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THE LOOKOUT

JUNE 2021

UNIT: History of Israel (2 Samuel; 2 Chronicles)

THEME: A King's House

OVERVIEW:

Israel reached her zenith during the reigns of Kings David and Solomon. The only reign to surpass them would be the coming of the true Son of David, Jesus Christ. This month, students will learn of the house (kingdom) of David being established, threatened, rescued, and secured.

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 JUNE 20, 2021

LESSON AIM: **Make your house
right with God**

UNIT: History of Israel (2 Samuel & 2 Chronicles)

THEME: A King's House

LESSON TEXT: 2 Samuel 22:17-25; 23:1-5

SUPPLEMENTAL TEXT: 2 Samuel 22:26-51; 2 Corinthians 5:21

STUDY

SONG OF THE KING

BY MARK SCOTT

We move from sin (last week's lesson) to song (this week's lesson). While forgiveness is always possible when God is in the equation, the consequences of sin often linger. Second Samuel 13–21 trace some ugly consequences of David's sin. David's house and reign were filled with immorality, rebellion, death, grief, and war (particularly with the Gibeonites and Philistines).

David was an old king by now. His soldiers urged him not to go to battle lest "the lamp of Israel . . . be extinguished" (2 Samuel 21:17). Earlier, when he stayed home from battle, he sinned (2 Samuel 11:1-2). This time he turned to song. The songs from which our texts are drawn for this lesson are reflective of deliverance and righteousness, as David poetically revisited his life.

Song of Deliverance

2 Samuel 22:17-25

Some of the lyrics of this song were composed earlier in David's life. But as he reviewed his life, he remembered God's faithfulness during his reign. David sang about who God was (rock, fortress, refuge, shield, and horn—2 Samuel 22:2-3) and what power he had displayed (bowed the heavens and came down—22:5-16). Then he began to sing about God's rescue (vv. 17-20) and rewards (vv. 21-25).

David spoke about God's "rescue" twice, but he used two different words to do so. The first means "to save or pluck out." The second means "to loose or deliver." God *reached down* (a reminder of his transcendence) and *took hold* of David on more than one occasion. David used the metaphor of being in *deep waters* to symbolize God's rescue. *Powerful enemies* and *foes* proved too much for David's human strength. These enemies even *confronted* (came out to meet) David when he was in *disaster* (bending down in calamity). But the Lord was David's *support* and *brought* him to a *spacious place* (broad or wide place; a symbol of freedom and deliverance in contrast to hiding). The only reason for this rescue was that God *delighted* (took pleasure) in David.

David not only sang about God's rescue, but also about how God would reward David. David was far from perfect, but he had moments of great faithfulness. He attempted to live in *righteousness*. He tried to live with clean hands.

He worked at keeping the laws of God, strived not to turn from God, desired to be *blameless* (innocent) before God, and kept himself from sin as much as possible. David was conscious that God's mercy met him at the point of his efforts.

Song of Righteousness

2 Samuel 23:1-5

The rest of David's song in chapter 22 continued to celebrate who God was and what he had done. In chapter 23, the last stanza of the song is labeled, *the last words of David*. In terms of his last words of "poetry" that may well be true. The record of David's death is only chapters away. The *hero of Israel's songs* ("sweet psalmist of Israel," *English Standard Version*) sang his final song. The song was about God's righteousness (the third great quality of God following his love and holiness).

The word *righteousness* occurs only once in this section (while occurring twice in the previous section), but it appears in the middle (v. 3). David said some things leading up to this and some things leading away from this (the technical word for this is *chiasm*). The text leads to this idea/point, so it is the central idea. It means a sense of justice and things being made right by God. It contains wrath and mercy.

God gave David (who is identified three ways: *son of Jesse, man exalted by the Most High, and the man anointed by the God of Jacob*) this lyric (*inspired utterance*) about righteousness. God *spoke* to David so that he could speak *through* David to the people of Israel.

This message concerned one who *rules over people in righteousness*. When kings rule *in the fear of God* it is like sunshine and rain. The sun makes it bright, and the rain *brings grass from the earth*. David confessed that had his house not been right with God (i.e., a state of righteousness) three things would not have been accomplished: the *everlasting covenant* that God had made with him would have been compromised, salvation from God would not have been brought to *fruition* (to bear or spring up or cause to prosper), and David's desires would not have been *granted* (helped). Our houses too should sing songs of deliverance and righteousness. ■

APPLICATION

IS YOUR HOUSE RIGHT WITH GOD?

BY DAVID FAUST

As King David prepared to die, he made sure his house was right with God. He was confident his salvation would come to fruition because he shared with the Lord “an everlasting covenant, arranged and secured in every part” (2 Samuel 23:5).

Even royals are mortals. David’s son Solomon, who succeeded him on the throne, suggested we can learn more by visiting a funeral than by attending a dinner party. He mused, “It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, for death is the destiny of everyone; the living should take this to heart” (Ecclesiastes 7:2).

When you think about your own death, what makes you afraid? What gives you hope? Is your house right with God?

The Shadow of Death

Morticians aren’t the only ones who have a front-row seat in the theater of death. So do others, like doctors, nurses, hospice workers, EMTs, police officers, firefighters, and ministers.

I have led funerals for 100-year-olds and for 1-day-old babies. I have led memorial services in large churches attended by hundreds, and graveside services where a couple of observers stood alone in a cemetery. I’ve heard mourners say with admiration, “He lived a long, full life,” and I’ve seen lives tragically cut short while loved ones shake their heads and wonder, “Why did God allow this to happen?” I have seen individuals take their final breaths with terror in their eyes, and I have seen others approach death like relaxed travelers getting ready for a long-awaited journey home.

Death is a persistent intruder. It casts a dark shadow. It disrupts our plans and demands our attention. Whether it arrives gradually or suddenly, we can’t just shrug it off. At times, it looks like death has the final word. But if you read the Gospels, you’ll see that God has other ideas.

The Sunlight of Hope

Christ has the final word. Faith in him alters the way we view death. In Christ we “do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope” (1 Thessalonians 4:13). Yes, Jesus’ followers cry at funerals, but you can see peace in their eyes along with the tears.

Satan uses the fear of death to captivate and intimidate, but Christ liberates us to walk in the sunlight of hope. After enduring a painful and humiliating death, Christ emerged victorious three days later. He insisted, “I am the resurrection and the life,” and he promised those who believe in him that they will go on living after they die (John 11:25). For believers, the deathbed is our launching pad to glory!

Looking to the past, in baptism we already died and rose again (Romans 6:1-4; Colossians 2:12). In the present, we know that “to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21). In the future, we will pack up the tents of our mortal bodies and trade them for mansions prepared by the Lord (John 14:1-3; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10). Meanwhile, we can give ourselves fully to the work of the Lord, knowing that because he lives, our “labor in the Lord is not in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:58).

The question, *How will we die?* leads to another question: *How should we live?* King David knew the answer: “Make sure your house is right with God.”

Personal Challenge: Have you planned your own funeral? Write down ideas to guide those who will conduct your memorial service someday. List your favorite songs and Scripture passages, and include any key lessons you have learned in life that you want to pass along to others. You may want to suggest the name of a minister you would like to preside or others you want to participate in the service. When people attend your funeral, what will you want them to hear about the Lord? After writing down your thoughts, discuss your funeral plans with a few trusted family members or friends. ■

DISCOVERY

BY MICHAEL C. MACK

1. Over the last week, how did you teach someone else about God's grace by sharing your story?
2. What big challenge did you face last week?

Ask two people to read aloud **2 Samuel 22:17-25; 23:1-5** one after the other, preferably from different Bible versions. Then ask two other people to summarize David's song—the first person will summarize 2 Samuel 22:17-25 and the second 23:1-5—in their own words.

3. What do you discover about walking with God from these passages?
4. Let's dig deeper:
 - A cursory reading of these passages might give you the impression David was bragging about himself or claiming self-righteousness, but neither is the case. David was praising God for helping him live blamelessly as a leader even through many challenges. In what ways did God help David live and lead?
 - What evidence of David's humility do you see?
 - What evidence of his loyalty to God do you see?
 - How else do these passages describe King David?
 - How do these passages describe God's nature?
 - The verses in chapter 23 are described as David's "last words." What would his son Solomon, who would soon become king, learn about leadership by reading these words?
 - What do you learn from these passages about righteousness, that is, being right with God?
5. What do you learn about God from these passages?
6. What do you learn about people?
7. What do you learn about living a life of obedience to God?
8. What will you do so the Spirit of the Lord can and will speak through you as he spoke through David?
9. Based on our study and discussion, complete this sentence: "This week, I will . . ."
10. What new challenge or opportunity do you anticipate this week?

For Next Week: Read and reflect on **2 Chronicles 5:1-14; 7:11-16**. You can also read next week's supplemental texts as well as the Study and Application sections as part of your personal study. ■