

Always A Shepherd

When we're first introduced to David, he's in the field taking care of his father's sheep. David's experience as a shepherd had a profound impact on his own life. One of the most cherished portions of Scripture, Psalm 23, is a song about "The Good Shepherd" and was written by David. Later in life, long after David had left the fields of sheep for a throne over a kingdom, David was still a shepherd. Following a sinful census that brought a terrible punishment, David witnessed the suffering of the people for his sin and said, "Behold, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly. But these sheep, what have they done? Please let your hand be against me and against my father's house." David's reference to the people as sheep wasn't a slight—it was a term of endearment, love, and mercy. Long ago David had risked his life to save a lamb from a bear and also a lion. Now David couldn't stand by and see those under his care suffer for his mistakes.



David's life and leadership remind us of a common theme in Scripture regarding leadership. Godly leaders are not rulers and tyrants; they are shepherds who lovingly and caringly guide the Father's sheep. When Jesus saw the masses, he viewed them as sheep without a shepherd, and thus He fed and taught them. Elders are exhorted to be shepherds of God's people (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2). Leaders would do well to learn from the shepherd theme of Scripture, and we all would do well to hear and respond to the voice of the Good Shepherd!

“That You May Grow Thereby...”

A weekly Bible reading plan



2 Samuel 13-24

The Reign of King David: Part 2

Overview

David's reign began with success. The nation finally had a leader worthy of being followed, and things seemed to be on the right track. As we saw in chapters 11 and 12, however, David wasn't a perfect man. His sin with Bathsheba and the subsequent cover-up attempt would have consequences that haunted David the rest of his life. As Nathan the prophet foretold, the sword never departed from David's house. The final half of 2 Samuel recounts the heartaches and troubles David faced. One of his sons raped a half-sister, which led to another son murdering the culprit. The resentment that ensued between Absalom and David would lead to a full-scale rebellion, which was successful enough to drive David from Jerusalem for a time. In the end, David saw yet another child dead. This portion of David's story is a startling reminder that sin can have terrible, long-lasting, and far reaching consequences!

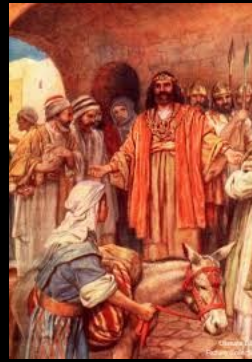
Suggested Reading Schedule

Monday: 2 Samuel 13-14
Tuesday: 2 Samuel 15-17
Wednesday: 2 Samuel 18-19
Thursday: 2 Samuel 20-22
Friday: 2 Samuel 23-24

Questions:

1. What was the name of Absalom's sister and Amnon's half-sister? _____
2. Who encouraged David to let Absalom return to Jerusalem? _____
3. Who acted as a spy for David to thwart the advice Absalom received? _____
4. Who cursed David while he was on the run, and what family was this man from? _____
5. What city did David flee to? _____
6. Who killed Absalom? _____
7. Why did Joab rebuke David? _____
8. What did David do to the man who had cursed him while he was on the run? _____
9. Who led a rebellion against David? How is this man described? _____
10. Why did David demand to pay a price for Aruanah's threshing floor? _____

How to Usurp Authority



2 Samuel 13-18 tells the unfolding saga of Absalom's rebellion. The story is a tragic but riveting one, with a dramatic plot that could rival any later production. Nestled within the tale is the story of how Absalom led a short-lived coup against his father and king, David. While David was a good king, Absalom was also a charmer. In chapter 15 we learn how Absalom was able to lead a revolt against one such as David. First, Absalom made it look like he was important by getting a chariot and 50 men to run before him. Next, Absalom sowed seeds of discord, while promising he could provide solutions. He would seek out people who had disputes and problems, and then bemoan that sad fact that the king hadn't appointed someone to settle their dispute. This was followed with the helpful statement, "Oh that I were judge in the land...I would give every man against leadership and assume we have better answers. But be wary of those who undercut leadership with grand promises of something better. They might just be an Absalom seeking bitter revolution.

To Absalom's credit, he was a patient man. He continued his plot for several years, until as the Bible says, "...stole the hearts of the men of Israel." The conspiracy grew strong, and the people loyal to Absalom increased. Finally, when Absalom decided to lead his revolt, he did so nearly unopposed.

This story reminds us of the dangers of false teachers. Those who seek their own agenda often appear very genuine—they complain about current leaders behind the scenes, and of course they have all the answers. Again, be wary of such individuals. The Bible teaches us that God hates those who sow discord (Pro. 6:19) and that we should mark and avoid those who cause division (Rom. 16:17). Let the story of Absalom be a reminder to all: Leaders should be actively involved with their people and protect them from threats. Others should trust leaders who have proven to be godly men, and be wary of those who seek to undermine them for their own gain.

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