The Bible Study Companion is a guide that, when used with the translation of your choice, will help you read through the Bible in one year in chronological order.

The Bible Study Companion is also a collection of maps, charts, word studies, and personal reflections designed to assist you in your Daily Bible Study.

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The Bible Study Companion is also available at: 
bunkertownpastor.blogspot.com

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April

April 1: Judges 4-6

Judges 4

- Judges 4:4-5 It’s notable that Deborah was not only a prophetess, but also a Judge. She would set beneath the tree and decide disputes. The hill country of Ephraim was about 10 miles north of Jerusalem.
- Judges 4:21 Bedouin women had the task of pitching the tents, so Jael was an expert with the peg and a hammer. This fulfilled the prophecy Deborah gave Barak in Judges 4:9.

Judges 5

- In Deborah’s song we learn that not all of Israel joined in battle. Reuben, Dan, and Asher were not too distressed about things, and just went about their business (Judges 5:15-17).
- Judges 5:19-22 It appears there was a great rain storm that turned the area into a marsh. Of course no Canaanite commander would take his Chariots into the wetland during the rainy season. They would be mired in the mud. Judges 5:21 implies that a flash flood swept many of these soldiers away.
- Judges 5:24 True to her prophecy, Jael receives the praise here rather than Barak. That’s what he gets for not finding confidence that the Lord would be with him.

Judges 6

- Judges 6:1 I’ve never understood why the majority of Israel would abandon the teachings of God so quickly; so easily. Here it says that the people returned to their wicked ways. Why didn’t the teaching of the Judge stick? It’s almost as if righteousness was simply a way of living, not something to be believed.
- Judges 6:3-6 Unlike the other Canaanites who occupied the land, the Midianites came marauding during harvest time. They were the descendants of Abraham
and Keturah (Genesis 25:1-2), and had been defeated by Israel during the wilderness wanderings (Numbers 25:16-18).

**Judges 6:8** This is an unnamed prophet. It was not Gideon.

**Judges 6:11-12** The story of Gideon is a good example of how hard it is for us to believe that God would work through us, and a testimony of the Lord's patience with us. Several times Gideon asks for proof, and each time God complies. I actually find that to be encouraging. When I question God's leading and direction, it is okay to keep asking for God to light the path before me.

**Judges 6:21** The food is consumed by fire in a way quite symbolic of an offering consumed upon the sacred altar.

**Judges 6:25** Isn't it true that unless a leader's holiness exceeds the people's holiness, it is difficult to lead them into holiness. So a test is made to Gideon, and he follows through. What I find interesting is that Gideon's dad, Joash, had a Baal altar and an Asherah pole in his back yard. Did Gideon participate in this worship? Was he part of the problem as well? Or did Gideon refuse to participate in this Baal worship, which made him holy, and which is why the Lord chose him as a Judge?

**Judges 6:36-40** Gideon's fleece was not a test to determine God's will. That had already been determined. The fleece test was one of assurance. Gideon was looking for assurance that indeed God would be with him in battle. This is far different than discerning God's will, which people often employ in situations like this. There was no question in Gideon's mind what God wanted him to do. We would benefit from this lesson. It seems to me that if God wants us to do something for Him, He will be quite clear in the call. But like Gideon, we sometimes need assurance that He is still there with us.
April 2: Judges 7-9

Judges 7

- Judges 7:2 Gideon was going against the Midianites. Gideon had 32,000 men. Midian had 135,000 (Judges 8:10). And God says they have too many? God shrinks the group down to 10,000 (Judges 7:3) and then down to 300 (Judges 7:6). Lucky me. I would have ended up going to war.
- Judges 7:19 The beginning of the second watch would have been just after 10 pm. First watch was from 6 pm to 10 pm. Second watch was 10 pm to 2 am. Third watch was from 2 am till 6 am.
- Judges 7:21 Imagine their surprise as this great army literally destroyed itself in the confusion. In the dark it would have been hard to tell who was who.

Judges 8

- Judges 8:2-3 Gideon rightly points out that he and his little band of men really did nothing. At least compared to what Ephraim did. Truthfully, I'm not sure why they were so upset. I didn't see any one of them raise a call to arms.
- Judges 8:7 Gideon gets a little ticked off here. And I don't blame him. What a snobbish reply! Kinda reminds me of what Maon says to David when he wanted some food (1 Samuel 25).
- Judges 8:17 The tower in this town may have been a fortress where people went for safety.
- Judges 8:18 Gideon's brothers were probably killed in their homes or out in their fields, not in battle. So Gideon carried out a blood revenge (Deuteronomy 19:12). Gideon turned to his oldest son to fulfill this honor, but the boy was not willing to follow through.
- Judges 8:27 The golden Ephod may have looked like the one worn by the High Priest. It was intended to honor God, but it became an object of worship. Were these people nuts, or what? That's like worshiping the bronzed baby shoes parents used to put on display.
Judges 9

Judges 9:1 Shechem was the place the Lord appeared to Abraham (Genesis 12:6-7). It was the place where Joshua led the nation to recite the Law (Joshua 8:30-35). And this is where Abimelech lived with his mother and his uncles.

Judges 9:2 Since his mother was only a concubine (a woman who Gideon would sleep with when he visited the town), Abimelech was probably shunned by his half-brothers. He and his mother would have been cared for by Gideon, but Gideon did not marry this woman. So there was probably hatred behind Abimelech’s accusation. There’s a good chance his 70 brothers didn’t want to be kings anyway.

Judges 9:5 Abimelech did not merely kill his brothers. This was murder. "On one stone" implies a mass public execution, which is probably why Abimelech hired those reckless troublemakers. I wonder, was Abimelech’s real motive personal vengeance?

Judges 9:6 Abimelech becomes king of Shechem, not Israel. And no where is Abimelech called a judge. His was a self-made monarchy. And it just goes to show how far from God these people had fallen.

Judges 9:1-6 Abimelech becomes King, but manages this by purchasing followers and killing all but one of his brothers. However, in spite of this, the people of Shechem crown this man as king. Why? Why would they do this after such dishonest behavior? Although we are appalled at this behavior today, back then it was common practice. This sort of thing happened all the time. If we consider that Abimelech was a Hebrew (the people God was trying to change), and yet he stooped to such underhanded methods, can you imagine how wicked the other nations must have been.

Judges 9:8-15 The point that Jotham is trying to make in this fable is that only worthless people seek to be lord over the people, for those who are worthy are busy doing things that are useful and helpful for others.

Judges 9:28 The call to serve the true sons of Hamor is an indication that a large number of people living in Shechem were Canaanites (see Genesis 34:26).
Judges 9:45 Archeology has confirmed this 12th century destruction of Shechem. It remained a pile of rubble until it was rebuilt by Jeroboam and turned into his capital (1 Kings 12:25).

April 3: Judges 10-12

Judges 10

Judges 10:1 Dude, the Bible mentions a man named Dodo. That's cool! His grandson Tola becomes the next Judge of Israel, but since there were no foreign oppressors mentioned, it may have been from internal strife. That's sad. God had to raise up someone to deliver these people from themselves. The same thing could be said about Jair (Judges 10:3).

Judges 10:6 Israel has completely abandoned their worship of God. Does this mean they ignored all the festivals, the holy laws, and the sacrifices? Or does this mean they no longer behaved in a way the glorified God? We get the impression from later texts that Israel may have followed the rituals (the festivals, the sacrifices, and the other external things which would have been unique to their culture), but ignored the things that demonstrated their holiness (Isaiah 1:10-17). You and I must be alert to not fall into the same trappings. God is not truly worshiped if we merely go through the motions. Participating in a religious ritual is not what God desires. He is looking for a heart bent toward Him in humility and service (Micah 6:8).

Judges 10:14 If these gods that Israel worshiped were so worthy of their devotion; if Israel could be lured away by some golden statue, then let those golden gods rescue Israel. And truthfully, when we worship things other than God, are we not telling Him that we believe these other "gods" are more powerful than Him? I'd like to see Molech part the sea, to bring water out of a rock, to keep my shoes and clothing from wearing out after 40 years.
Judges 11

Judges 11:1-3 Jephthah was driven away from his home much like Abimelech. He was probably half Canaanite. And he seemed to attract a bunch of rebels. What they rebelled against though is unknown. Were they rebelling against the Canaanite gods that were being worshiped? Or was Jephthah really a rabble rouser. If so, doesn't it seem odd to you that God would call such a trouble maker a Judge?

Judges 11:15-27 Jephthah seems to know his history pretty well, and he seems quite willing to give all the credit to God. Is it possible that this son of a prostitute really had his heart bent toward God? Is it possible that this is what caused him to be an outcast?

Judges 11:30-31 A rather stupid vow. What happens if it is a child or a wife? To offer a child as a burnt offering was similar to worshiping the god Molech. Well, guess what happens?

Judges 11:34-35 See what happens? The lesson is to think long and hard before you make a vow to the Lord. You better be ready to fulfill that vow one day. What is unfortunate is that Jephthah apparently did not know of the law which stated a person could be redeemed with silver, and released from their vow (Leviticus 27:1-8). Was there not a Priest nearby who could have helped in this situation? Maybe, but perhaps he may not have even known this. The Law even forbids such sacrifices (Leviticus 18:21). However, some scholars believe that she merely became a life-long virgin that served at the Tabernacle (kinda like a nun). The argument could go either way.

Judges 12

Judges 12:1 The divisive attitude in the land continues to get worse. When the tribes east of the Jordan built a memorial altar, the western tribes were ready to fight (Joshua 22:10-34). Now they are ready to fight because they were not invited to a fight. You've got to be kidding me. It seems Israel is becoming quite
hot tempered lately. And that is a sign that they are becoming just like the people living around them. They are quick to kill but slow to mercy.

 Judges 12:6 Shib-bo' leth means "Flowing Stream". Apparently this test would be similar to those who call a small stream a Creek and those who call it a Crick. It's like the difference I've noticed even here in America. We are all Americans, but some of us carry our groceries home in a bag, and others carry them home in a sack. It was this kind of difference that helped Jephthah discern who was from Ephraim.

April 4: Judges 13-15

Judges 13

 Judges 13:1 Although the Philistines oppressed Israel for 40 years, there is no record of Israel's repentance. God simply announced that Samson would rescue the nation. Has it really come to this? Has Israel really forgotten all that God had done for them? Have they really abandoned their love for this God who chose them? I suppose I can accept the fact that there will always be people in this world who reject God. They just don't want Him in their life. But how could someone reject God once they have allowed them into their life? Read Hebrews 6:4-6. Do you think this describes Israel? Does it describe you?

 Judges 13:4-5 Samson was to be a Nazirite his whole life. Typically a Nazirite vow was taken for a period of time. A person refrained from wine and from cutting their hair during the period of the vow (Numbers 6:2-6). In this particular case, even the mother of Samson was to participate in this vow while she carried the baby.

 Judges 13:8 I find it significant that the Angel of the Lord appeared to Samson's mother. Does that tell us something about Manoah? Is it an indication of what all the men were like in Israel? When you consider that Israel seems to have forgotten all that God had done for them plus the command given to these
fathers in Deuteronomy 11:19, is it possible that Israel fell away from God simply because the fathers did not pass along the stories of God from one generation to the next?

Judges 13:11 Notice than when Manoah meets the Angel of the Lord he sees Him as a man. There seems to be nothing spectacular about His appearance; no physical sign that this is a celestial being (notice what Samuel adds in Judges 13:16). But, compare what Manoah's wife says about the Angel of the Lord in Judges 13:6. Do you think that being able to see manifestations like these depends upon a person's spiritual maturity? Consider what Elisha saw and what his servant saw in 2 Kings 6:17. Think about what Peter saw that day on the fishing boat (Luke 5:8). He saw Jesus as the Lord. Most of the Pharisees did not. Somehow I get the impression that as a person grows spiritually, they should come to see Jesus as more than just their Savior. They should come to see Him as The Lord.

Judges 13:23 I am convinced that Samson's mother was the spiritual leader in this family; a sure sign of the spiritual collapse in the nation. When men take a back seat in being the spiritual leaders of their families, society is on its way to ruin.

Judges 14

Judges 14:2-4 I would have sided with Samson's parents on this. But instead we are told that God was at work in this. It sure is a lot easier to look back and see where God was at work than to see the hand of God working in our lives presently. Was Samson being disobedient at the moment? Yes he was (see Deuteronomy 7:3). So my question is, did God lead Samson into disobedience, or did God use Samson’s disobedience as a way to bring about something greater?

Judges 14:9 This touching of a dead animal would have made Samson ceremonially unclean, and perhaps have been a violation of his Nazirite vow. By giving this to his parents, they became unclean as well.
Judges 14:12-14 I have no idea why Samson decided to make this wager. My only guess is that he felt spiritually superior to these uncircumcised Philistines, and used this opportunity to rub it in their faces.

Judges 14:16-17 Samson's wife must have been very attractive physically, because she sure was a drama queen. That's what he gets for not using that dating service that promises harmony. But then again, Samson wasn't much better. The depth of his maturity runs very shallow. And he seems to be quite arrogant and self-centered.

Judges 14:18 Samson just called his wife a heifer; a person with an untamed and stubborn spirit (see Hosea 4:16).

Judges 14:19 Askelon was about 23 miles southwest, along the Mediterranean coast - far enough away that no one would associate him as the Samson from Timnah. Samson, still fuming about what his bride had done, went back home to live with mom and dad on the 7th night of the wedding; the night the marriage was to be consummated. Perceiving this as an annulment, the woman was given to the best man instead.

Judges 15

Judges 15:1-2 It seems that Samson's marriage was to be a concubinage, where the woman would live with her parents and the man would visit periodically (compare Judges 8:31). She would be cared for, hence the present of a goat. This was probably not a reconciliation gift, but the expected gift on a husband's periodic visit.

Judges 15:4 The Hebrew word here Shu-'al can also be interpreted as Jackal. They run in packs and are more easily caught. It would have taken a considerable amount of time to catch 300 individual foxes, unless God brought them to Samson.

Judges 15:11 Apparently the men of Judah were content to let the Philistines rule over them. They simply accepted this as a way of life. That's sad, especially when they had other Judges rise up and deliver them in the past. How quickly they forgot.
Judges 15:14 I want you to notice something here. Samson did not have unlimited strength that he could use whenever he wished. His strength came only when the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him (compare Judges 14:6 and Judges 14:19).

Judges 15:16 Through the power of the Lord, Samson piled these 1000 men into heaps and heaps with only the Jawbone of a donkey. This is simply amazing because it's not like he sneaked into town and killed these thousand in stealth. This would have been a mob that could have rushed upon him as one.

Judges 15:20 Experts agree that this event happened around 1069 BC. Samson would have been about 20 years old here. He judged Israel for 20 years, marking his death at 1049 BC.

April 5: Judges 16-18

Judges 16

Judges 16:1-2 There is no indication why Samson went to Gaza (35 miles southwest of his home in Zorah). But while he was there his hormones took control again and he slept with a prostitute. There's a good chance she was a Philistine. Why Samson had a thing for these Philistine women is beyond me.

Judges 16:3 Tearing out the town gate is a way of tearing down a city's security.

Judges 16:4 According to the Harper Bible Dictionary, Delilah means "loose hair", so she may have been a temple prostitute.

Judges 16:5 There were probably 5 of these Philistine rulers, one for each of the major Philistine cities. 5,500 pounds of silver would equal several thousand dollars. Jesus, on the other hand, was betrayed for only thirty small coins. That's sad.

Judges 16:6-17 Samson may have been quite strong, but he certainly wasn't very bright. I can't believe he didn't see through this ploy. And I can't believe how
sound of a sleeper Samson was. Either that or he was just going along with the whole game, taunting Delilah's futile attempts to gain the upper hand.

 Judges 16:19 Samson's strength did not come from his long hair but from God. By allowing it to be cut, Samson showed disobedience to the Lord, and the Lord withdrew because of that disobedience. There was nothing magical in the hair, but there was something supernatural in the man.

 Judges 16:23 According to texts discovered at Ugarit, the Philistine god Dagon was the father of Baal Haddu. Jerome wrote in his 4th century commentary that Dagon was half fish, based upon the Hebrew word dag. The Arabic word dagana means "to be cloudy, rainy", which seems to fit the description of a fertility god. Whatever the image of Dagon may have looked like, the Philistines accredited him with delivering Samson. And they threw a great celebration.

 Judges 16:26 This temple would have been a long inner chamber with two major pillars supporting the roof in the center of the room. Samson would have been in the center of this room with a bunch of uncircumcised Philistines taunting and teasing him, and perhaps mocking the God of Israel.

 Judges 16:28 Samson's prayer seems selfish. He was more interested in getting revenge than in honoring God or in delivering Israel from bondage. This whole section about Samson is a lesson on keeping a vow; on allowing your life to be controlled by God rather than being controlled by your own passionate lust.

 Judges 17

 As Samuel is recording the history of the Judges, chapters 17-21 seem to be epilogues, giving illustrations of the apostasy (turning away from God) that plagued Israel during the period of the Judges. In this particular example, Micah saw nothing wrong with establishing a place to worship within his home, or making a carved image (see Exodus 20:4). He asks this young Levite from Bethlehem to stay in his house and serve as priest, another violation of God's commands (Numbers 3:10). This event would have happened early on, considering that this Levite was Jonathan, Moses' grandson (Judges 18:30).
Judges 18

As the tribe of Dan continued to be driven out of their land, most of them went north looking for another place to settle. Seeing a peaceful village, they storm the town, steal the idols from Micah, and lure Jonathan away. They establish a place of worship and a family of priests to lead them, and they continued to worship there even after the tabernacle is established in Shiloh. This false worship in Dan was perhaps the beginning of what we see happening with Jeroboam I who established a Northern Kingdom shrine at Dan (see 1 Kings 28-31).

April 6: Judges 19-21

Judges 19

To set the stage for this story we must understand a few things. It all begins with the statement in verse 1: Israel had no king. There was anarchy and injustice throughout the land. This means that although the nation was to be governed by God, they had completely abandoned Him and followed their own passions. There was nothing about the nation that set them apart from any other. The Levite was not Jonathan (from chapter 18). And this woman was a second status wife (a concubine), a practice that was never approved by God.

Judges 19:10 Traveling six miles from Bethlehem, they come to Jerusalem. But Jerusalem was not an occupied city at this time. It was controlled by the Jebusites who lived there.

Judges 19:14 They travel about four more mile and come to Gibeah, a city within the land of Benjamin, and a friendly city filled with fellow Israelites.

Judges 19:20 In words reminiscent of Lot (Genesis 19:1-11), the old man warns them not to spend the night on the square. Really? Has Israel fallen this far? Have they now become no better than Sodom?

Judges 19:22 This behavior is appalling. Not just the lust that's going on here but the complete disregard for human dignity. Were these troublemakers Israelites,
or where they Canaanite? Either way it is a poor testimony. If they were fellow Jews, they have truly abandoned God. If they were Canaanites, the Jews in the town were just as guilty, for they did nothing to stop this injustice. We get the impression that this has been going on for quite a while (based on the old man's alarm), yet nothing seemed to be done about it. This time Israel needed someone to deliver them from themselves.

judges 19:25 I cannot believe the Levite did this. I cannot believe he would travel all the way down to Bethlehem to bring her home, and then be that cold as to "feed her to the lions". This is another indication of how far Israel has fallen. Even to a Levite there was no sanctity of human life.

judges 19:29-30 This too is appalling. It was so gruesome that it shocked the rest of Israel as well. Years later God will condemn this action, and use it as evidence against Israel (Hosea 9:9).

judges 20

judges 20:12 As the rest of the nation rallies to address this crime, they at least speak words of reason to the town of Gibeah. Why destroy the whole town when the real criminals were the troublemakers?

judges 20:18-48 In this battle the rest of the nation seeks the Lords guidance. Truly this was not something to be taken lightly. They were attacking a town within the land of Benjamin. Three times they ask. On the third battle they are victorious. But the nation weeps because of this. It was not a glorious victory; it was heart breaking discipline (judges 21:3). By the way, this even would have occurred not long after the death of Joshua (see judges 20:28) since Phinehas is still mentioned as High Priest. This is why chapters 17-21 need to be read as a summary of Israel's downward spiral to moral depravity, not as a chronology of events.

judges 20:48 I don't know this for sure but it seems even the old man who gave shelter to the Levite might have been killed. I don't know this for sure, but I would have hoped he had been spared. Maybe he left the city shortly after the Levite did.
Judges 21

The rest of the nation faced a problem. In their discipline of Benjamin, they nearly wiped out the entire tribe. 600 men remained. They had also taken a vow to not give daughters to the tribe of Benjamin. What to do, what to do. As a solution seems to present itself, they still come up 200 brides short. However, like a bunch of lawyers, they find a loophole. And I wonder what God must have been thinking this the whole time. What did He think about this whole loophole business?

April 7: Ruth 1-2

Ruth

Ruth is read annually by orthodox Jews on the Feast of Pentecost. This feast celebrates the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai. Ruth's betrothal took place during this festive harvest season.

No one knows for sure who wrote Ruth. Some say that it was Samuel, written near the time David was anointed king. It would have been used to justify David's claim to the throne (through Ruth and Boaz, his great-grandparents). Others say that it was written during the end of David's reign, or perhaps at the beginning of Solomon's.

The story unfolds during Israel's Dark Ages - during the time of the Judges. Since Ruth was David's great-grandmother (he began to rule in 1010 BC.), this would put Ruth's story in the last half of the 12th century. Ruth may have been alive during the Judgeship of Gideon.

I love Ruth's place in our Bible. After reading 21 chapters of moral degradation, here is a story of courage, purity, faith, and responsible living. Against the backdrop of Judges, Boaz stands out like a beacon of hope; a reminder that even in the darkest times, God was still working in the hearts of a faithful few.
Ruth was from Moab, a people descended from Lot's oldest daughter (Genesis 19:30-38).

I can’t say enough about this story. What I see in Boaz, I see also in Christ. He was willing to redeem, so was Jesus. And the parcel of land he received through his redemption of Ruth guaranteed that one day Joseph & Mary would have to travel back to this little town because of the census. See Leviticus 25:25-28 for a full explanation on the Old Testament instruction concerning redemption. In this short book I see just how intricately God works and moves in people’s lives to bring about things that glorify and honor His name. Paul confesses this in Philippians 2:13.

**Ruth 1**

- **Ruth 1:2** An Ephrathite was another name for a person living in Bethlehem.
- **Ruth 1:16** Ruth chooses life with Naomi over her family, her national identity, and her religious idolatry. Like Abraham, Ruth decided to leave her ancestor's land and go to the land of promise. And Ruth did this while Naomi continued to tell her to stay.
- **Ruth 1:20-22** Naomi, which means "sweetness" did not fit her current circumstances. But what I find interesting is that Naomi claimed God had brought misfortune upon her. And yet it was through this misfortune that King David would be born. Like Naomi we see events through eyes that look at the here and now. We fail to realize that God just may be orchestrating events for a future glory.

**Ruth 2**

- **Ruth 2:3** Ending up in this field was no accident. God was at work here. A lesson you and I need to learn is that when things seem the darkest, God's hand is still close by moving and directing things according to His plan. We, the reader, know the outcome. We want to shout into the pages of our Bible "Just hang in there! This will all soon be over". Perhaps God is shouting the same words to us, but we are too consumed by grief and sorrow to hear them.
Ruth 2:8-12 Do you hear the kindness and tenderness behind the voice of Boaz? These are the men and women in the Bible that make us want to shout for joy. Those who demonstrate such gentleness, such grace and mercy; these are the real hero's in the Bible. A man may be strong enough to pull down a Philistine temple, but what man is strong enough to pull down pride and arrogance?

Ruth 2:22 A family redeemer was someone who would help continue the family name, and be the one to redeem property, which would be significant because that little parcel of land that Elimelech had owned would one day be the land David would roam while tending his sheep. And had there been no family redeemer, that land would have been lost.

April 8: Ruth 3-4, 1 Chronicles 4

Ruth 3

Ruth 3:7 Ruth did nothing immoral here. This was a ceremonial act that was completely proper. It was probably done in the dark so Boaz had an opportunity to reject the proposal without the whole town knowing about it.

Ruth 3:12 Boaz displays his integrity by pointing out that there is another who is more closely related to Elimelech that he is. But Boaz assures Ruth that she will not be cast aside. I think Boaz was amazed at how much of the Law Ruth really knew. A lesser woman would have simply ran off with someone younger. And considering the spiritual condition of the land, Ruth's integrity would have been outstanding (Ruth 3:11).

Ruth 4

Ruth 4:4-6 The Law of Redemption stated that with the death of Elimelech, his land would have been given to his oldest son - Mahlon. As Mahlon's widow, Ruth's next son would become the rightful heir of the land. The relative to act as the redeemer would provide that child, but get none of the land. The unnamed
relative wanted the land for himself, which was not the honorable thing to do. Boaz though, was indeed a man of honor. And for that, I respect him as much as I do King David. So Boaz becomes a redeemer so that Naomi has an inheritance; she has a place among God's people. Jesus does the same for you and me. He redeems us so that we have an inheritance; a place among God's people.

Ruth 4:12 It's interesting that the leaders reference Tamar and Judah here. Tamar had the same problem Ruth had. Both had lost their husbands. Both needed a family redeemer. But Tamar resorted to deceit. Ruth did what was honorable. Judah acted with indifference. Boaz acted with honor (contrast this story with Genesis 38:14-26).

Ruth 4:18-22 From Judah's son Perez we follow the line down to David. Hezron was among the family that went down to Egypt (Genesis 46:12). Amminadab was the father-in-law of Aaron (Exodus 6:23). Nashon was head of the house of Judah (Numbers 7:12). According to Matthew 1:5 Boaz's ancestor was Rahab, the Canaanite harlot from Jericho.

1 Chronicles 4

1 Chronicles 4:1-8 The Chronicler continues to expand the Family Tree. Some names are familiar, some are not. Even though this section details other descendants of Judah, we may not be able to understand their importance to the nation. For example, verse 2 mentions Samson’s family (see Judges 13:2). And in verse 5 we find out that this was the family of Amos the Prophet (see Amos 1:1). Considering the leadership these two men provided the nation, it was important for Israel to see their connection to Judah.

1 Chronicles 4:9-10 This is the Jabez that was the subject of an entire book a number of years ago. His life is mentioned as part of Israel’s history, not as an instruction for you and me on how to get what we want from God.

1 Chronicles 4:11-18 Israel's first judge (Othniel) was a descendant of Judah, his father being Kenaz. Caleb (the one who served with Joshua) was also called a
descendant of Kenaz (see Joshua 14:6). So the Caleb and the Kenaz mentioned in verse 15 must have been named after their ancestors.

1 Chronicles 4:21-23  Shelah was Judah's youngest son, the one he had promised to marry Tamar (Genesis 38:14).

1 Chronicles 4:24-43  The tribe of Simeon never really grew very large (see verse 27) and they eventually were absorbed in the clan of Judah. Most of this genealogy has no other parallels in the Old Testament. The section finished with a note that the clan of Simeon defeated all the descendants of Ham living in the region of Gaza (the descendants of Ham were from Egypt). Also this clan defeated the Amalekites living in and around the region. The Amalekites were descended from Esau's son Eliphaz. Keeping in mind that the writer of Chronicles was trying to highlight God working though a certain clan of people, he felt these defeats would help bolster the confidence of the small remnant of Israel that returned from exile.

April 9: 1 Samuel 1-4

1 Samuel

Although we credit Samuel as the author of this book, there had to be later additions. 1 Samuel begins with Samuel's birth (1120 BC). 2 Samuel concludes with David on his death bed, long after Samuel had died. Toward the end of 1 Samuel reference is made to Judah and Israel, a division that didn't take place until after Solomon died (931 BC). But that does not mean we must discredit the words found in these two books. Someone else just continued to record the history of events that surrounded Israel's first two kings; Saul and David.

Solomon takes the throne in 971 BC, so the entire period of 1 and 2 Samuel spans 150 years.
After 300 years of moral and spiritual decline under the Judges, God steps in and gives the nation Samuel. He would serve as an elder, judge, prophet, and priest. Yet this leadership would not be enough. The nation needed a strong military leader to assure that Israel would not be destroyed by the nations around her.

1 Samuel 1

1 Samuel 1:1 Elkanah lived in Ramah, about 25 miles north of Jerusalem. According to Eusebius (early church leader and historian, 263-339 AD) this town is identified as Arimathea, the home of Joseph of Arimathea. Also of note is that Elkanah was a direct descendant of Levi (1 Chronicles 6:33-38).

1 Samuel 1:6 In light of the many times in Israel’s history where a barren woman’s first child would become a blessing to the nation, you’d think the people would be a bit more respectful. You’d think they would be a bit more encouraging. Yes, Hannah was in the middle of a barren season, but seasons change. Could they not have been a bit more encouraging? I see this happening in the life of Christians and in the life of a church. We go through times of barreness; where it seems we are under God’s curse. But He is waiting for the right time in order to bring a blessing through us. In the middle of the dry season we must wait expectantly, for only the Lord knows how long the dry season will last.

For example, look what Eli’s encouraging words did for Hannah (1 Samuel 1:17-18). I’m not saying God will grant all our requests, but it just seems to me that we need to build up one another through encouragement rather than tear one another down through criticism. Does it really hurt to come along side someone who is down and pray with them; to petition God for them?

1 Samuel 1:28 Samuel, now about 3 years old, is given to the Lord under circumstances very similar to Samson (Judges 13:2-5). I wonder how often Samuel got to see mom and dad? Did they get to visit on those occasions his parents would make the 15 mile trip north to Shiloh? Yes they did (1 Samuel 2:19). As Samuel grew, was he allowed to visit home from time to time? I suspect he was. And I say this because when you consider the righteousness
demonstrated by his parents and the wickedness demonstrated by Eli’s sons, Samuel must have learned what godliness looks like from some other place. I think it was mom and dad.

1 Samuel 2

1 Samuel 2:1-10 In a clear reference to Peninnah, Hannah speaks of her joy and her strength because God had answered her prayer. It almost seems that she knew what Samuel would do for the nation.

1 Samuel 2:12-17 This is the wickedness I was talking about earlier. It's a good thing Samuel didn't copy their behavior.

1 Samuel 2:25 What an incredible verse. “If one man sins against another, God will mediate for him; but if a man sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him?” The answer, of course, is found in Jesus our Lord. Did Eli really know what he was saying? These words carry eternal significance, and set the stage for the next few verses.

1 Samuel 2:35 The line of Priests that were descended from Eli would one day come to an end (see 1 Kings 2:27). But more importantly, a new line of priests would be established (see 1 Kings 2:35). Abiathar was a descendant of Aaron's son Ithamar. Zadok was a descendant of Aaron's son Eleazer. But ultimately the priesthood and kingship would rest upon the Messiah; Jesus our Lord.

1 Samuel 3

1 Samuel 3:2-3 Samuel must have fallen asleep waiting to refuel the Golden Lampstand just outside the Holy of Holies (remember the description of the Inner Sanctuary). Why this young boy, not a priest, was allowed in there is beyond me. That was the duty of a priest (see Leviticus 24:3).

1 Samuel 3:7 Here is a great truth that is often overlooked. Young Samuel had not yet heard the voice of the Lord, and he needed wise Eli to help him discern. It is essential that more mature Christians be ready and willing to help younger Christians discern the voice of the Lord in their lives; to help them tell the
difference between mere thoughts and His direction. I wonder how many mature Christians would be able to do that?

1 Samuel 3:17-18 Although Eli was not very good at discipline, he was a humble servant of God. He accepted the Lord's judgment. And poor Samuel had to be the one to bring this troubling news. I imagine he couldn't even lift his eyes to tell this to the old man. Eli's judgment didn't happen right away though. Eli lived for a short time after this. And the priesthood continued in his family for three more generations (see 1 Samuel 14:3).

1 Samuel 4

1 Samuel 4:6-9 The Philistines rightly feared the presence of the Lord. Only, God was not there with Israel's army. God was using this battle as a way of disciplining Israel. Just because they brought the sacred Ark didn't automatically mean they would win. They wrongly assumed the power was within the object. In reality, the power was and is in the Lord. He does not need, and never has needed, the presence of the ark to defeat an enemy. The Philistines remarked about how Israel's God defeated Egypt. But that happened long before the Ark was ever made.

1 Samuel 4:11 The Ark of the Lord is captured by the Philistines, and the sons of Eli are killed. Do you find it interesting that the Philistines were able to carry the Ark away without being killed? Did they carry it with the poles? Did they not reach out and touch it? Know this, God allowed the Ark to be captured to teach Israel an important lesson. Behave in an ungodly way, and God will withdraw even from His own people. This truth is echoed by Israel and by Eli's daughter-in-law (1 Samuel 4:22). I wonder if this is what Jesus meant in John 15:6?
April 10: 1 Samuel 5-8

1 Samuel 5

1 Samuel 5:1-5 I love this story. I absolutely love this story. The Philistines took the Ark 50 miles southwest to Ashdod. There they laid it at Dagon's feet as though to say that he was the victor; that he had triumphed over God. Yea right. Even Dagon knew that he was in the presence of the Most High. The statue falls face first before the Ark; the symbol of God. The word "Threshold" can also be understood as the pedestal where Dagon stood. The Philistines were so embarrassed that they refused to set foot upon this pedestal.

1 Samuel 5:6-8 The town of Ashdod is then overrun by mice (or rats) that spreads some sort of plague. The word "plague" in Hebrew is the word Ophel, which can be understood as hemorrhoids. So the presence of the Ark in Ashdod becomes a pain in the butt.

1 Samuel 5:8-9 Next the Ark is sent to Gath, about 12 miles southeast. But just like Ashdod, the Lord sends them a bad case of hemorrhoids.

1 Samuel 5:10-11 On its way to Ekron the people of that city throw a fit. Thinking it was their turn to suffer, they plead to send that darn thing away. Give it back to Israel.

1 Samuel 6

1 Samuel 6:1-9 So basically the Philistine priests and diviners are saying God won. Israel's God just whooped up on Dagon. Unless, of course, they were mistaken (don't want to make the Philistine lords angry here). So why not let the blame fall somewhere else. Why not let the cows decide who is guilty?

1 Samuel 6:10 The Ark was designed to be carried by a Levite, not put on a cart (Exodus 25:12). Yet the Philistine lords sent it home on a cart. This would have been quite insulting.

1 Samuel 6:13-18 After being lost to the Philistines for six months, the Ark returns home. Beth-Shemesh is about 15 miles west of Jerusalem. But to handle
the Ark or to even open the Ark to look inside (1 Samuel 6:19) was a clear violation of the Lord's commands (Numbers 4:5, 15, 20). This is why God's anger burned against them. The point here is that not only do unbelievers (the Philistines) suffer when the Law of the Lord is disregarded, but believers (Israel) do as well.

1 Samuel 7

1 Samuel 7:1-2 The Ark is then taken to Kiriath-jearim where it stayed in the family of Abinadab for about 100 years.

1 Samuel 7:5 The Ark was in Kiriath-jearim for 20 years when Samuel finally begins his public ministry. Samuel rightly implies that the return of the Ark does not mean God is with Israel. The nation needed to purge themselves of unrighteousness. In the same way, going to church does not mean a person is right with God. A person is made right with God by allowing Jesus to purge them of unrighteousness.

1 Samuel 7:7-11 Samuel took the people to Mizpah, about 7 miles north of Jerusalem. There these people prayed and offered sacrifices. It is right to assume that the Levites were there along with the High Priest because the Lord accepted their offerings. And unless they had been offered according to God's decrees, they would not have been accepted.

1 Samuel 7:13 The battle must have ended Philistine occupation in Israel, but we all know the Philistines would come time and time again to harass Israel.

1 Samuel 7:15-17 Samuel spent the rest of his life traveling throughout a 50 mile circuit acting as a judge in Israel.

1 Samuel 8

1 Samuel 8:1-5 After Samuel erects the Ebenezer stone (1084 BC), he leads Israel for the next 30 years. As he grew older the people once again start asking for a king. Isn't it a shame about Samuel's sons? Why do things like this happen? How do things like this happen? Perhaps the nation was reminded of Eli's sons,
and didn't want to go back to those wicked days before Samuel had come along. Isn't it amazing what difference one godly person can make in this world?

1 Samuel 8:7 The request for a human king was not improper. God had even promised such a leader (Numbers 24:17). But Israel refused to wait for God's timing.

1 Samuel 8:10-18 This is not a pretty picture of a monarchy. But it is a true picture. And Samuel's warning is that once the nation starts down this path, there is no turning back. And to seek this before God ordained it meant that Israel would get a king before the king God had in mind would arrive. I wonder what would have been different had they waited. It also makes me wonder what life would be like for us if we waited on God to work things out instead of taking mattering into our own hands.

April 11: 1 Samuel 9-12

1 Samuel 9

1 Samuel 9:3-10 Saul and the servant find themselves in a seemingly futile journey. They are looking for a couple of lost donkeys. But considering the size of the land, God only knows where they could be by this time . . . wait . . . God does know where they are. And perhaps God is using the donkeys to lead Saul toward Samuel.

1 Samuel 9:15-17 God knew that Saul was on his way because God was directing these two men. Samuel was being directed by the Lord Himself; Saul was being directed by circumstances.

1 Samuel 9:20 I wonder who found the donkeys? Don't tell me they simply wandered home! You mean Saul and the servant had been wandering all over creation looking for those stupid animals when they could have stayed home all along? Okay, that's not quite how Saul reacted, but that's what would have gone through my mind. What is significant about this is that through a rather frustrating
experience, God is about to do something wonderful through Saul. King of Israel is certainly not what Saul was thinking about. He was probably grumbling about the inconvenience. He was aggravated at those stupid animals. He was thinking about how tired he was; about getting home. But God was thinking about Israel's future, and Saul was just the man He had in mind.

1 Samuel 9:21 Notice how humble Saul's word are here. Notice the absence of pride or arrogance. Although he was tall and handsome (1 Samuel 9:2), Saul knows this is an honor that he did not earn or deserve. This humility is refreshing. I just wish it would have lasted.

1 Samuel 10

1 Samuel 10:1 This pouring of oil is a way of symbolizing that someone or something is set apart as holy, and dedicated to the Lord's service (Exodus 30:23-33).

1 Samuel 10:2-8 As Saul walked along, these three signs would be given to him to confirm that indeed Samuel had spoken the truth. God intended to take this insignificant young man and set him up as king.

1 Samuel 10:9-11 Was Saul converted or spiritually regenerated here? Probably not. More than likely he was simply granted a supernatural ability in order for him to serve as king. And to prophesy did not mean telling of future events but to speak about the great things of God. It would have been a similar experience to what the Judges received (Judges 6:34).

1 Samuel 10:13-16 I wonder why Saul didn't say anything about being the king? Did he still not believe, or was he really that humble?

Look what happens when Samuel bring the nation together in order to select the king (1 Samuel 10:17-24). Why Samuel chose to go through this process is not clear. Perhaps it was to let the people know that God did indeed look through the entire nation for the king. But when Saul was named, he was hiding among the baggage! Again I am amazed at how shy and unassuming this young man was. Perhaps his height made him uncomfortable.
True to any who are leaders, there was a group that stood with him and a group that stood against him (1 Samuel 10:27). There will always be people opposed to a leader. Moses endured it, Saul had to deal with it. David faced it in his own family. Jesus endured it upon the cross. Just because a person is a spiritual leader or even a servant within a church does not mean they will be immune to personal attacks. The true test of a leader anointed by God is an unwillingness to fight back. A leader who has been ordained by God does not need human affirmation. If God has set you up as a leader, He obviously wants you there.

However, Saul's leadership position would not last. God would eventually remove him because of arrogance, pride, vengeance, and disobedience. Somehow I think God knew this, for He had promised that through Judah the dynasty of kings would eventually produce the Messiah (Genesis 49:10). Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin. Regardless of that, God had appointed Saul as king for the time being.

Before we get to chapter 11, the Dead Sea Scrolls add an extra paragraph to chapter 10. It does not change the meaning of anything, it merely adds some historical background information about what unfolds next.

[Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had been grievously oppressing the people of Gad and Reuben who lived east of the Jordan River. He gouged out the right eye of each of the Israelites living there, and he didn’t allow anyone to come and rescue them. In fact, of all the Israelites east of the Jordan, there wasn’t a single one whose right eye Nahash had not gouged out. But there were 7,000 men who had escaped from the Ammonites, and they had settled in Jabesh-gilead.] - This paragraph, which is not included in the Masoretic Text, is found in Dead Sea Scroll 4QSama.

1 Samuel 11

1 Samuel 11:5 The King of Israel is out plowing the field. This may seem strange but consider that the monarchy had not been established (where the king rules from a palace). At this point Israel probably saw the kingship as merely an extension of a Judge.
1 Samuel 11:6 Back in Judges 20:46, only 600 men from the tribe of Benjamin remained alive after civil war. To ensure that the tribe would not die out, 400 virgins from Jabesh Gilead were captured and given to Benjamin. Since Saul was from Benjamin, there is a good chance his family came from this city. This threat was personal.

1 Samuel 11:8 The fact that Israel and Judah are listed separately here is an indication that this portion of 1 Samuel must have been written or edited after the nation divided in 931 BC.

1 Samuel 11:12-13 Saul demonstrates incredible restraint here.

1 Samuel 12

1 Samuel 12:1-5 Samuel intended to show Israel that just as he was trusted in the past, so too could his present words be trusted.

1 Samuel 12:6-25 Contrary to God's desire, the nation was given a king. And this king's first campaign was a glorious victory. Would Israel see this victory as God's? Would they give Him the glory? Or would they assume the victory came through human cunning and power?

1 Samuel 12:22 This is a true statement. Just because Israel sinned did not mean God would turn His back on them. As a matter of fact, God never did totally abandon Israel during the captivity that would come later. That was punishment, not abandonment.

April 12: 1 Chronicles 9, 1 Samuel 13-14

1 Chronicles 9

1 Chronicles 9:1 The preceding genealogy listed tribes and clans prior to the exile. What follows is the listing of those who settled in Jerusalem after the exile.

1 Chronicles 9:2-9 Two tribes (or clans) return back to the area. Considering the number that left, this is not a huge amount.
1 Chronicles 9:10-13 If you had been paying attention to the names of the leading priests throughout Israel's history thus far, you'll recognize Azariah's descendants. Because of his lineage, he was indeed qualified to serve as the chief priest.

1 Chronicles 9:16 No, this was not the same Obadiah you're thinking of. That Obadiah was a prophet when Ahab was King of Israel. There's no way he lived this long.

1 Chronicles 9:19 Shallum was apparently descended from a long list of Levites who held the responsibility to guard the entrance to the Tabernacle (Phinehas) and the Temple. The extent of their responsibilities is listed in 1 Chronicles 9:22-32. But since the Temple had been destroyed and many of the sacred items taken, there wasn't too much for these people to do right away.

1 Chronicles 9:35-44 Another section devoted to the descendants of King Saul. Perhaps the Chronicler listed these names just to make sure that no descendant would try to take leadership when the remnant returned.

1 Samuel 13

1 Samuel 13:1 Without getting into too deep of a discussion, it's important to point out that the Hebrew text omits Saul's age. It simply reads "Saul was years old when he began to reign, and he reigned and two". Some Bible's include this in their notations. A few early Greek manuscripts have the dates "30" and "40" inserted in the gaps. This is authenticated by Paul in Acts 13:21. However, some scholars claim that the best translation of verse 1 is that Saul was 40 years old when he began to reign, and he reigned over Israel for two years (begin verse 2) when he selected 3,000 special troops . . . Whatever the interpretation it appears this event with the Philistines took place in the second year of Saul's reign.

1 Samuel 13:3-7 After Jonathan's victory at Geba, the Philistine army is roused against Israel. If Jonathan was old enough to lead men into battle, then perhaps Saul was 40 when he began to reign.

1 Samuel 13:8-14 How sad. Saul couldn't even keep one little command given him by God (1 Samuel 10:8) Of course this command said nothing about rousing
an army and starting a fight before God was ready. Maybe Saul started this battle according to his own wishes and not according to God's direction. And if this man can't even follow a simple command like this, then he certainly will not be able to follow something even more demanding.

1 Samuel 13:19-23 I guess these skills had vanished from Israel over the years. Either that or the Philistines had learned of an improved method before they came into the land in 1200 BC. How Saul and Jonathan came to own their weapons is not known.

1 Samuel 14

1 Samuel 14:6-10 "Perhaps the Lord will help us", says Jonathan. I find his comment unusual because in the past it seems that God would first tell someone to go and assure them that He will be with them (compare Judges 6:16 for example). But true to his character, Jonathan moves ahead depending on God for a sign. He was willing to stop if God was not with them. And he was willing to move forward if He was.

1 Samuel 14:18-20 Some Bibles say that Saul asked to have the Ark brought to the camp. Other say that he asked Ahijah to bring the Ephod. Perhaps it was
both. It is right to assume that Ahijah would have been dressed in his priestly garments, considering he was bringing the Ark. Wearing this sacred vest, he would have used the two stones of discernment (Urim and Thummin) to discern God’s will (Exodus 28:29-30). But do you see what Saul said? Looking at the situation he turned to the priest said "Never mind". He felt he knew what God wanted. But Saul made a judgment based upon present circumstances and based upon human reason. That is not the same as listening to the will of God. The will of God will sometimes tell you to stay even though all the physical signs say go. Just because the light is green does not mean we rush through the intersection without looking for other traffic.

1 Samuel 14:27 Was Jonathan guilty here? No, because he had not taken the vow. Just because Saul said it does not mean it carries the same weight as a command from God. Is anyone else beginning to see a bit of arrogance building within Saul? Does he not seem a bit more prideful than he did when he was hiding behind the baggage (1 Samuel 10:22)?

1 Samuel 14:37 Why do you suppose God remained silent? Was it the fact that the men had eaten meat with blood still in it? Or was it Saul's cavalier attitude (see 1 Samuel 14:36)? I don't believe the problem was Jonathan.

1 Samuel 14:42-45 One has to wonder if God was directing the outcome of these lots, especially considering that Jonathan truly had been innocent. He never knew of the vow. Somehow I think God was involved, but not to get Jonathan killed. I think God was directing the outcome so that the rest of the army could begin to see how rash and temperamental Saul was becoming. Truly what he proposed was idiotic, and the men knew this. This army actually seems on the verge of rebellion. Can you imagine telling your king that he is wrong?

1 Samuel 14:52 This is exactly what Samuel had warned a king would do; drafting the sons into war (1 Samuel 8:11).

April 13: 1 Samuel 15-17
1 Samuel 15

- 1 Samuel 15:7-9 It appears that Saul thought himself to be more important than he really was. He may have been big in stature, and he may have been king, but he was still under God’s command. I think all leaders need to remember that no matter how powerful they may become on earth, God is still above them and in control. Look at what Saul does in 1 Samuel 15:12. Really? He set up a monument to himself?

- 1 Samuel 15:15 Saul makes a statement that shows just where his heart truly is. He says that the animals were spared so they could be offered as a sacrifice to the Lord your (Samuel’s) God. Why was He not Saul’s God? Or am I reading too much into the story?

- 1 Samuel 15:22-23 This is good stuff. “To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams”. It doesn’t matter what you might do for God or in the Lord’s name. Without the right attitude in our heart, all our work is useless and in vain (see Matthew 7:22).

- 1 Samuel 15:35 Although Saul would still rule as king for another 15 years, this is the last time Samuel will visit Saul (I'll save the 1 Samuel 28:11 discussion for a later time).

1 Samuel 16

- 1 Samuel 16:4 The reaction from the elders at Bethlehem should demonstrate what life under Saul must have been like. I get the impression that Samuel and Saul were the only ones to know of God’s rejection. Samuel must have mourned Saul’s failure a bit too long (1 Samuel 16:1), and had not conveyed the news to the nation. So perhaps the men in Bethlehem figured that with Samuel coming, something must be wrong in the kingdom, or that Saul needed something, or that there was more bad news about the Philistines.

- 1 Samuel 16:5 Think back to what we read a couple of days ago in Ruth. Remember that little parcel of land that Naomi was able to keep because of Boaz and Ruth? Obed was the father of Jesse, so Jesse and his sons would be living
in that little parcel of land just outside of town. God knew exactly where Samuel was to go and who he was to anoint because God had been planning this all along.

1 Samuel 16:7 There are fewer word more comforting than these. Somehow though, I think David needed to hear them. Notice that Jesse brought everyone in to meet Samuel except David (see 1 Samuel 16:11). How do you suppose this made David feel? I wonder if David even felt valuable in his own home. I wonder if he struggled to feel significant. Later in life, it’s no wonder David felt like a turtle on a fence post (If you ever see a turtle on a fence post, you know someone put it there). God has a divine plan and purpose that supersedes all of us. And that plan involves people like David and people like me. As we are placed in leadership positions by God, we know that it was God who put us there. What an honor and privilege to be used by God. It is God who is honored when someone who the world considers insignificant allows God to work through them.

1 Samuel 16:12 I know this sounds unusual, considering that this is the Middle East. And we all know what the men look like who live there. But to describe David as "Ruddy" is to say that he was red. I'm not saying he was a freckled faced red head boy, but he may have had a darker tone that the rest of the family.

1 Samuel 16:14 This troubling verse can be best understood when you consider what the presence of the Holy Spirit can do for a person. Before Saul was granted kingship, he was just an ordinary guy. When the Spirit came upon him, he became an instrument through which God worked. And that, of course, caught the attention of Satan. The Holy Spirit did not control Saul, as we can see by his disobedient actions. But He did protect Saul. When the Spirit was withdrawn, Saul was open to these attacks by Satan because God had withdrawn His protective hand.

1 Samuel 16:23 Because the Holy Spirit had come upon David, he was able to comfort Saul. And I find it interesting that the presence of the Spirit in a room can
have such a calming effect even upon those who are tormented. Just by being in the room with Saul, perhaps the presence of the Spirit within David caused the evil spirit to depart. This was not exorcism or casting out demons. What Saul was dealing with was not Demon Possession. As disobedient as Saul was, he was still one of God's own. God did not disown Saul as a son, just as a king. So more than likely the evil spirit filled Saul's mind with regrets, made him feel worthless, told him to despair, and stole hope from his heart. And through David, Saul found hope, peace, and assurance once again.

1 Samuel 17

1 Samuel 17:3  Sometime later we see the Philistines encamped a couple miles southwest of Jerusalem (or Jebus as it is sometimes called). Saul calls his troops together and they draw up into battle array. Too afraid to do anything, the two armies kind of get stuck in a stand-off. I'm no strategist, but if I had been Saul I would have sent a garrison back around their front and made a coordinated attack from the rear. Anything would have been better than simply this staring contest.

1 Samuel 17:4-7 Apparently the Philistines grew weary of this stand-off and sent in Goliath. Some translations say that he was over 9 feet tall. The Hebrew text says 6 cubits and a span. Counting a span as 18", that would make him about 8'3" tall. But the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Greek text say 4 cubits and a span, making him about 6'9" tall. Whatever his height, the man would have been intimidating. He threw Israel's army into a panic. Why Goliath had not presented himself in other engagements is not known. This is why some feel that Goliath was a mercenary soldier. He was hired by the Philistine army to bring fear into the hearts of their adversaries. Goliath was probably a descendant of the Rephaim after they were roused by the Ammonites (Deuteronomy 2:20-21), or descended from a tribe of giants known as the Anakim (Numbers 13:33).

1 Samuel 17:8-11 Had Saul been a godly leader, he would have led his army into victory. But see, when people are out of fellowship with God, they can only lead others into defeat.
1 Samuel 17:15 Apparently David had gone home at one point to help dad take care of the sheep. This is what people saw when they looked at David. He was simply good for tending sheep, being an errand boy, and calming those with a troubled soul. He had no value as a leader. No one saw his value in defending the nation. No one saw in him the greatest king Israel would ever know.

1 Samuel 17:26 Contrary to what others saw, David recognized Goliath's taunts for what they were. Goliath was not insulting Israel with his cutting words, he was degrading the God of the universe. And this angered David.

1 Samuel 17:28 Why didn't Eliab's anger burn against Goliath? Why get angry with David. All he did was ask a simple question. Isn't it sad that Israel's army was being destroyed from the inside out (because of fear), and no one seemed to notice? Eliab stood by and did nothing while God was mocked, and he has the audacity to scold David?

1 Samuel 17:37 The sad thing is that Saul could have asked that the Lord be with him, and then Saul could have gone against Goliath himself. Any one of the soldiers could have done this. But they did not because they looked at the problem from a human perspective. In their mind they did not believe they could overcome this foe, and so they were already defeated without ever lifting a sword. Boy, don't we do the same thing? Don't we assess circumstances and come to a conclusion even before we begin? It is not insurmountable circumstances that defeat a person; it is a timid and fearful heart.

1 Samuel 17:49-51 The stone did not kill Goliath, the sword did.

1 Samuel 17:55-58 Why didn't Saul recognize David, especially after David had played his harp for Saul. Well, if you read closely, Saul was asking about David's family. David didn't look at Saul and say "I'm David". He told Saul who his father was. After all, it seems that David was about to become his Son-in-law (1 Samuel 17:25). Also we can rightly assume that David's time with Saul was either brief or intermittent. So if, for example, David had been 12 when he came as Saul's musician, he might have been 18 by the time he attacked Goliath. And Saul no
longer recognized the young man. Consider that just before the battle David had come from home, but this time Saul did not let David go home (1 Samuel 18:2).

April 14: 1 Samuel 18-19, Psalm 59

1 Samuel 18

1 Samuel 18:2 When Samuel first anointed David as king, he may have been called, but he certainly needed much preparation. So God provides him with a tender heart to care for the sheep, He gives him a musician’s heart that is sensitive, He sends him to battle to build up his courage, and here He places him in the palace to learn leadership. Once David learned these things then he was ready to lead. A calling (or an anointing) does not negate the necessity of learning.

1 Samuel 18:4 What Jonathan did here was to signify that he was passing along his rightful place as heir to the throne to David. This is significant. And perhaps Saul noticed this little exchange.

1 Samuel 18:17 Although Saul had tried to kill David twice, here he tries to have him killed in battle, a ploy David would one day use against Uriah (2 Samuel 11:15).

1 Samuel 18:18 Oh, I beg to differ with you David. Your family is something indeed. I guess you just don’t know that yet. I often wonder what great contribution my descendants will make in the kingdom of God? Long after I’m gone, how will God be glorified by those who will come after me?

1 Samuel 18:27 Not the sort of gift I’d bring to a king, but hey, he asked for them. What’s disgusting is that they were carried all the way back to Gibeah (the current capital).
1 Samuel 19

1 Samuel 19:6 Saul vows that David would not be killed. I wonder how long he will keep this vow. Let's see, about one, two, three... ah yes, three verses (1 Samuel 19:9-10).

1 Samuel 19:13 Just what was this idol that David and Michal had in their house? The Hebrew calls it Teraphim. They were large statues that looked like a person's ancestors. Kind of like a statue. In the time of the Romans these statues were actually worshiped. There is no indication that this idol was worshiped by David or Michal. It may have simply been a decoration within the home. Perhaps Michal had snuck it into the home from her father's house.

1 Samuel 19:17 Michal's true character is shown here. She resorted to lying. It seems she feared her father more than she feared God. Maybe she was the one who placed the Teraphim in the home for superstitious reasons?

1 Samuel 19:23 Here even Saul himself began to act like a prophet. To act like a prophet did not mean that Saul began to utter words like Isaiah or Ezekiel. Those prophets told of what God would do. To prophecy is also to tell about God; to sing praises to God. Well, earlier in the story (1 Samuel 19:20) we read that Samuel was leading a group of prophets who were prophesying, or singing about the glory of God. Saul's men come upon the group and are moved by the Spirit of God to join in the worship. Eventually Saul does the same thing. God allows the Spirit to move Saul's heart to worship and praise God, and he forgot all about his evil plan.

Psalm 59

This Psalm introduces itself at this exact point in David's story. He wrote this when Saul sent soldiers to his house. Although David is being hunted down, and although their gossip is filled with hurtful lies and slander, David does not ask that his enemies be destroyed. Rather, he asks that their curses and lies be exposed; that they be caught in the act.
April 15: 1 Samuel 20-21, Psalm 34

1 Samuel 20

• 1 Samuel 20:1-4 When David told Jonathan about what Saul was trying to do, Jonathan didn't believe it. He had never heard his father making any type of scheme. But David reminds Jonathan that since they were friends, Saul would have kept this a secret.

• 1 Samuel 20:14-16 Several years later David will remember this vow by treating a young man named Mephibosheth with dignity and love.

• 1 Samuel 20:30-33 Here we see the real reason Saul hated David. He knew that as long as David lived, the dynasty of Saul would end. And truthfully, when a leader behaves with this kind of rage, it will not take long for his subjects to rebel against him. True, a king must lead the nation; he must make difficult decisions that some people will not like, but a king does not have to be oppressive. He does not have to be a tyrant. After reading about Saul's outbursts I'd almost say that he was bipolar.

• David was probably 20 years old when he fled from Saul. So for the next 10 years he would roam throughout Israel hiding from the king. Throughout this time David was learning much about what it meant to be a Man after God's own heart.
1 Samuel 20

1 Samuel 21:1 Although the Ark was in Kiriath Jearim (1 Samuel 7:2), the Tabernacle apparently was in Nob. Why the two remained separated is not known, but it seems to be a clear sign that God was no longer part of their Worship Service. He wasn't worshiped, the traditions were.

1 Samuel 21:6 The Showbread had just been replaced, so the old bread could be eaten, but only by the priests at Nob (Leviticus 15:18). Jesus references this as He is talking with the Pharisees (Matthew 12:3-4), and reminds them of a concession that the Law permitted - life is more holy than bread (Matthew 12:7-8).

1 Samuel 21:9 Why this sword was kept at the Tabernacle is not known. It kind of makes you wonder if God had them place it there because He knew David would need it in due time.
1 Samuel 21:13-13  David was recognized by the king of Gath, so David pretends to be insane. In the ancient world someone who was insane was seen as an omen from some god. And fearful of provoking a god, they send David away. And truthfully I don't understand why David went to this city in the first place.

Psalm 34

The title of this Psalm places it in relation to the events in 1 Samuel 21:10-14. In Samuel the king's personal name is used (Achish). But here his royal name is mentioned (Abimelech - see Genesis 26:8). As if to remind himself, David confesses that the Lord is a guard who surrounds and defends His people. Sometimes we simply need to remind ourselves of the attributes of our God. When it seems life is crushing us, and people are trying to destroy us, the best thing we can do is remember that the Lord is close to the brokenhearted; He rescues those whose spirits are crushed.

April 16: 1 Samuel 22-23, Psalm 57, 142 & 52, 1 Chronicles 12

1 Samuel 22

1 Samuel 22:1 I wonder what David's family thought about him now? I wonder if they supported him as king or if they went with him because they were afraid of Saul? It's hard to say what David's family felt about him by this point in time. Earlier his dad did not bring him to meet Samuel, and his brothers thought he was just an irritating young punk. Did their attitudes change when he killed Goliath? Did they change after he married the kings daughter or when he killed all those Philistines?

1 Samuel 22:3 Considering that David's great-grandmother was Ruth, perhaps David's parents went to live with relatives.
1 Samuel 22:5 Apparently Gad was among the men who sided with David. It must have been good for David to know that God was still with him in the presence of this prophet.

1 Samuel 22:7-8 Here is a glimpse into the tormented mind of Saul. He is irrational and he believes things that are not true. At no time did David ever try to kill Saul. This is the ranting of a man filled with fear. And his fear seems to be fueled by Satan. Was David really his enemy? Of course not. Was David someone who had been filled with the Spirit? Yes, of course. Does Satan fear the presence of the Holy Spirit? Yes. So if Satan can destroy David, he wins a victory. It appears Satan is trying to use Saul to accomplish this.

1 Samuel 22:17 Here we begin to see the signs of a rebellion against Saul. I’ve a lot of respect for these men. Even though Saul was hot tempered and cruel, they would not attack the Priests of the Lord. Saul had become suspicious of everyone, even his own son. This attitude seems to be prevalent in the nations surrounding Israel where suspicion alone was justification for a king to execute someone. But although other kings ruled with an iron fist and kept people in line with threats of violence, it should not be the way among God’s people. Remember how Jesus exhorted His apostles to not “Lord it over” the people they would serve (Matthew 20:25-28).

1 Samuel 22:18-19 I didn’t like Doeg from the first time I met him. He didn’t seem like a person of good character. So if this massacre symbolizes his character, what do you suppose he was doing in Nob to begin with? 1 Samuel 21:7 says that he had been detained before the Lord that day. What this means is uncertain. It almost seems as if God kept him there long enough to see David so the chain of events from this section would unfold. If that is true, then I don’t understand God’s reasoning here. I can see why Ahimelech might be punished, being a grandson of Eli (consider Samuel’s statement against Eli in 1 Samuel 3:13). But the other priests certainly did not factor into this. Perhaps it was God’s intent that this happen only to Ahimelech, but Saul and Doeg, in their
unrighteousness, took things too far. And if that's true then they were guilty of murder, and by the Law deserved to be stoned.

1 Samuel 22:20-23 One good thing comes from this. Abiathar goes and lives with David. So now there is a priest and a prophet with him. What a striking difference these men will see between Saul and David in the coming years.

1 Samuel 23

1 Samuel 23:5 While in hiding, David and his men learn that a city is under attack by the Philistines. Placing their own safety on the line, the army is victorious. We read here that the Lord directed David to go. But in spite of this, we will learn later that these people were ready to hand David over to Saul. Why would God direct David to do this when He knew how ungrateful these people would be? Perhaps these people reacted the way they did only because Saul was headed to town. And in light of what happened in Nob (1 Samuel 22:19), perhaps they feared for their life.

1 Samuel 23:16 Does anyone else find it ironic that Saul could not find David, but Jonathan could?
1 Samuel 23:17 Had Jonathan lived long enough we are given the impression that he would have been David's right hand man; sort of a vice king. Although Jonathan was the rightful heir to the throne, he gladly gave that role to David, for he knew David had been anointed by God.

1 Samuel 23:21 Oh poor, poor king Saul. Everyone hates you. Everyone is against you. Do you think it might have something to do with your belligerent attitude, your selfishness, and the way you killed all the priests?

1 Samuel 23:28 God demonstrates here that although we humans have the freedom to do and act as we wish, God will intervene through circumstances in order to bring about His divine plan. How else do you explain the Philistine army attacking at just this moment? They certainly were not stupid. They realized there was a sort of civil war taking place in Israel, and this opened the nation up to an outsiders attack. I wonder if the same can be said in a spiritual sense. When church members spend more time devouring one another, are they then at their weakest and consequently more open to attacks by Satan?

Psalm 57

As David continues to flee from Saul, he hides once again in a cave. It may not be the same cave as in Psalm 142, but the feeling is the same. Here, as David considers the problems he is facing, three times he is reminded about the promises of God. He will send forth His unfailing love and faithfulness. God is exalted over all the earth. His heart is confident in God. I do similar things as well. When the troubles of life seem to get me down I start singing hymns. *Great is Thy Faithfulness. He is Exalted. A Mighty Fortress is Our God.* And just as these great songs lift our spirits, so too was David's heart in the face of his earthly troubles.

Psalm 142

After David leaves Gath, he heads to the cave of Adullam. There he writes this Psalm of lament. Joined by his family and about 400 others, perhaps David addressed them with this Psalm. Please note what David says in verse 7. He
does not praise God simply when things are going well. David continued to praise God even in the darkest cave. What David wanted to do is show others that God had been the One to rescue him, and for this he would give God the thanks.

**Psalm 52**

David wrote this Psalm with Doeg in mind (see 1 Samuel 22:9). David certainly does not mince words here. He calls Doeg a liar who loves evil. He says that Doeg is more interested in destroying others, and would rather tell lies just to see others suffer. But this is not true of David. David sees himself as someone who gives of himself for the good of others. As I read this Psalm I’m reminded that sometimes the hurtful words of others cause us to say hurtful things ourselves. And we always want to place ourselves in the right while those who oppose us are in the wrong. I suggest a person be very careful before they claim absolute innocence in a situation. I also believe that those who claim to be Christian must not spew slanderous words, even at those who are evil. We should not be stooping to their level of verbal abuse.

**1 Chronicles 12**

Most of the mighty men mentioned in the previous chapter were men from Judah. Here men are mentioned from other tribes; men who pledged their lives to follow their king. Considering that the Chronicler is trying to show the line from Saul came to an end, he points out that even men from Benjamin (Saul’s tribe) recognized David as king (see 1 Chronicles 12:2). Men from the tribe of Gad aligned themselves with David (1 Chronicles 12:8), as well as men from Manasseh (1 Chronicles 12:19). 1 Chronicles 12:24-37 lists the fighting men who united under David; a clear sign that the whole nation recognized the line of David as the one anointed by God to lead the people (see 1 Chronicles 12:38-40).
April 17: 1 Samuel 24-25, Psalm 54

1 Samuel 24

In 1 Samuel 24:7-15 we find out the depth of David's integrity. I will always be amazed at David's heart. He had a prime opportunity here to put an end to the running and hiding. But instead he chose to do what was right. 1 Samuel 24:12 states that any avenging to be done was in God's hands. David refused to get even or take revenge. He simply demonstrated to Saul the intentions of his heart. He left it up to God to repay Saul for what he was doing. I wonder if you or I would be willing to do the same. And revenge, buy the way, is not always physical. We take revenge often times by defaming that person's character or by spreading gossip and rumors. We tear down someone who has hurt us, and by doing so we are getting even; taking revenge. Would you be willing to hold your tongue against someone who has wronged you or hurt you? That's how far David was willing to go.

1 Samuel 25

1 Samuel 25:1 It is not clear if David attended Samuel's funeral. He probably did not. Just as the entire nation did not attend Ronald Reagan's funeral, the history books still say that “The nation Buried Ronald Reagan".
1 Samuel 25:2-9 At some point in the past David and his men had been in this section of Israel and had given these shepherds protection. As expected, David's men were honorable (see the difference a godly leader can make!).

1 Samuel 25:10-11 Nabal really was a fool. It seems that he knew exactly who David was and what he had been experiencing. After reading some of the Psalms David wrote while in the cave, you get the feeling that David's heart was in anguish. How much more can I endure, Lord? How many more people will be against me? And when he asks for some small help, his courtesy is returned with insult. I honestly don't blame David for this. I really don't. He rescues a city from the Philistines, and they are willing to turn him over to Saul (1 Samuel 23:12). Another city betrays David for no reason at all (1 Samuel 23:19). In spite of Saul's treatment, David does the honorable thing while in the cave, an example of David's honor that apparently did not get reported. Wherever David went he conducted himself with honor and righteousness. Yet here is a man who throws all of this back in his face. I would have snapped as well.

1 Samuel 25:18-19 Notice the amount of food Abigail sends David. Somehow her husband never misses it. Yea, he could have spared the food. He was just some belligerent, selfish, fool who didn't care one bit for anyone other than himself.

1 Samuel 25:26-31 Do you see what Abigail said here. "You've done no wrong". "Your life is in the Lord's hands". "Your enemies will disappear". David had just reminded himself of this in the cave. And I'm sure he heard the voice of God through this wise woman. She points out to David that God had called him for a specific purpose (1 Samuel 25:30). He had a spotless record up to now, and this act of vengeance would give his enemies something to hold against him (1 Samuel 25:31). Could he live the rest of his life with the memory of the crime he was about to commit (1 Samuel 25:31)?

1 Samuel 25:32-35 Into our lives we will meet a Nabal and an Abigail. One person's corrosive speech is like sandpaper to our hearts. Another's words soothe and comfort our soul. The question is which words do you let control you? The words of Satan tear down and destroy while the words of God lift up.
and strengthen (James 3:15-18). When we allow the venomous words of others to control our hearts, we are, in affect, allowing Satan to control our hearts. We would be wise to listen to the voice of the Abigial’s we encounter throughout our lives.

1 Samuel 25:41 Once Nabal dies, Abigail agrees to marry David. She seems rather excited about the proposal. She would replace Michal who had been taken from David and given to another man (Palti). Saul probably took Michal away from David so he could have no royal claim to the throne (being Saul's son-in-law).

Psalm 54

As the heading indicates, this Psalm was written by David after the men of Ziph betrayed him (1 Samuel 23:19). The voluntary offering he mentions in verse 6 would have been the Peace Offering (Leviticus 7:12).

April 18: 1 Samuel 26-28, Psalm 56

1 Samuel 26

1 Samuel 26:2-4 Saul goes on the hunt for David again, this time with 3,000 troops. You’d think they would be able to find David and his 600 men, but somehow they keep eluding Saul. Do you think God was busy confusing their search? Maybe Saul was just a really lousy military commander.

1 Samuel 26:7 David and Abishai snuck into camp, all the way to the center of the ring where Saul and Abner were sleeping. Saul had been surrounded by 3000 men, yet David just sneaked on past. Everyone must have been sleeping. And who made them sleep? God, of course (1 Samuel 26:12). But if you ask me, it was still a bold move; a really bold move. Maybe the army felt so secure in their size that they figured they could sleep.
1 Samuel 26:9 Another lesson on morality by David. I hope Abishai was listening. I hope we are listening. God had ordained that Saul would be king until God took him out of that position. David had no business playing God here. We have no business praying for leaders to fail. The church should be praying that leaders change or that God will work in spite of poor leadership. But we must acknowledge that the leaders we presently have were allowed to be in power by God. And when God has accomplished what He desires, that leader will be removed.

1 Samuel 26:15 You can almost see the blood rush from Abner's face here. Quickly he looks to the king for any sign that he is still alive.

1 Samuel 26:17 Why does Saul continue to call David "My son"?

1 Samuel 26:23 Part of me wants to view David's actions as a sign of his righteousness. But the strategist in me wants to see this as a wise move from someone with political savvy. If David kills Saul, then David's reign will be constantly threatened by those who were loyal to Saul. But if a foreign nation kills Saul, they will receive the wrath. And if David can conquer that nation he gains the respect of those who had been loyal to Saul. But see, that kind of political strategy takes righteousness away from David and makes him seem just like any other ordinary person who is lusting for power. And that's not the David we see in the Bible. His action was motivated purely out of honor and holiness; out of a passion to live righteously.

1 Samuel 27

1 Samuel 27:2-4 David still does not trust Saul, so he and his men move to Gath. What David does not know is that when Saul learned of this, he stopped hunting for him.

1 Samuel 27:6 David and his men move to the country town of Ziklag and stayed there 16 months.
1 Samuel 27:8-12 While living in Ziklag, David and his men raid the villages just east of the Suez Canal. He wiped out everyone and took all the plunder. But when King Achish would ask what he had been up to, David said he had been raiding towns within Judah. Why he fabricated these stories is unknown. Perhaps it was to keep the Philistine king from becoming suspicious and turning against him as well.

1 Samuel 28

1 Samuel 28:1-3 King Achish probably didn't know what he was getting into when he made David his personal body guard. The question remains as to whether David will actually join forces to attack his own people. We'll have to wait and see what happens.

1 Samuel 28:3-14 Saul consults a medium so he can ask Samuel a question. But Saul had banned all mediums (Necromancers) and those who consult the dead (Soothsayers). God speaks strongly against those who claim to be mediums (see Leviticus 19:31). But God would not answer Saul, so he looks for one of the illegal mediums still living in the land. The problem is that the spirit these people would conjure was not the soul of a dearly departed loved one, but an angel of
darkness appearing as a real person. Usually the medium will speak for the spirit, but in this case the medium almost has a heart attack (see 1 Samuel 28:12). Samuel does his own talking (1 Samuel 28:15). I wonder if this really was Samuel or the Lord appearing as Samuel. My guess is that it really was Samuel. And boy, was he ticked off.

1 Samuel 28:19 Notice what Samuel says to Saul here. You and your sons will be with me - the land of the dead. But I wonder if Samuel meant that Saul will simply be with the dead or with Samuel, because if he was with Samuel then he would be with him in comfort (see Luke 16:22-23). That means that although Saul disobeyed and angered God, he had not been rejected by God.

Psalm 56

While in Gath David wrote this Psalm of trust. Even though David's enemies were waiting to destroy him, he trusted that the Lord knew what was happening, and that the Lord would one day deliver him from danger. Those who hounded David were probably not the Philistines but those who were working for King Saul. I have to wonder if David wasn't thinking of Doeg here (1 Samuel 21:7). Like David, many in leadership echo his lament - "They are always twisting what I say; they spend their days plotting to harm me. They come together to spy on me, watching my every step, eager to kill me. Don't let them get away with their wickedness; in your anger, O God, bring them down".

April 19: 1 Samuel 29-31, 1 Chronicles 10, 2 Samuel 1

1 Samuel 29

I suspect the commanders were right. David should not be with them. I just can't imagine David attacking his own people. Maybe God was at work here to get David and his men to return home, especially in light of what happens when they do get home.
1 Samuel 30

1 Samuel 30:6  Isn't it true that when disaster strikes, people always seem to blame those in charge. Why blame David for this? Is he God? Is he able to tell the future? Of course not. He had no idea the Amalekites would attack. Come on people; be mad at them, not David. He committed no crime.

1 Samuel 30:11-12 Again we see the humanity in David. It's these small, kind gestures that demonstrate the heart of this man. Although they had lost everything, David was still concerned about this man's own health.

1 Samuel 30:17  The Amalekite army must have been quite large in order for 400 young men to be mentioned as an "except".

1 Samuel 30:21-25 In David we see fairness and mercy. The plunder taken from a raid is for the good of all people, not just those on the raid. Here we see David acting like a King. He demanded equality and fairness from those who followed him. But I also see David trying to teach his people that it is wrong to go to war just so they might grow fat and wealthy off of others. It is wrong to take from others for their own personal gain. If a nation must war, it is for the benefit of all people. Any other reason breeds selfishness and greed.

1 Samuel 30:26-31 But not stopping there, David sends a portion of the plunder to several cities within Judah. Some Bible scholars claim that these were cites the Amalekites had raided. Others see this as a political move. Perhaps it was done because these were the towns that had helped David and his men during the years they had been running from King Saul and David saw an opportunity to return their generosity. But the David I see in the scriptures is not motivated politically. He is driven by a hunger and thirst for righteousness.

1 Samuel 31

1 Samuel 31:2  Saul and three of his sons are killed easily in this battle. The Philistines attacked with their chariots in the broad plains of the Jezreel valley. It's a shame that so many had to die because of one man's unrighteousness. Saul was the one who disobeyed, but the rest of the army and even Jonathan
died. There is a lesson here. If a person is given great responsibility for other people’s lives, their righteousness needs to exceed those they have been called to lead, especially if they have been given this responsibility by God.

1 Samuel 31:4 Even Saul’s armor bearer showed a high degree of righteousness here. David had refused to take the king’s life as well. Oh sure, you could say that it would have been a mercy killing. But what would happen if word got out that he had been the one to kill Saul where he lay. Why this armor bearer took his own life though is beyond me. Perhaps he feared the one son of Saul who was not killed; Ishbosheth (see 2 Samuel 2:8).

1 Samuel 31:11-13 Forty years earlier Saul had rescued the town of Jabesh-gilead. And when they learned what had happened to Saul and his sons, they show him one last act of respect. Later, David will have their bones moved and reburied in Benjamin (2 Samuel 21:11-14).

With the death of Saul, David should become king, but two things stood in his way. Ishbosheth, a son of Saul, was not killed, and the Philistines were
determined to keep Israel weak and under their rule. However, they will make a huge mistake in allowing David to become king in Judah while Ishbosheth is recognized as king by most of the other tribes. Perhaps the Philistines wanted to encourage civil war.

1 Chronicles 10

The Chronicler assumed everyone knew of Saul’s reign, so he begins with his death. Again, this is a way to show the remnant that Saul’s dynasty had come to an end. If you compare these events with what is recorded in 1 Samuel 31, you’ll see a lot of similarities, except that 1 Chronicles 10:10 mentions that Saul had his head hung in the temple to Dagon. Dagon is the god who kept falling over when the Ark was placed there (1 Samuel 5:1-7). The Chronicler also adds a moral and theological perspective on Saul’s death (1 Chronicles 10:13-14).

2 Samuel 1

2 Samuel 1:2-10 This man’s report differs from what we just read in 1 Samuel 31. Which account is true? The best conclusion we can draw is that his was a fabricated lie. Why take the crown and the arm band and deliver them to David? If he was an Amalekite, why was he mourning? Why come in torn clothes and ashes? Why boast to David that he was the one to kill Saul? David was wise enough to see through this deception and became quite angry with this man. It could be that Saul was not dead when this man found him. If that’s true then this man showed no honor by killing Saul. If Saul was dead, this man showed no honor by stripping Saul of his royal crown instead of bringing his body back to be buried in honor. David did not want Saul dead. And he made that known on many occasions.

2 Samuel 1:15 David is acting like a king and a judge here.

2 Samuel 1:17 This passage mentions a book called Jashar. It’s claimed that this book was found and translated into English back in 1840. There are some similarities to the Bible, but numerous discrepancies. If you want to read more, visit http://www.logosresourcepages.org/History/jasher.htm
April 20: 2 Samuel 2-3, 1 Chronicles 3

2 Samuel 2

2 Samuel 2:1 After being anointed by Samuel 15 years earlier, David is ready to become King of Israel. But that will not happen just yet. Judah is happy to place him on the throne, but the rest of Israel has other plans. I wonder what the Philistines thought of this. Wasn't it just a short time ago that David was going to march out to war with them?

2 Samuel 2:5-7 David commends the people of Jabesh-gilead for their honorable treatment of Saul, and asks them to recognize him as king. However, Abner, commander of Saul's army, had other plans (2 Samuel 2:8-11).

2 Samuel 2:12 David rival was not Ishbosheth but Abner. Ishbosheth was merely a puppet king whose strings were being pulled by the manipulative Abner. And it appears David and his men knew this because of the event that unfolded at Gibeon.

In order to settle the dispute over who was king, Abner and Joab got involved in a staring contest. One leader glaring at the other. In 2 Samuel 2:14 it is not clear why they decided to have this wrestling match. It may have been a way to determine whose side got to be king. But it doesn't seem that way because it is not expressly mentioned. Because of this event a fierce battle erupted that day between the forces of Abner and the forces of Joab.

2 Samuel 2:18-32 I just don't understand what motivates people to kill kinsmen like this. Abner knew Asahel (2 Samuel 2:20). He knew he was Joab's brother (2 Samuel 2:22). But the two seem intent on killing one another. Eventually Abner shouts to Joab that this fighting is ridiculous (2 Samuel 2:26), so why did he agree to start it in the first place. Maybe he had a change of heart after losing 360 men. Why would kinsmen kill one another over personal preferences? It didn't make sense back then, and it doesn't make sense today. Why would people in a church destroy one another over personal preferences? Why divide
over music styles or worship times? Is personal preference sufficient reason to drive a wedge between people in a church; between families and friends?

2 Samuel 3

- 2 Samuel 3:1 Ishbosheth reigned from Mahanaim for only two years (2 Samuel 2:10), but the unrest within the nation probably lasted 4 years.
- 2 Samuel 3:2-5 David's wives and his children are mentioned here. It seems some of these marriages were politically motivated, especially to Maacah. Her father was king of Geshur, a state northeast of the Sea of Galilee.

- 2 Samuel 3:7 When Abner took one of Saul's concubines he was indicating that he was royalty. Should anything happen to Ishbosheth, he was next in line to be king. This was a common practice in those days. Abner's power had grown so much that he was setting things up so that he could overthrow Ishbosheth as king. Do not trust this Abner. Look what he says in 2 Samuel 3:10. “I'm going to give Saul's kingdom to David!” Excuse me, who is in charge here? Who really is in power? He says, "I will establish the throne of David". Oh really? I don't think
God needs any help with that. Abner has a lust for power, and he has no integrity or honor. Oh, he'll come to King David with flowery speech and make all kinds of promises, but the minute he feels his power is threatened, he will stab him in the back. Ever meet someone like this? They want things to go their own way by manipulating others; by controlling leaders. But they don't have the guts to be a leader themselves.

2 Samuel 3:16 It seems that Michal and Palti had built a wonderful life together. It seems there was love between the two. The separation seems so tragic. But maybe Palti was saddened because he no longer was part of the royal family. Michal was, after all, the daughter of King Saul. Perhaps he had aspirations for the throne once Ishbosheth was gone. At any rate, I wonder who Michal loved more, or if she loved anyone at all.

2 Samuel 3:17-19 Do you see the political influence Abner has? He even persuaded the people of Benjamin (Saul's kinsmen) to follow David. This man is getting away with too much. Some might be fooled by his manipulative power, but not everyone, particularly Joab.

2 Samuel 3:24-27 Joab was right to not trust Abner. The historian who wrote this section of 2 Samuel wanted us to see Abner for who he really was. He painted the portrait of a man who lusted for power and who manipulated others for his own personal gain. Who knows, had he not been killed he might have used his position in David's kingdom to take revenge on Ishbosheth, then set himself up as king in that part of Israel. You never know? But Joab should not have murdered Abner, especially in Hebron - a city of refuge (Joshua 21:13) where such revenge was not permitted (Numbers 35:22-25).

2 Samuel 3:31-34 David's compassion and forgiving spirit are evident here, qualities which separated him from ordinary men.

2 Samuel 3:39 Joab, Abishai, and the deceased Asahel were David's nephews to his sister Zeruiah (1 Chronicles 2:16).

1 Chronicles 3
Picking up on the line from David, the Chronicler takes us throughout the history of Judah’s kings. The Kings of Israel are not significantly important here.

1 Chronicles 3:1-9 Looking over this list of David’s children, some are familiar while others are not. We need to keep in mind that Samuel and Kings recorded significant events in the life of the nation. If a person did nothing significant in their lifetime, they were barely mentioned in the history books. But if you are tracing a family’s heritage, names become more significant. You may notice a variation on spelling for some of these names. Perhaps it has to do with Babylonian or Assyrian influence over the years of captivity.

1 Chronicles 3:10 Notice here that it says the descendant of Solomon, not Solomon’s children. This section is a record of Judah’s kings from Solomon to Josiah.

1 Chronicles 3:19 If this Zerubbabel is the same as the one mentioned in the book of Haggai, this would place the writing of Chronicles years after the return from Exile. However, it may not be the same man. In Haggai, Zerubbabel is the son of Shealtiel, not Pedaiah.

April 21: 2 Samuel 4-6

2 Samuel 4

2 Samuel 4:4 The story of Mephibosheth is introduced within a parenthesis, as if the young man's story was an afterthought. The reason the nursemaid fled was because it was common for the new king to execute all the family of the old king. That way no family of the old king could rebel against the new king. With Saul and Jonathan dead, she assumed that David would mobilize his forces to wipe out all resistance. That may have been the common practice of lesser men, but not David. It's unfortunate this woman didn't know the integrity of her future king.
2 Samuel 4:9-12  Do you see how David's integrity shines in this dark and miserable land? Everyone assumes that David wants people to die. Everyone assumes that David is looking for revenge; to play the power card and begin to reign with an iron fist. Everyone assumes that David must have hated Saul and his whole family, especially the way he was treated. Who knows what kind of relationship David and Ishbosheth had while David was still within the house of Saul?

2 Samuel 5

2 Samuel 5:5  If you'll notice, the writer makes a distinction between Judah and Israel, a pretty clear indication that this portion of 2 Samuel was written after the kingdom divided in 931 BC.

2 Samuel 5:6  After all that has happened in Israel, the Jebusites still inhabited Jerusalem. David probably selected this city instead of Hebron because it was closer to the border between Israel and Judah.

2 Samuel 5:8  David's men either entered the city through the water tunnels or over the wall. The Hebrew word *sinnor* could refer to some sort of grappling hook. Whatever the method, the lesson here is that the Jebusites thought there was no way they could be defeated. They placed their security in what the hands of men had made. Kind of reminds me of the people in Jericho.
2 Samuel 5:11  The people of Israel had united under David and here it seems this has caught the attention of foreign kings. King Hiram of Tyre (a Phoenician city), provided materials for David to build a palace. Doesn't this seem a bit unusual? I think it caught David by surprise as well because he saw it as a confirmation from God.

2 Samuel 5:17  This attack by the Philistines was in the valley of Rephaim, an area south of Jerusalem and near David's earlier military headquarters at Adullam. Notice that David, although king, still turned to the Lord for wisdom and advice. Anyone who is in leadership should always remember that no matter how far they climb the ladder of responsibility, God is always above them.

2 Samuel 5:21  The Philistine army brought their idols with them, symbols of their gods. Thinking these gods would deliver them, it is significant that they were defeated. Even though David brought no physical representation of his God, the Lord was still with them in the battle.

2 Samuel 5:24  God provided this sound for David's benefit. That way he would know to follow the Lord's lead. The army of the Lord did not need to make a sound. Truthfully, had God wanted to, the Philistine army could have been
defeated with simply a word from the mouth of God. But God often chooses to work through us, not for us.

2 Samuel 6

2 Samuel 6:1-2 David’s desire was to bring the Ark of God into Jerusalem, transforming this city into the religious capital of Israel. The Ark had been in Baalah (also known as Kiriath Jearim) for 20 years. Saul never seemed interested in this sacred object. Actually, for many years we are left with the impression that the whole covenant God made with Israel was forgotten. It makes me wonder if sacrifices were even being observed. And where was the Tabernacle? Isn’t the Ark supposed to be inside the Holy of Holies? The High Priest was to stand before it during the Day of Atonement. David’s desire is to honor God and unite Israel once again in its worship of God. After being separated for 100 years, David begins to bring the Ark (in Kiriath Jearim) and the Tabernacle (in Nob) together.

2 Samuel 6:3 Although their motives are pure and noble, they ignored some very important instructions here. The Ark was supposed to be carried by Levites who would bear the Ark upon their shoulders. It was to be lifted by poles that passed through golden rings. No one was to touch the Ark (see Exodus 25:14, Numbers 4:15-20). There’s a good chance David did not know these instructions, and perhaps neither did Uzzah and Ahio. Although they were Abinadab’s sons it’s actually unclear if Abinadab was even a Levite. When the Ark was brought to his house, the people ordained his son Eleazar to be in charge of the Ark (1 Samuel 7:1). It does not say that this family was a descendant of Levi.

2 Samuel 6:6-7 This happened because no one had followed God’s clear instructions. Was Uzzah a wicked, evil man? No, but he did have uncovered sin, and God had clearly spoken about the Ark in the past. Although Uzzah may have been ignorant of the Law, he was not immune from the Law. Yea, I know. We could probably spend an entire day just on this subject. The Law is the law. Sin is sin. Just because a person is ignorant of the Law does not mean they are innocent of breaking the Law. We see this even in today’s society. For
those who have called upon Jesus to be their Savior, they are still guilty of sin, except that Jesus has paid the penalty for that sin. He covers our sin with His righteousness (see Isaiah 61:10). Uzzah's sin was uncovered. It could have been covered though if he had followed the steps prescribed in the Law to make one holy. But he did not.

2 Samuel 6:12 Three months later, David tries this again. Only this time he does it right. No, David was not a priest here, but he was ordained by God. To say that David sacrificed the bull and calf can also mean that he instructed it to be done.

2 Samuel 6:16 Do you think Michal's contempt started here, or did it start when she was taken away from Palti?

2 Samuel 6:19 Everybody gets a door prize for coming to today's celebration. And you though Oprah was the first one to come up with this idea.

2 Samuel 6:23 Apparently Michal had been childless the whole time she was with Palti. Or perhaps the text can mean that she was childless the whole time she spent with David. It's uncertain to tell which is true. However, after her insulting words, David probably never slept with Michal again.

April 22: 1 Chronicles 11, 13-14

1 Chronicles 11

1 Chronicles 11:1-3 Again it is assumed that everyone was familiar with David’s anointing and calling by Samuel, so we are simply introduced to the period in which David began to reign. The Chronicler avoided much of the history that was known, and instead focused on those particular elements that were necessary to make his point. For example, Joab is recognized as a hero in conquering Jerusalem, a point not made in 2 Samuel. Likewise, Eleazar’s help in defending Pas Dammim was not mentioned in 2 Samuel. Apart from some spelling variations, the men mentioned in this chapter are identical to 2 Samuel 23.
1 Chronicles 13

This chapter follows the events recorded in 2 Samuel 6.

1 Chronicles 14

1 Chronicles 14:1-7 Following the custom of the day, David builds a palace and a harem of wives (even though God spoke against polygamy in Deuteronomy 17:17). Two of the sons mentioned here, Elpelet and Nogah, are not mentioned in the parallel account in 2 Samuel 5:14-16.

1 Chronicles 14:8-17 These two accounts of victory over the Philistines are recorded in 2 Samuel 5:17-25.

April 23: 1 Chronicles 15-16

1 Chronicles 15

The account of moving the Ark into Jerusalem is much more detailed here than it is in 2 Samuel 6:12-23. This chapter gives us the names of those who helped organize the event.

1 Chronicles 16

1 Chronicles 16:1-6 Again, a more detailed listing of names is given here than in 2 Samuel 6. Perhaps this greater detail is to help people understand who in leadership honored God as opposed to those who did not. Perhaps the Chronicler was trying to point out to the remnant that this is what godly obedience and godly worship looked like.

1 Chronicles 16:7-36 This is actually a compilation of several Psalms. 1 Chronicles 16:8-22 is related to Psalm 105:1-15. 1 Chronicles 16:23-33 is related to Psalm 96:1b-13a. 1 Chronicles 16:34-36 is related to Psalm 106:1, 47-48.
1 Chronicles 16:37-43  If you read this section closely you’ll notice that it seems there were two places of worship that had been established. Zadok, a descendant or Aaron through Eleazar, was in charge of the sanctuary in Gibeon, while Abiathar officiated at the new tent-shrine in Jerusalem. The origin of Gibeon as the site of a tabernacle is not known but it must have been legitimate since David appointed Zadok as priest there, and later on Solomon offered sacrifices there with God’s approval (compare 1 Kings 3:4-10). In fact it appears that sometime after the ark was taken from Shiloh the tabernacle was moved also, eventually ending up at Gibeon (1 Chronicles 21:29). Therefore, Zadok was ministering at the original Mosaic house of worship, while Asaph was with Abiathar in David’s tabernacle which housed the ark.

April 24: 2 Samuel 7-8, 1 Chronicles 17-18, Psalm 60

2 Samuel 7

2 Samuel 7:1  David was living in a rather nice palace by now (see 2 Samuel 5:11). But David's thoughts were never far from God. Based upon what he says to Nathan the prophet, it seems David still walked humbly before his God. Isn’t it refreshing to see a man who has been set above all others still realize that he is beneath God? This is the mark of true humility. Notice that David did not refuse the leadership position. Some people would say that David was not humble because he allowed himself to be ordained as king. In their view of humility, a person should refuse to serve in any way, shape, or form because they see it as setting themselves above others. These are the people who have been given a gift yet bury it out of fear (see Matthew 25:29). To serve where God has called you and to do so willingly is not pride. Pride is what happens when a person who serves in the name of God forgets that they are still beneath God. But a person who serves with a humble heart realizes that even when they receive great honor and praise, what they do has been for the Lord’s honor all along.
2 Samuel 7:6 Although David's motives were pure, what God says does make sense. Can an omnipresent God (a God who is present everywhere) really be confined to one particular place? Of course not. The pagan gods were limited to particular places and to particular buildings, but not so the Lord, the God of Israel (see Isaiah 66:1). David had confessed this in Psalm 139:7, God merely confirms it here.

2 Samuel 7:8-9 I know we might be tempted to say that David received undeserved grace here, but perhaps we are wrong. Perhaps David's righteous behavior merited God's outpouring of love. Please note that this has nothing to do with David's salvation. David was a man saved because of his faith. What God is speaking about here has to do with using David to fulfill his plans. And when a person is faithful in the small tasks God gives them, He will give them even greater things to do, not for the person's honor but so that God's will might be accomplished. Let me put it another way. God has something in mind that He intends to do. He desires make this happen through people who are willing to be used by Him. If a person remains righteous and humble, God will make those things happen through them. But if they turn their back, if they let pride and self-centeredness come between them and God, then God will probably chose to work through someone else. So because of David's righteous and humble heart, God would do even greater things than the nation had seen in the past. And God will do this through David. Why? Because David maintained the right posture before God; humble and submissive.

2 Samuel 7:18-29 David’s response is a clear sign that he is a man humble before God. At this point his life has not affected his pride. He still sees himself as a humble shepherd boy. Indeed, it was not family name, riches, or fame that brought David this far. He was being honored by God on this day because he pleased the Lord. And to know that your life has honored God is one of the greatest joys a person will ever know. Oh how we all long to hear "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21).
2 Samuel 8

2 Samuel 8:1  As David begins to establish the kingdom, he first drives out the Philistines; a nation that has been a thorn in the flesh for over 125 years. This chief city may have been Gath, but some translations read Metheg Ammah - an unknown city that has not been mentioned before.

2 Samuel 8:2  Why David attacked Moab is unknown. Based upon the facts we have, it doesn't make sense. David might of had ancestors in Moab (through Ruth), and the last we heard the two nations seemed to be getting along (1 Samuel 22:3-4). We can only assume that something must have happened to cause David to act so harshly.

2 Samuel 8:4  Next David moves north to attack the Arameans who lived northeast of the Sea of Galilee. Although it says here that he captured 1,700 charioteers, the reference in 1 Chronicles 18:4 is viewed as the more accurate number - 100 chariots and 7000 charioteers.
2 Samuel 8:9-10  King Toi decided to skip the war and simply surrender to David. By sending his son as an emissary bearing many gifts, the king agreed to not just avoid war with Israel but also pay tribute to them (sort of a tax). They did not become part of Israel, but recognized Israel's authority over them.

2 Samuel 8:11  David did not keep all this plunder for himself. He dedicated it to the Lord, perhaps planning that it would one day be used to build the Temple (see 1 Kings 7:51).

2 Samuel 8:12  Although some translations mention Edom here, most Hebrew manuscripts read Aram. It's the same in 2 Samuel 8:13.

1 Chronicles 17

The wording in this section is almost identical to 2 Samuel 7:1-17, except that Samuel mentions Saul by name and the Chronicler does not (see 1 Chronicles 17:13).

1 Chronicles 18

1 Chronicles 18:1-2  In mentioning David's conquests, the Chronicler paints a more subdued picture of David's conquest over Moab. Compare what he says here in verse 2 with what is recorded in 2 Samuel 8:2.

1 Chronicles 18:3-11  This story compares to the events that are recorded in 2 Samuel 8:3-12.

1 Chronicles 18:12-13  Contrary to the account in 2 Samuel 8:13, the Chronicler credits David's nephew Abishai with killing the 18,000 Edomites. Perhaps the campaign was under Abishai's command, who was following David's instructions.

Psalm 60

This Psalm was written as a reminder to future generations. It was written to teach them about what happened when David was facing defeat in the south as he went to battle in the north. This was probably written sometime around the events in 2 Samuel 8:13 and 1 Kings 11:15-16. With his forces divided, it seemed he might be defeated. But David understood that both victory and
defeat come from God, so he was pleading with God to make them victorious. It seems David hoped that this Psalm would remind future generations what to do when defeat was standing on their doorstep.

April 25: 2 Samuel 9-10, 1 Chronicles 19-20

2 Samuel 9

- 2 Samuel 9:3 With David’s reign now secure, he looks back over the last several years, and his heart stops on his promise to Jonathan (1 Samuel 20:14-17). I wonder why Ziba felt it important to mention Mephibosheth’s handicap. Why did he feel this was important?

- 2 Samuel 9:5-13 We are first introduced to Mephibosheth in 2 Samuel 4:4. The nurse panicked because Saul and Jonathan had been killed. And it was customary for the new king to execute any surviving members of the royal family. That way a surviving family member could not one day try to take back the kingdom. So this nurse surmised that with Saul and Jonathon gone, David would naturally take over the throne and then come after poor little Mephibosheth. For nearly 20 years this young man would grow up not only broken physically, but also emotionally. Can you imagine spending nearly 20 years living in fear? 20 years with people reminding you of your past. 20 years of people telling you to be afraid of the king. So Mephibosheth ends up hiding in the barren city of Lod-debar (literally “not a pasture). For nearly 20 years the boy had been hiding in fear. For nearly 20 years people had been whispering in his ear (“Avoid the king. He’ll kill you for sure”). Mephibosheth had heard these words so often that execution is what he expected. But Mephibosheth did not take into account that his king was a king of grace. His king would keep his promise.

- I love the way the New Century Version translates verse 4. “Where is this son?” it reads. For the first time in who knows how long, Mephibosheth is identified without any reference to his past. The handicap goes unnoticed and
unmentioned from the mouth of the king. Only a reference to the promise made. I can only imagine the look that must have been birthed the moment David started mentioning the blessings Mephibosheth would receive. “Why me, Lord?” he asks. I am not worthy of this level of grace. And he certainly wasn’t. Tell me; was not Mephibosheth part of Saul’s family? Was he not the descendant of the King’s enemies? But this king has made a promise.

You know, our King has made the same promise as well. He has promised life to those who embrace the Son (John 3:16). We, who are crippled because of our past, will find grace at His throne (Romans 8:1). And we, who would be content just with life, will find ourselves treated like part of the royal family (Revelation 21:7).

I wonder. How long will you avoid our King? How long will you stay at this barren place in your life living in fear; living crippled? When will you finally come before His throne and experience His grace?

2 Samuel 10

2 Samuel 10:1-2 Amnon was a nation directly east of the Jordan River. Nahash had ruled this nation since early in Saul’s reign. Nahash was the one to attack Jabesh-Gilead (1 Samuel 11:11). Because Nahash had shown David kindness at one point (perhaps as David was in Moab hiding from Saul), David decides to send a sympathy card.

2 Samuel 10:4 To a sensitive Hebrew, this would bring shame. But I can’t help wondering if they went all the way back to David with their back-side hanging out or if they found a way to cover it up and told David what had happened.

2 Samuel 10:6 Beth Rehob was located in north west Galilee, Zobah was north east of Galilee, and Maacah directly north of Galilee. Tob was a small kingdom several miles east of the Sea of Galilee. Looking at the map you can see the strategy being employed by the Ammonites. There would be an attack from the east and also from the north. Israel would end up with their backs to the Mediterranean Sea.
2 Samuel 10:9-19  What’s interesting in this passage is that no one mentioned seeking the Lord’s guidance. The only reference is in 2 Samuel 10:12 where there is a call to fight for the cities of their God and that the Lord’s will might be done. That’s not the same as asking God what to do. Also, do you notice anything unusual in this story? It seems that Joab and Abishai were the first ones to lead troops into battle, not David. It wasn’t until the Arameans regrouped in the north that David got involved. Although he and his troops were highly successful, it just seems odd to hear that he stayed behind at first. Was something happening to David? Was his attitude beginning to change here? Was he going soft? I can’t quite explain it, but I just get this nagging feeling that something within David was changing.

1 Chronicles 19

1 Chronicles 19:1-5  The events leading up to the battle with the Ammonites is introduced much like it is in 2 Samuel 10:1-2. But the preparations for battle are different. In 1 Chronicles 19:6-7 we are told that King Hanun of Ammon hired
other armies to do battle with David and Israel, and a detailed list of who, how many, and how much it cost is given.

1 Chronicles 19:8-19 The record of Joab’s and Abishai’s strategy is similar to what is recorded in 2 Samuel 10:9-14.

1 Chronicles 20

1 Chronicles 20:1-4 Compare this story with the version found in 2 Samuel 11:2-27 and you’ll notice that the Chronicler makes no mention of David’s affair with Bathsheba or how he had her husband murdered. He also failed to mention that when the city was ready to fall, Joab invited David to come and lead the attack. The reason for this is because the Chronicler was merely pointing out how the promise of God was working through David and his descendants, not necessarily a history lesson of all David did.

1 Chronicles 20:5 The Chronicler says here that Elhanan killed Lahmi, Goliath’s brother, while 2 Samuel 21:19 says Elhanan killed Goliath. Is this a contradiction? Some people claim that David was also known as Elhanan, but that argument does not work because it’s quite clear that David was known as the son of Jesse, not Jair. Some say that Goliath is another word for giant, and any person quite large was simply referred to in that slang. Also, some respectable Bible Scholars have surmised that what probably happened was that a scribe once inadvertently forgot to copy “the Brother of” in 2 Samuel 21:19. I know that excuse seems almost sacrilegious, but based upon the comparisons we were able to make with Isaiah and the Dead Sea Scrolls, a word here or there can be missed. Whatever the reason, it’s obvious that a giant was killed. Was he Goliath, another Goliath, or Lahmi? Does the answer change the fact that a man from Israel killed a giant Philistine?
April 26: 2 Samuel 11-12, Psalm 51

2 Samuel 11

2 Samuel 11:1 Although we just saw that David had severely beaten the Arameans, they must have been pestering Israel all winter long. Not through a huge campaign, but just pesky little raids every now and then. When the weather was more suited to engage in a full scale battle, David sent Joab north to do battle. He, however, stayed behind in Jerusalem. There’s that nagging feeling I’m starting to get again. Something about David just doesn’t seem right. It’s not like him to act this way.

2 Samuel 11:2-3 Although one has to wonder why Bathsheba was bathing where someone could see her, David’s actions are inexcusable. She would not have been far, perhaps one or two houses away because she was the daughter of Eliam, one of David’s 30 elite fighting men (2 Samuel 23:34) and wife of another of these men (2 Samuel 23:39). It’s not known how long these men had been in David’s service, but they were the best of the best, with honors. It just seems logical that David would have known them and that they would be living in close proximity to their king. So when she was introduced to David, that would have been opportunity enough to put an end to the temptation, but David ignored it. Was Bathsheba tempting David? Perhaps. But he was the one who took the bait.

2 Samuel 11:4 This bath signified the end of her un-cleanliness according to Leviticus 15:19-28. So naturally, with Uriah off to war, the child had to be David’s.

2 Samuel 11:6-13 David attempt to cover up the problem, but his plans become frustrated by one more godly than he.

2 Samuel 11:13-27 David finally resorts to murder. And he should have been placed on trial because of this. He should have been stoned.
There were 5 things I see going on in David’s life that should not have been there. And I think you’ll be surprised just how frequently we may hear these things coming from our own lips.

1. I want my own way – that’s selfishness
2. I won’t quit until I get it – that’s Stubbornness
3. I don’t care who it hurts – that’s Indifference
4. I refuse to listen to council – that’s Resistance
5. I’m not concerned about the consequences – that’s Contempt

I don’t know what caused David to fall so far away from the godly attitude we had seen earlier in his life, but I suspect it happened gradually over time. And I suspect none of you woke this morning suddenly finding yourself living a life of defiance; a life that dishonors God. Like David, it happened gradually over time. Each day you were just a bit more selfish and a bit more stubborn. Each day you cared less and less about the feelings of those around you. Each day “Those People” got under your skin more and more. You can’t recall exactly when, but at some point you stopped listening to the voice of God as He speaks through His word, through His Spirit, and especially through those closest to you. Gradually, bit by bit, all these things wear away at your heart to the point that you no longer care about the consequence. You don’t care what other’s think about you. You don’t care who is hurt or what you destroy. And you don’t care how your actions affect God.

If any of these attitudes sound familiar to you, I suggest that there is a slow erosion taking place in your heart; that you are not the godly person you once were. If that’s the case, then something needs to change, and soon! Because, like David, the Lord is displeased with what you’ve become as well.
2 Samuel 12

2 Samuel 12:5 David is right. He did deserve to die. His adulterous affair and his schemed murder warranted the death sentence (Leviticus 20:10 and Numbers 35:33). Yet David received no punishment.

2 Samuel 12:7 Nathan the prophet minces no words here. But it does give us a glimpse into the heart of David. Nathan confronts his king with the bitter truth. Had David been an evil, vengeful king, Nathan may have been hesitant to approach him. But instead Nathan must have felt that David would listen and allow his heart to be convicted. If not, Nathan’s best solution to the problem would have been to make this known publicly.

2 Samuel 12:11-12 God announces David’s punishment. Again, why was it not execution? The only thing that stands out is David’s confession before Nathan and before the people (Psalm 51). We can only assume that God granted grace to David because of his grief; his grief was not in the fact that he was caught in sin, but because he offended God. However, although David’s life was spared, there would be consequences for his sin. It would affect his family and his children. It would also affect the nation. The righteousness of those in leadership needs to be impeccable. Their holiness is a source of inspiration to others.

2 Samuel 12:18-23 Here we see David fasting and praying so that his son might be spared. Because of David’s sin, Nathan said the boy would die. First of all, David accepted Nathan’s words as God’s words. Second, he recognized that the punishment was against David, not the boy. Third, he accepted God’s judgment. When the boy did die, David resumed his life. He owned the sin, accepted the consequences of that sin, but he did not let this affect his faith. Is this a lesson many of us need to learn, or what.

2 Samuel 12:25 This is a little known fact. David named his next child Solomon, but the Lord gave him the name Jedidiah.

2 Samuel 12:26-28 Joab displays a significant courtesy to his king. He had led the army to great success in the areas around Rabbah, but defers the glory of
the victory to David. That’s humility my friend. That’s a servant’s heart. Something that David had lost while he lounged in Jerusalem. Perhaps there is a valuable lesson here. When we allow others to do on our behalf, we risk the temptation to elevate ourselves above others. When we work alongside others we are reminded that we all are in this together.

Psalm 51

How many of us have turned to this Psalm looking for assurance? If David could find forgiveness through the confession of his sin, is it possible that we can experience the same thing? Yes we can, if we follow the same process that David did. Forgiveness comes only after we admit our guilt (Psalm 51:1-6). Some people simply want the forgiveness without ever admitting guilt. It doesn’t work that way. And by the way, for those who think that love wins in the end; that Christ’s sacrifice will redeem all of humanity, there is a big problem in the fact that redemption comes only after confession. If you do not admit sin, forgiveness will not happen. And if we remain unforgiven have we truly been redeemed?

The healing process then moves from confession to cleansing (Psalm 51:7-11). One of the understandings found in the Old Testament was the concept that sin defiles a person; it stains the heart. Much of the Law spoke of the rituals necessary to restore cleanliness to a person whose sin has defiled them. This is what David pleads, seeking God to wash him so that he will be whiter than snow. You and I need to be reminded that only God can instill holiness and purity upon us. He alone is the one who can remove the stain of our guilt.

Psalm 51:12-15 As with anyone we love, we become sadden by a strain in the relationship. Our sin is an offence to God. David realized this. He knew that what he had done must have hurt God deeply. So he desired that God would accept his apology and see the honesty in his confession. David said that he would demonstrate his changed heart by showing God and the world that he had truly repented.

Psalm 51:16-19 David’s words here are so very profound. Forgiveness is not found in what we do; it is found within a heart that grieves and mourns. Too
often we think that God will grant forgiveness for our sins when we participate in Christian activities. That just is not true. It is not in religious deeds that we find restoration, but in a broken and humble heart that not only seeks God’s forgiveness, but stops doing the sin as well.

April 27: 2 Samuel 13-14

2 Samuel 13

2 Samuel 13:1 Amnon was David’s oldest son while Absalom was third (see 2 Samuel 3:2-3). There is no indication what happened to the second son. Here some translations call him Daniel while others call him Chileab. In the parallel text found in 1 Chronicles 3:1 he is called Daniel.

2 Samuel 13:13 Marriage to a half-sister was forbidden in Israel (see Leviticus 18:11). I don't know how David could have this law suspended. I even wonder if he would suspend it, especially after David’s encounter with God’s discipline concerning sexual sin.

2 Samuel 13:15 Amnon was brutal, cruel, and selfish – traits unbecoming for a king. Although Amnon lacked any decent morality, it fulfilled the words found in 2 Samuel 12:11

2 Samuel 13:21 The Dead Sea Scrolls and Greek version add But he did not punish his son Amnon, because he loved him, for he was his firstborn. This was a bad decision because David's inaction just made Absalom’s anger even worse. In spite of what these boys were doing, it seems poor Tamar has been forgotten here. She was defiled and forced to live as a desolate woman in Absalom’s house. No one seems to offer her any comfort or mourn with her over this tragic event.

2 Samuel 13:23 Although Amnon showed undesirable qualities that made him unfit to be king, Absalom was no better. He held on to revenge for two years. He was equally violent and equally deceitful.
2 Samuel 13:29  As I was reading this I started wondering if little Solomon would have been there with his brothers. If he was, he might have been no older than five or six. Think of the wisdom Solomon would have gained by watching his brothers murder and scheme to set themselves above one another. As all of these events unfold over the next several years, Solomon, the wise little child, would have been watching and learning. And he would have been able to see the destructive behavior that folly can cause.

2 Samuel 13:39  After three years David had come to terms with Amnon’s death, and his heart had softened toward Absalom. An alternate reading of this verse says that he did not desire to go out after Absalom. That could mean that after three years David no longer thought of punishing Absalom. David might have first thought of some sort of disciplinary action against his son; perhaps even to have him executed for murder, but eventually that changed, and David longed to be reconciled with his oldest surviving son. Unaware of God’s plans at this point, David is thinking about who would be king once he is dead, and naturally it would be the eldest.

2 Samuel 14

2 Samuel 14:1-24  It appears that Joab had been trying to convince David to bring Absalom back for quite some time. His own personal pleading not working, he finds a wise woman to present the situation in a different perspective. It seems that David did not want to be reconciled, but Joab, thinking of the Kings successor, wanted Absalom back. The only thing wrong with Joab’s plan was that he had not considered Absalom’s character. Was a scheming, murdering man the right individual for the throne? I suspect Joab must have known the events that surrounded how David became King. God was the one who rightly anointed the King of Israel. No one thus far had even thought of asking God who He wanted to rule His people. Joab, and perhaps many others, simply thought that Israel would be run just like the other nations around her. But she should not be like any other nation. Israel was to be different; holy and set apart from the rest of the world. Nations around her might hand the kingdom over to the oldest
son, but it will not be like that with Israel. God had His mighty hand upon this nation. And God has plans that He will accomplish through these people. They would be wise to simply sit back and let God lead. I see this same misunderstanding within the church. The church must let God lead. After all, the church belongs to God. The church (His holy people) is to be set apart from the rest of the world. But too often the church adopts the practices and methods of the world. Too often a church tries to run itself like they do in the business world. God has plans that He desires to accomplish through His church, and the church would be wise to sit back and let God lead.

2 Samuel 14:25-33 Although Absalom was desirable on the outside, what we see of his character is not necessarily desirable. There is an awful lot of blaming going on here. He seems to blame his father and Joab for his unfavorable lot in life. But he is the one who put himself in this position. He is the one who conspired and schemed to kill his brother. Although Amnon was only a half-brother, he was still David’s son. Why should Absalom be surprised that David is having a hard time finding forgiveness? Doesn’t Absalom seem like many people we meet today? “Everything is wrong with my life” they lament. And their problems always seem to be some else’s fault. There are few people who are courageous enough to turn the microscope inward and ask if they have done anything to bring problems upon themselves. I can tell you that Absalom never did this because no where do we read that he apologized to his father. No where do we read that there was remorse. Yes, we can criticize David for not taking the initiative to seek restoration, but there was certainly no initiative taken here by Absalom.
April 28: 2 Samuel 15-17

2 Samuel 15

2 Samuel 15:1-5  I give Absalom this much, he sure knew how to work the people. He sure was a natural leader. But his motives and intentions were warped by a lust for power. Perhaps this whole event could have been avoided if David had invited Absalom back to the palace and had not kept him at arm’s length. At least he could have kept an eye on his son. But you know what, I seriously doubt it. I do not think Absalom’s self-absorbed personality came because David waited so long to offer restitution. We saw this attitude in Absalom even before he had Amnon killed. No, Absalom was manipulative and selfish even then. Now if you think I’m being a bit too harsh with Absalom, consider this little trick. When someone came to Jerusalem, notice that he asked them where they were from. If they were from a nearby town, he probably just let them pass (see 2 Samuel 15:11). But if they were from a distant part of Israel, then he started talking about how rotten things were in the kingdom. He did this so that his conspiracy would remain a secret within the city wall. That way no one in the palace would learn of his plans. He started working the nation against David long before he even set himself up as king. It is the whispered and hushed conversations filled with slander that damaged this kingdom. David had been innocent of Absalom’s accusations, but that didn’t stop Absalom from spreading lies. I mean, of course David had someone to hear their cases. Of course there was a judicial system in place; if not David, then at least a priest or a prophet. Absalom spread lies for four year with the idea of overthrowing the kingdom, and setting himself up as King. Have you ever seen this happen within a church? It will tear a church apart. And the sad thing is that the person who initiates the division is not seeking what is best for the church but what they want. They have a secret desire to see their wishes fulfilled and church to be run their way. They lure people to their side of an issue, setting themselves up as some great hero God has sent to save His church. But their actions prove otherwise. Think about
this: if God no longer wanted David to be king, He would have taken the same steps He had taken with Saul. God had a prime opportunity to remove David’s crown when he sinned in the whole Bathsheba affair. But instead God saw David’s repentance, and offered him grace and forgiveness. So it is with those who divide a church. If a pastor has truly sinned, then the issues need to be brought out in the open. If God desires to ends a pastor’s tenure at a local church, God will draw that pastor away. In both cases, what is best for the church has been maintained. But when a person secretly manipulates to have God’s servant removed, that person is literally playing God.

* 2 Samuel 15:13-37 Absalom had turned many away from David, including Bathsheba’s grandfather Ahithophel. Even the regular army seems to have been led astray (2 Samuel 17:1). David made a wise choice in leaving Jerusalem. It is also a demonstration of his innocence and his true love for the nation. He would rather leave than throw the nation into a bloody civil war. He sent the priests back home along with the Ark. This demonstrates that David was leaving the outcome of this whole affair up to God. So David marches out of the city with a sorrowful heart. And from what I know of David, he was seeking God this whole time, and asking the Lord to reveal the reason behind this event. Just like another man who walked the road up to the Mount of Olives, David was humbly obedient to the Lord even though it meant suffering and loss.

2 Samuel 16

* 2 Samuel 16:1-4 It’s hard to believe that Mephibosheth had turned traitor. Although his true feelings about David are not revealed here, I just can’t see how a struggle between David and Absalom would result in the kingdom being given to Mephibosheth. However, it’s hard to imagine how David could have been deceived so easily by Ziba. I’d like to believe that his rational was blinded by grief and sadness rather than Ziba’s accusations to be true. David had shown such kindness to this son of Jonathan.

* 2 Samuel 16:5-14 Shimei’s accusations were false. David did not murder anyone in Saul’s household. Now a lesser man would have spoken up and
challenged these accusations. A lesser man would have fought back. But David was committed to let God work in this situation. If David was being punished or humbled by God for some reason, he was willing to accept it. But if David was being wronged by these events, then the Lord would bless him. The character of David never ceases to amaze me. And he has shown tremendous spiritual growth. Remember how quick he was ready to kill Nabal (1 Samuel 25:13)? We may face people who spread lies about us. We may face people who hate us. But before we react we need to keep in mind that the whole world is watching for our reaction. David’s is incredible (see Proverbs 16:32).

2 Samuel 16:15-23 Remember that Ahithophel was Bathsheba’s grandfather, and that Hushai was really supposed to subvert the advice of this man. Apparently Ahithophel’s counsel in the past had very wise. Truthfully, his counsel here was as well. By sleeping with David’s concubines where everyone could see, Absalom had taken over in the palace. David was gone, and a way to defile the departed king was to take his wives and make them your own.

2 Samuel 17

2 Samuel 17:1-4 Why do you suppose Ahithophel was so eager to go out and destroy David? You don’t suppose he harbored any revenge for what David did to Uriah?

2 Samuel 17:5-14 Ahithophel’s advice was sound and true. David was dejected. David was walking along like a beaten dog; his tail dragging between his legs. So Hushai’s advice was not the best, but God had confused Absalom’s mind because he was not acting according to God’s will.

2 Samuel 17:15-22 En Rogel was just a stone’s throw south of Jerusalem. This is where the two son’s had been hiding. Dispatched with information, they are spotted by a boy. Who was this boy? We don’t know. For some reason he was looking for an opportunity to get on the king’s good side. But God was with the messengers, and brought them to the right house in the right town at the right time. Think about the odds of coming into Bahurim (east of the Mount of Olives),
and finding someone to hide them. It’s important to note that this trip was only a few miles.

2 Samuel 17:23 Why did Ahithophel commit suicide? I guess he figured that God had thwarted his advice and was working against Absalom and probably against himself as well. So he assumed that when the whole ordeal was over, David would come back into Jerusalem and have him executed. I guess that’s what he was thinking. I don’t know.

2 Samuel 17:24-29 David apparently went to Mahanaim because it had served as the capital of Israel under the rule of Ishbosheth, Saul’s surviving son. Since David had shown kindness to Mephibosheth, perhaps this warmed the hearts of these people, and they greeted him with kindness and hospitality.
Psalm 3

This psalm reflects the events we just read as David fled Jerusalem because of Absalom’s rebellion. Initially, David’s flight lasted two nights until he came to Mahanaim. The first night he was noticeably despondent, as seen from his attitude in 2 Samuel 15:30. But the cure for this was to find assurance in the attributes of God. Indeed, God is a shield for His people (see Deuteronomy 33:29).
Psalm 63

Either this Psalm was written while David was hiding in En-Gedi, or it came at a time while he was traveling through the dry land. Whatever the event, the dryness of the land made him think of how he thirsts for God. Verse 1 can also be translated "Early will I seek You", which is why some like to read this Psalm in the morning. The main point here is that when we find ourselves in a dry season with God (when He seems distant & quiet in our lives), those are the times we continue in our faith by drawing strength from when He was near; during times of wonderful fellowship with Him and His church.

2 Samuel 18

2 Samuel 18:1-5 The person who recorded these events shared subtle hints that give us a glimpse into David’s heart. Although he divided up the army, David wanted to be the one leading them. And he wanted to be out among them because he wanted to make sure Absalom was not harmed. He spoke clearly and plainly. And everyone heard the king give this order. Was David’s attitude wrong? Not if you look at this from a father’s perspective. But from a king’s perspective it seems the only solution would be to end the uprising through the death of Absalom.

2 Samuel 18:6-8 The advice that Ahithophel gave in 2 Samuel 17:2 was true. David’s men were much more suited to fight in the wilderness than any of Absalom’s army. This part of Israel was quite rugged and deserted. It was not a prime location for people to even settle in. Possibly it was west of Mahanaim. 20,000 of Absalom’s men perished in the battle, and most were from the inhospitable terrain rather than the sword. This tells you something about the area and about the stoutness of David’s fighting men. Even Absalom’s long flowing hair get entangled in a tree (2 Samuel 18:9)

2 Samuel 18:10-17 I see more integrity and compassion within the soldier than I do Joab. Joab’s solution was to end things the easy way. With Absalom dead, the fighting is over. But the righteous way is never the easy way. Sure there
would have been possible upheavals and maybe more rebellions if they simply captured Absalom, but then again maybe he could have been turned from his selfish ways. It seems that God’s hand was in this event, for I see God delivering Absalom to David’s men. But I don’t see God involved with the brutal murder of Absalom. Joab had acted harshly and in haste. He though only of the kingdom, not the heart of the king.

2 Samuel 18:18  Apparently Absalom’s children had died, at least his sons (see 2 Samuel 14:27). If that’s the case, then why not spare his life? Why end his life when there was no son to avenge his father’s capture? Joab’s disregard for David’s wishes seems to bother me.

2 Samuel 18:19-23  Why Ahimaaz wanted so desperately to go can only be seen as a lust for recognition and fame. He did not care that the news was bad. He wanted only to be the one to report back to David. Did he not know of David’s command when the army marched out against Absalom? Surely he must, but this didn’t seem to matter. Joab, on the other hand, knew how David would take the news, which makes his murder of Absalom even more cruel. I even suspect that he had the 10 men surround Absalom and beat at him just so no one person could be held accountable for his death. Joab could honestly say that Absalom was still alive when he left him. He must have died when one of the armor bearers attacked him. Yet Joab’s blows would have eventually resulted in death.

2 Samuel 18:29  Why tell the king a lie? What was Ahimaaz thinking here?

2 Samuel 18:33  David is hit hard by grief because he knows that Amnon and now Absalom are dead because he had sinned. This was all part of his punishment for his affair with Bathsheba and his murder of her husband Uriah (2 Samuel 12:10). This kind of grief is probably the hardest; to realize that someone else has suffered because of your sin can be devastating. You were the one who deserved the punishment, not one of your children.

2 Samuel 19

2 Samuel 19:1-8  Again we see that Joab is more concerned for the kingdom than he is for the king. Was his advice here right? Not necessarily. See had
Joab acted according to the kings wishes there would be no mourning and then no problem. What should of happened, and a man of true strength would have done this, Joab should have told the men that he had caused the king grief because he had ordered Absalom killed. But instead he blames David. He says that David needs to grow up. Yea right. If anyone needed to fess up here it was Joab, but he didn’t have the courage.

2 Samuel 19:9-10  I want you to notice what’s going on here. First the northern tribes of Israel, the very ones who turned against David, now start thinking that maybe it was better to have David rule as king. But what of the southern tribes? What are they thinking about this change of events? Well, apparently they were not thinking anything. It seems like they didn’t care one bit, and that sort of upset David.

2 Samuel 19:13  In order to demonstrate forgiveness to the people, David appoints Amasa as the new commander of the army (see 2 Samuel 17:25). This also lets Joab know just how displeased David was with his murder of Absalom. Oh, David might be grieving, and he might mourning for his son, but he is still guided by the Spirit. And it is the presence of the Spirit within David that helps him think and act wisely.

2 Samuel 19:15-18  So David is welcomed back to Jerusalem, which is located in the southern tribe of Judah by the way. And a lot of people come out to help him move back home. And look who just happens to be there. Why it’s two people who had treated David harshly and had lied about him. You don’t think these two men were dealing with some guilt now do you? Why would they feel guilty? Oh, I think I know why. They’re feeling guilty now because David is coming back to town, and he might just remember a few things or find out the truth. And the King might just get upset and dispense some justice. So now would be a good time to come crawling on your hands and knees looking for some mercy. I also want you to notice who is not here. No one from the northern tribes was present to help David come back to town.
2 Samuel 19:18-23  Apart from the death of his son, many of David's requests to God (as we have read in several Psalms) are being answered. He is being restored. His enemies are falling at his feet. Seeing that his prayers have been answered, David is feeling gracious. He spares the life of Shimei. As David had vowed when he was being insulted by this man, he would let God make the decision about who was right and who was wrong (2 Samuel 16:5-8). God did see that David was being treated unjustly, and sent this little man groveling for mercy. To David, it was enough that God had heard his prayers. Vengeance was not necessary. It seems many of David’s followers needed to learn this.

2 Samuel 19:24-30  Next David finds out that Ziba had lied to him as he was leaving town (2 Samuel 16:1-4). I knew there was something wrong with Ziba’s report about Mephibosheth. You want to know how I knew, because it was slanderous. What Ziba said about Mephibosheth in chapter 16 was slander. He insulted the name of Mephibosheth. I’ve learned that when some messenger shares a bit of news about another person, and it tears down that person’s character or integrity, I’ve learned to not trust the messenger. It would have been enough to simply say that Mephibosheth was not coming. Ziba did not need to add all the extra details. Consider how Mephibosheth deals with Ziba as opposed to the way Ziba dealt with Mephibosheth (compare 2 Samuel 16:1-4 with 2 Samuel 19:30).

2 Samuel 19:38  Kimham was perhaps the son of Barzillai. So there is another person sitting at David’s table that is not his own son. I find it interesting that God brought another young man into David’s life, perhaps to somehow lessen the pain of his own son’s death.

2 Samuel 19:41-43  Although the civil war was over, there was still much tension in the nation. Truthfully, those northern tribes had been the ones to so eagerly side with Absalom. Now they’re hurt because they didn’t get invited to the coming home party. There is a schism growing within this nation, and it will eventually divide this nation into two. So strong with this schism become that it will never be resolved.
April 30: 2 Samuel 20-21, Psalm 7

2 Samuel 20

- 2 Samuel 20:1-2  David can’t even get back into Jerusalem before another trouble maker rises to divide the kingdom. It seems there is never any end to those bent on having things their own way. And it seems there is no end to the people who are so easily swayed. Tell me, wasn’t it the northern tribes who first thought of restoring David as king (see 2 Samuel 19:43)? So why the change of heart? Truthfully, the division that will take place once Solomon dies was brewing even now.

- 2 Samuel 20:3  David acted righteously with these concubines. Once they had been defiled by Absalom, it would have been wrong for David to sleep with them again. But he did not simply cast them aside. They were cared for. They had a place to live and food to eat; a testimony to the heart of this King.

- 2 Samuel 20:4-13  Joab’s actions were guided by jealousy toward Amasa, probably because David had appointed Amasa as commander of the army. But David did this because Joab had killed Absalom against the king’s command. Joab was lucky he was even left alive. His actions are beginning to concern me. He is starting to show more authority than he should. It almost seems that he is starting to think that he is above the law. This attitude will be his downfall eventually.

- 2 Samuel 20:14  Sheba’s revolt was not well planned. He runs all the way north to a city northwest of the Sea of Galilee.
2 Samuel 20:15-22  Apparently the town was well known for solving conflicts and finding peaceful solutions to problems, although the solution was not so peaceful for Sheba. However, it did end the siege, and many lives were spared. This should give you a clue just how loyal all Sheba’s men really were.

2 Samuel 20:23-26  Apparently David tolerated Joab’s assassination of Amasa because he is listed here as a commander of the army. I’m not sure why David let him get away with this. Also mentioned here is Adoniram, who was in charge of the labor force. This is the first time a labor force is mentioned. Apparently David had to depend on Israelite people to help with work projects around the nation. Perhaps this part of 2 Samuel can be attributed to Jehoshaphat or maybe Sheva. Maybe they worked together to record these events. It is pretty
clear that they were assembled into book form after the kingdom divided, considering the constant reference to Israel and Judah.

2 Samuel 21

2 Samuel 21:1 At some point in David’s reign as king (probably near the end) there was a three year famine in Israel. The Lord indicates that Saul had violated the covenant made with the Gibeonites back in the time of Joshua (Joshua 9:15-21). In an event not recorded in scripture, Saul had apparently killed some of these people. Now I’m not trying to doubt the wisdom of God here, but why did He wait so long until He brought this to David’s attention?

2 Samuel 21:2-6 David agrees to let the Gibeonites practice Lex Talionis – eye for eye, tooth for tooth, life for life (see Exodus 21:23-25). Truthfully, none of this really makes sense, from a human point of view. But God seemed to have his reasons. Sometimes I wish I knew what they were. It would help make better sense of this story. The only thing that seems to make sense here is that these seven sons might have been directly implicated in the killings (see what God commands in Deuteronomy 24:16). It’s possible that they were old enough at the time to have participated in this killing spree, and yet not too old that they would have died already. If that’s the case, then justice is being served, not some ritualistic sacrifice to appease a god who was holding back the rains. That sounds too much like Baal worship to me.

2 Samuel 21:10-14 To some in Israel it might seem that David was the one to kill these seven men, but he did not. David did not harbor any animosity toward Saul or any of his family. But he did what was necessary for the nation. God had commanded that justice be served here. But David also knew that even when justice is done, dignity of human life remains. So he does something to uphold the dignity of these seven men along with Saul and with Jonathan. He has their bones buried properly, and together with the rest of the family. That’s dignity, my friend. We would be wise to do the same with those who oppose us or lie and slander against us. When justice has been served, human dignity still
remains. We need to remember that it is the crime we are punishing, not the person.

2 Samuel 21:15-22 This chapter ends with a summary of victories over the giants of the Philistines. There are still some of these giants alive, and they are still being used by the Philistines. The amazing part is that even though they were large and impressive (“You were supposed to be this great colossus”), they all fell at the hands of David’s mighty warriors (“Inconceivable!”). The important part of this section is found in the way David was regarded by his men. He was the Light of Israel. This is significant, because considering all that David had been through and the times when he had stumbled, his faith and devotion to God became a beacon of hope to the rest of the nation. Don’t ever underestimate the difference one godly person can make. You may be the only one in your family, at school or at work, but your faithful, godly character is influencing more people than you realize.

Psalm 7

This Psalm is attributed to a time when David encountered a man named Cush from the tribe of Benjamin. Although it is not directly related to any particular event that is mentioned in David’s life, the words seem to reflect his encounter with Shimei. David is asking God to reveal what he might have done wrong. He is asking God not to simply take away the problems, but to be honest with him. David wants to know if there is something he has done wrong; the sign of a great man. It is a truly mighty man who is willing to stand before God and have his sins revealed.