died. At that time, God allowed Samuel to appear before the spiritualist could conjure him up. What did Samuel's spirit tell Saul?

### **David Flees the Philistines**

Read 1 Samuel 29–30. David and his men received a promotion to serve as Achish's bodyguards. They served Achish a year and four months before Achish's superiors called for David's dismissal.



**91.** When David and his men reached their home city of Ziklag, they learned that an army of Amalekites had destroyed it, capturing their wives and children. How did David solidify his position among his men?

### **The Death of Saul**

Read 1 Samuel 31. 1 Samuel ends with the tragic death of Saul. This battle took not only Saul's life, but also the lives of three of Saul's sons including David's dear friend, Jonathan. God saw to it that David and his men were not part of the Philistine army when it attacked Saul.

**92.** What happened to Saul? Why did God not want David anywhere near this battle scene?

### **God's Word for Today**

Saul and David—one served as Israel's first king, a king like those of the nations surrounding Israel. The other was a man after God's own heart, but not perfect.

**93.** How might you contrast the lives of Saul and David?

**94.** David wrote many psalms. Look at selected verses from three of them—Psalm 25:2; 40:3–4; and 56:3. Each addresses a common theme in David's life. What theme do these psalms stress, and why does this theme apply to your life and mine?

### **In Closing**

- Think about the void created in David's life at the death of Jonathan. When have you experienced something similar?
- Review the role the city of Jabesh-gilead played in Saul's life (1 Samuel 11:1–11; 31:11–13).
- Read **2 Samuel 1–4** to prepare for the next session.

Pray: Almighty Father, help us honor You with our words and deeds. May we be faithful representatives of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.