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THE LOOKOUT

MAY 2021

UNIT: History of Israel (1 Samuel & 1 Chronicles)

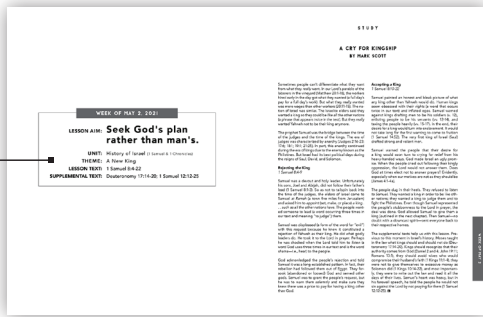
THEME: A New King

OVERVIEW:

William Shakespeare wrote, "What's past is prologue." We often must look backward to move forward. This month, students will learn from Israel's past about the people's desire for a king, what happens when that king goes AWOL, the need for a new king, and the establishment of his throne in Jerusalem.

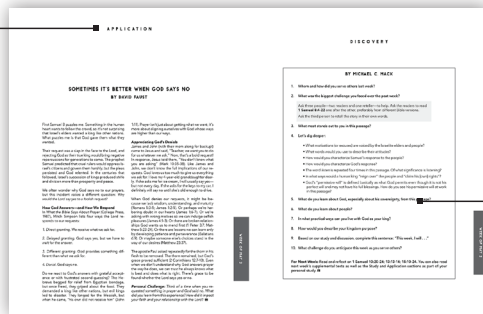
HOW TO USE

Each week has a **lesson aim**, **lesson text**, and **supplemental text**.



Tabs indicate the week of each lesson.

Each week features three sections: **Study**, **Application**, and **Discovery**.



Use the **Discovery** questions to study, discuss, and apply the Scripture passages in a group or class.

WEEK OF MAY 30, 2021

LESSON AIM: **Give thanks
to the Lord, for his
presence is with us.**

UNIT: History of Israel (1 Samuel & 1 Chronicles)

THEME: A New King

LESSON TEXT: 1 Chronicles 11:4-7; 15:28-16:9;
2 Chronicles 6:2-6

SUPPLEMENTAL TEXT: 2 Samuel 6:12-15; 1 Chronicles 16:10-36;
Zechariah 8:1-8; Acts 7:45-49

STUDY

CITY OF DAVID FOUNDED

BY MARK SCOTT

On the uphill drive from Jericho to Jerusalem, the tour guide will have the song “The Holy City” played on the bus speakers. It’s very emotional to round a turn, see the temple, and hear, “Jerusalem! Jerusalem! Lift up your gates and sing; Hosanna in the highest, Hosanna to your King!” Jerusalem is the city of stone, the envy of the whole earth, and the highest joy (Psalm 137:6).

How are we to think about sacred space? God is omnipresent (i.e., there is no place he is not), yet not all places are created equal. God had invaded Jacob’s space, but only later did Jacob know it (Genesis 28:16). The Israelites saw God’s glory come into the tabernacle in a special way and yet God routinely guided the people through the wilderness day and night (Exodus 40:35, 38). David’s reign would be centralized in Jerusalem and the presence of God would be located there as in no other city.

The City

1 Chronicles 11:4-7

Before David could operate out of Jerusalem, he would have to conquer it. He marched his soldiers to the ancient site of *Jebus* and captured it. The Jebusites (descendants of the third son of Canaan) thought they were safe in their *fortress* (stronghold). After all, the banana-shaped ancient city of David had mountains to the east with a deep ravine between. It was also well protected to the south and west, even if perhaps a bit vulnerable to the north.

Joab (one of David’s most loyal men for most of the king’s reign) led the charge. His reward was becoming *commander-in-chief* (ruler or prince) of David’s forces. So David *took up residence* in this place and it became known as his city. It was known as *Zion* (a term that can refer to a mountain, a city, or a people).

The Ark

1 Chronicles 15:28–16:9

It was one thing for David to dwell in Jerusalem, but for God’s presence to dwell in Jerusalem would demand special furniture and ceremony. How would David solidify his permanent residence in Jerusalem and secure God’s presence in the city? With the help of his “mighty men” to secure his reign there (1 Chronicles 11–12), David attempted to move the precious “ark box” (a symbol of God’s presence and redemption) to the holy city from Kiriath Jearim, where it had been for

some time (1 Chronicles 13). Two things delayed the ceremony. The people did not follow God’s instructions about moving the ark (1 Chronicles 13:5-14) and the Philistines invaded (1 Chronicles 14:8-17).

The celebration of bringing the *ark of the covenant* (also called the *ark of the covenant of the Lord* and the *ark of God*) was grand. It was highly celebrative with volume (*shouts*), musical instruments (horns, trumpets, cymbals, lyres, and harps), Levitical offerings (*burnt offerings* and *fellowship offerings*), food (*bread, dates, and raisins*), leaders (11 are mentioned by name), and praise that was off the charts. To perpetuate this celebration, David appointed (assigned) *Levites* and *priests* to ensure that God’s praise would be made *known among the nations*. Jerusalem was clearly intended to be a city on a hill that could not be hidden. The last two verses of this text are part of David’s larger “Song of Thanks” (16:8-36).

Only one sour note was sounded in this celebration, and that came from David’s wife, *Michal*. The daughter of King Saul, Michal had been given to David as a prize for defeating the Philistines (1 Samuel 18:25-29). Something about David’s exuberance embarrassed her. She watched David *dancing* (skipping) and *celebrating* (playing or laughing). She *despised* (held in contempt) David. The result was that the marriage was pretty well over (2 Samuel 6:23).

The Name

2 Chronicles 6:2-6

We fast-forward to David’s son Solomon, who built the temple after his father’s death. The resulting celebration outstripped the earlier celebration of bringing the ark into the city. The sacrifices offered were innumerable, and the glory of the Lord filled the house of God (2 Chronicles 5:6, 14).

Solomon told God he had *built a magnificent temple* (exalted house) for him to *dwell* in forever. Then he turned to bless the people and praised God. He acknowledged God’s faithfulness, his redemption of his people, his election of Israel, and the choice God made to have his *Name* dwell in Jerusalem. For God’s name to dwell there meant his presence would be there.

The “Hound of Heaven” finds ways to be with us. While heaven and earth cannot contain him (Acts 7:48-49), he can make Zion come to us (Hebrews 12:22; Revelation 21:2). ■

APPLICATION

LEARNING TO PRACTICE THE PRESENCE OF GOD

BY DAVID FAUST

When people ask, “Where is God?” they’re not looking for a road map. You can’t locate the Lord with a GPS. The question “Where is God?” is about relationship, not geography.

David asked the Lord, “Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?” (Psalm 139:7). Travel with astronauts to the moon or descend in a submarine to the ocean floor, and God is already there. Wander away like a stray sheep, and the Good Shepherd searches for you. Sink into despair, and he reaches for you. As Jonah discovered, God can even hear the prayer of a hopeless rebel sloshing around in a fish’s belly.

Aware of God’s Presence

A cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night guided the Hebrews while they wandered in the desert. In Jerusalem they built a temple where they could celebrate his presence with singing and sacrifices. But God “does not live in temples built by human hands” (Acts 17:24). No building can contain him, and no cathedral can fully capture his glory. Paul reminded first-century believers, “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst?” (1 Corinthians 3:16).

God is omnipresent and inescapable. The trouble is, we can be oblivious and distractable. We are like Jacob, who awoke from sleep and thought, “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it” (Genesis 28:16). The problem isn’t God’s availability, but our awareness.

When have you been especially mindful of the presence of God? Several years ago I stood in Wyoming’s Grand Teton National Park gazing across a canyon, amazed by the Creator’s artistry. It was as if God had painted a beautiful canvas, covering it with mountains, boulders, trees, wildflowers, streams,

birds, and wildlife under a clear blue sky. I sensed the presence of God amid the mountain grandeur.

In a very different setting, one evening my wife and I stood by the bedside of a dying minister who had devoted his entire adult life—more than half a century—to the Lord’s service. As the three of us quietly read Scripture, sang hymns, and prayed, that lonely hospital room became holy ground. It was the last time we saw our friend on this side of Heaven, but our little bedside prayer meeting provided a foretaste of glory divine.

Come Near

Brother Lawrence was a 17th-century monk who described himself as “a great awkward fellow who broke everything.” He labored in the kitchen and repaired sandals, but during his daily tasks he learned to pray without ceasing. After he died, his spiritual reflections were collected in a short book called *The Practice of the Presence of God*. If your mind tends to wander when you pray, Brother Lawrence suggested a solution: Don’t let it wander too far at other times. If you think of God often, he said, “you will find it easy to keep your mind calm in the time of prayer, or at least to recall it from its wanderings.”

James 4:8 exhorts us, “Come near to God and he will come near to you.” Do we intentionally recognize and pursue the presence of God? Christ came to earth as Immanuel—“God with us.” The question is, *Are we with him?*

Personal Challenge: Create two lists on a piece of paper that answer these questions: (1) What makes you aware of the presence of God? (2) What prevents you from recognizing God’s presence? Write down as many answers as you can to those questions, and discuss your lists with a trusted friend. ■

DISCOVERY

BY MICHAEL C. MACK

1. In what ways did you demonstrate mercy and humility to people in your circles of influence this past week?
2. What was the biggest challenge or opportunity you faced last week?

Ask two people to read aloud **1 Chronicles 11:4-7** one after the other, preferably from different Bible versions. Then ask the same two people to each read **1 Chronicles 15:28-16:9**. Repeat the process with **2 Chronicles 6:2-6**.

Ask a third person to retell the entire story in their own words.

3. What most stands out to you in these passages?
4. Let's dig deeper:
 - How would you describe the atmosphere surrounding the ark of the covenant being brought into Jerusalem and the completion of God's temple?
 - The ark of God and the temple both represent God's presence with his people. How do God's people respond to his presence?
 - Look at each of the instances in these passages to the Lord's "name." God's name can convey his authority, power, presence, and salvation, among other things. How is the word used in these instances?
 - What do you learn about the nature of praise from these passages?
 - What impact should it make in our daily lives that Christ followers are now God's temple and God's Spirit dwells in our midst (1 Corinthians 3:16)?
5. What do you learn about God from these passages?
6. What do you learn about yourself?
7. What do you learn about obeying God from these passages, even when your friends and family may not understand or may criticize your zeal for God?
8. Take a few moments to reread and contemplate 1 Chronicles 16:8-9. What is the connection between worship and evangelism?
 - How will you make God's name known this week among the people with whom you come in contact? How will you tell them of his wonderful acts?
9. Based on our study and discussion, complete this sentence: "This week, I will . . ."
10. What challenge do you anticipate facing this week?

For Next Week: Read and reflect on **2 Samuel 7:8-26** as we begin a new unit called "A King's House." You can also read next week's supplemental texts as well as the Study and Application sections as part of your personal study. ■