

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 7



KING DAVID KEEPS A PROMISE

Scripture Texts: 2 Samuel 8:1-18; 2 Samuel 9

David had great success in military campaigns. It was not because of his wisdom or superior numbers. **And the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went.** The Lord did this because David kept his vows. Promises must be kept. It is God who gives success and victory. Our salvation is by the love and grace of God. We may all have His preserving power as David did, and on the same conditions.

MEMORY VERSE: *Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay.* — *Ecclesiastes 5:5*

Enemies Subdued

2 Samuel 8:1-14 After God gave David the wonderful news of the coming Messiah, David fought battles with the surrounding peoples. The Philistines, Moab, a combination of Syrian kingdoms, and Edom all felt the power of his mighty sword. In the statement: **And the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went,** we find the secret of David's success over his enemies.

In gratitude for the defeat of his enemy, the king of Zobah, King Toi of Hamath sent thanks and gifts of silver, gold, and brass to David. David dedicated these and other gifts and spoils to the Lord to be used later in the building of the temple. The kingdom of Israel increased in size and strength, as well as internal solidarity. The record further tells of David's conquests of Ammon and their hired Syrian allies. Again we read, **And the Lord preserved David**

Administrative Genius

2 Samuel 8:15-18 The organization of the kingdom was the result of long years of effort and planning on the part of David. He was the head, the "anointed of the Lord." He was the leader of a great nation. In him God had placed all the qualities of kingship that characterized an ideal king.

Under the king were countless officials in Jerusalem and throughout the land who administered the numerous activities of the government. Some of these were: the keeper of the treasury, the recorder of records, the scribe or secretary, and many counselors, who were David's own sons. He had his advisors, one of whom was the prophet, Nathan. Then there were the priests who headed the religious system, and the leaders of armies and affairs of war. There were overseers of his royal estate, and hundreds who cared for his storehouses.

It must be remembered that in spite of these intricate details of an amazing organization, David always thought of himself as the representative of the Divine Sovereign. To Him, he was directly responsible, and he tried to be a king after God's own heart. He executed justice and righteousness unto all his people.

A Vow Kept

2 Samuel 9:1-4 At the height of his power, when there was a pause in his political duties, David thought of Jonathan, his dearly loved friend, son of King Saul. He remembered the day when he fled for his life from Saul, and Jonathan helped him. He remembered his vow made then (**1 Samuel 20:14-15, 1 Samuel 20:42**) to show kindness forever to Jonathan's house. He must keep it. To do so, he started a search, found a servant of Saul, and through him, a crippled son of Jonathan. The only member of Saul's house who was still alive was Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, who lived in hiding in the home of Machir, a wealthy citizen of Lo-debar.

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The youth, Mephibosheth, having been fortunate enough to escape destruction when his family was destroyed had also been unfortunate. The Bible records that when he was five years old, upon learning of Israel's defeat at Mount Gilboa, and the death of Saul and Jonathan, his nurse took up the child and fled. In her haste to get away, she dropped him and he became lame in both feet (**2 Samuel 4:4**). Incapable of contributing to his own support, he found shelter in the neighborhood where his uncle, Ishbosheth, had unsuccessfully set up his kingdom in rebellion against David. Here he lived neglected and unknown until this time.

Kindness to Mephibosheth

2 Samuel 9:5-10 David now called Mephibosheth to him. In dejection and with fearful heart he fell on his face before the king, ready to hear words of condemnation and death for himself as the last descendant of Saul. Instead, for the sake of Jonathan, his father, David restored unto him all the land of Saul, made him a member of his own house, and invited him to eat regularly at the king's table as one of his sons.

In gratitude, Mephibosheth cried out, "What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?" Instead of disgrace and shame and death as the descendant of Saul, David's worst enemy, Mephibosheth, now became a member of the royal family. The restored land was put into the hands of Ziba to till and take care of. And all of this because David had so greatly loved Jonathan, the father.

This is a touching scene, as David, at the zenith of his power, reveals the true nature of his character. As king, he would have had every right to do away with this despised descendant of Saul. But power and success had not changed his inner nature. "For Jonathan's sake" and "the kindness of God" are expressions from the lips of David that show his heart was filled with love to God and his fellow men.

David's Nature

David felt obligated to keep his vow to Jonathan because he loved him dearly. His sincere promise was binding. Someone has said, "Make few promises, but keep those you make." We must keep promises just as God keeps His promises. Children should be taught the sacredness of a promise. The only time a promise should be broken is when it will be a sin to keep it.

Today we have seen David at war. This is the strong, commanding, severe side of David's nature. He was a man of war and shed much blood. This is partly the reason for God's refusal of David's plan to build a temple of worship.

David also had another side, shown in his treatment of Mephibosheth, and in his desire to keep his vow. Mephibosheth's experience may be considered a type of salvation. In God's sight the sinner is even more helpless and more worthy of condemnation than Mephibosheth. Yet even while we were sinners, Christ died for us, and through His death we are cleansed of our sin and restored to our rightful position as sons of God, and members of His family. Jesus invites us, unworthy though we are, to sit at His table and partake of His body and blood.

In continual fightings of the Old Testament, we see in Israel the physical counterpart of the Christian's battles against those spiritual forces that are continually opposing him. Joshua, David, and other great warriors of Israel were not only fighting political and military battles, they were at the same time fighting the forces of darkness and heathenism which were intent on destroying God's people and true religion.

It is significant that in *Pilgrim's Progress*, John Bunyan sees Christian fitted out as a warrior before he makes his way to the City of Zion. He was led into the armory where he was shown all manner of equipment which the Lord had provided for pilgrims: sword, shield, helmet, breastplate, all-prayer, and shoes that would not wear out. God will preserve us as He did David if we keep our promise to Him.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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