**Survey Old Testament**

**1 Samuel 25:1 The death of Samuel.**

1. This chapter begins with the death of Samuel. Samuel was a great man of God. (1) He had a godly mother who prayed for him and dedicated him to the service of God. (2) He came to know the Lord at a very young age and served the Lord as he grew into a man. (3) He was a great prophet and the last judge of Israel. (4) He was a great man of prayer.

**1 Samuel 25:2-44 Nabal and David**

1. Nabal was a very rich man, a descendent of Caleb, but he was also a very cruel and mean man in all his dealings. David and his men have been around Nabal’s shepherds and protected them, never taking or asking for anything.
2. David sent messengers to Nabal asking for provision for he and his men but Nabal said “who is this son of Jesse. Who does he think he is? Shall I give provision to an outlaw?”
3. Nabal, however, with utter contempt, refused to comply. This so angered David that he took about 400 men with him to take forcibly from Nabal what he wanted. Were it not for the intervention of Abigail Nabal’s wife, Nabal surely would have been slain. To avert disaster she took with her food supplies in sufficient abundance to meet David’s requirements. When she met him, she begged him not to punish her husband for, she said, He is just like his name—a fool. Instead, she continued, God would bless David and would eventually make him king. For him to kill the senseless Nabal would only burden his conscience needlessly. Impressed by her wisdom, David followed her advice and gratefully accepted the food she had brought (vv. 32–35).
4. Abigail’s judgment was vindicated shortly thereafter when Nabal, after a drunken night, found out how narrow an escape he had from David. The news so shocked him that he had a heart attack and died in about 10 days. Obviously struck by the beauty and character of Abigail, David proposed marriage to her, a proposal she gladly accepted.

**1 Samuel 26–31 The tragic end of Saul’s life.**

1. We come now to the tragic end of Saul’s life. The man who “stood higher than any of the people” now falls to the earth in a witch’s house and then falls dead on the battlefield. Perhaps the best way to study these sad events is to notice the obvious contrasts between David and Saul.
2. **Love and Hatred**. David’s message to Saul was actually a plea for him to return to the Lord. “If God has led you to pursue me because of some sin in my life, then I will offer a sacrifice with you and get the matter settled,” he said. “But if men are cursing me, then you can be sure God will settle the matter for me.” Listen to Saul’s empty confession “I have sinned! I have played the fool!” Yes, he had—but he still did not repent! “Be sure your sins will find you out!”
3. **Light and Darkness.** Chapters 27 and 29–30 deal with David’s victories as he sought the mind of the Lord, while chapter 28 pictures Saul’s terrible defeat as he sought aid in a witch’s house. The contrast between chapters 28 and 30 is striking: Saul had departed from the Lord and therefore had no divine guidance, while David looked to the Lord for courage and direction. It is quite another picture when we look at Saul’s midnight visit to the witch’s house. Samuel came because he had a special message for the king from the Lord. The witch could not have impersonated Samuel since she did not know Saul was coming. The witch becomes a mere spectator once Samuel is on the scene.
4. **Life and Death**. 1 Samuel 31 While David was sending gifts to his friends, Saul and his family were being stripped on the battlefield! “To be carnally minded is death” (Rom. 8:6). Gilboa had been the scene of some great victories in the days of Deborah (Jud. 4–5) and Gideon (Jud. 7); but this day it would be the scene of a tragic defeat. God had abandoned Saul, and the only thing left for the rebellious king was death. How sad that his innocent son, Jonathan, had to suffer because of the father’s sins.
5. Saul’s tragic life and death can teach us many practical lessons: (1) great sins often begin as “little matters”—impatience, incomplete obedience, excuse-making; (2) once sin gets hold of people, they go from bad to worse; (3) if we are not right with God, we will not get along with God’s people; (4) excuses are no substitute for confessions; (5) natural gifts and abilities mean nothing without the power of God; and (6) there is no substitute for obedience.

**2 Samuel 1 David Sorrows over Saul’s Death**

1. A lesser saint would have rejoiced that his enemy was slain, but David was a man after God’s own heart and felt sorrow at the tragedy of Saul’s death. Of course, David’s dear friend Jonathan was also dead; the sin of a disobedient father had brought judgment upon innocent people. Note that an Amalekite brought the news and claimed to be the one who finally took Saul’s life. Had Saul obeyed the Lord in 1 Samuel 15 and slain all of the Amalekites, this would not have happened. The sin we fail to slay is the one that slays us.
2. David’s lamentation is touching; This “Song of the Bow” connects with Jonathan’s use of the bow (1 Sam. 20:20). There are no unkind words about Saul in this song. David’s chief concern is that the Lord’s anointed has been slain and the Lord’s glory has been dimmed. He is anxious that the unsaved enemy not rejoice over this victory. “How are the mighty fallen!” is his theme. In 1 Sam. 10:23, Saul “stood higher” than any other man, but now he had fallen lower than the enemy!

**2 Samuel 2–4 David Struggles against Saul’s Family**

1. We now begin those “political secret schemes” that plagued David throughout all his life. Even though David sought the mind of God, he could not escape the plots and plans of others. David’s march to the throne was a difficult one.
2. Joab, Abishai, and Asahel were all sons of David’s half-sister Zeruiah. Thus, they were David’s nephews as well as valued men in his army. David first reigned over Judah, his own tribe, with his headquarters at Hebron. However, Abner, the commander of Saul’s army, had made Saul’s son Ishbosheth the king over the other tribes. It was to his advantage to see Ishbosheth reign, but he was deliberately rebelling against God’s Word when he crowned him. Abner’s murder of Asahel was the prelude to the “long war” between the two kings (3:1). As we shall see, the two remaining brothers avenged this death, much to David’s grief.
3. Abner took one of Saul’s concubines and incurred the displeasure of Ishbosheth. This led to a disruption between Abner and Ishbosheth. Abner tried to make a peaceful agreement with David, but Joab plotted against him and killed him. While Joab did the actual killing, it is likely that his brother was in on the plans. Joab’s hands were stained with Innocent blood before his own death came; for he not only killed Abner but Amasa too. David asked his son Solomon to deal with Joab, and he did (1 Kings 2:5–6, 28–34).
4. This was a turning point when Ishbosheth was killed, the way was wide open for David to rule over the entire nation. However, it must be noted that David did not approve of the method the sons of Rimmon used, and he had the murderers slain because of their crime. David knew that God was able to elevate him to the throne.

**2 Samuel 5 David Succeeds to Saul’s Throne**

1. David had reigned seven years in Hebron over the tribe of Judah; now he was to reign over the entire nation for thirty-three years, making a total of forty years. The king now needed a capital city, and he chose Jerusalem. This stronghold had not been captured previously (Josh. 15:63; Jud. 1:21) and the Jebusites were arrogant and defied David to attack. “The lame and the blind could defeat you!” they taunted, but David and his men turned their taunts into cries of defeat.

**2 Samuel 6 Moving the Ark to Jerusalem**

1. Psalm 132:1–6 tells of David’s intense desire to honor the Lord by returning the ark of the covenant to its proper place. For nearly twenty years, the ark had been in Kirjath-jearim so David prepared a special tent for it in Jerusalem (1 Chron. 15:1) and prepared to bring the sacred ark to its new home. It took more than three months for him to finish the task (6:11).
2. Certainly it was a noble desire on David’s part to bring the ark to Jerusalem, but it is possible to have “zeal without knowledge” and do a good work in a wrong way. David ignored God’s Word. Instead of asking the Levites to bear the ark on their shoulders (Num. 3:27–31; 4:15; 7:9; 10:21), he followed the worldly example of the Philistines and put the ark on a new cart (1 Sam. 6). All of the people were enthusiastic and joyful, but this did not make their method right in the eyes of God.
3. Naturally, the human method of doing God’s work eventually fails: the oxen stumbled and Uzzah, a man who was not a Levite touched the ark (see Num. 4:15). God had to judge him immediately or else sacrifice His glory and permit His Word to be violated. David’s reaction to this sudden judgment reveals that his heart was not completely right with God in the matter; for, first he was angry, then he was fearful.
4. God was blessing the household of Obed-edom, and David wanted that blessing for the whole nation. This time he saw to it that the Levites were properly prepared for their task. David was used of God to give expression to the joy of his heart, and his song glorified the Lord. The king laid aside his royal robes and led the procession in the humble garments of a Levite. The Levites took six paces and then paused, waiting to see if God would accept them; when no judgment came, they offered sacrifices and then proceeded the rest of the way to Jerusalem.
5. It is obvious that David’s “dancing” before the Lord was a spontaneous expression of his joy that the ark of God was restored to the people. Was it undignified for David to act in this way? Certainly not! David blessed the people and gave them gifts to celebrate the return of the ark. Years before “the glory had departed”; now the Lord of Hosts was back in the midst of His people again.
6. Saul’s daughter, was never a suitable wife for David. She belonged to Saul’s family and never really exhibited any faith in the God of Israel. Her harsh words to David after a great time of praise must have cut him deeply. It is usually true that Satan has a “Michal” to meet us whenever we have been rejoicing in the Lord and seeking to glorify Him. He realized that Michal would never help him in the work of the Lord; therefore, he put her away and refused to give her the privileges of marriage. For a Jewish woman to die without children was, of course, a great shame to her.

**2 Samuel 7 The Lord’s Covenant Promise to David**

1. The days of exile and danger are over, and David is enjoying rest and blessing in his own house. The king is fellowshipping with the prophet Nathan, and they are discussing the things of the Lord. David always had a love for the house of God (Ps. 132), and his desire was to build a beautiful house for the Lord. God would not permit this (1 Chron. 22:8), but He would acknowledge David’s love, inasmuch as this desire was in his heart (1 Kings 8:18).
2. Nathan did not know God’s express will in the matter, so he merely commended David and encouraged him to do what was in his heart. Both David and Nathan kept their hearts open for God’s leading; and, when the Lord spoke, they listened and obeyed. David truly was “a man after God’s own heart,” for he had the Word of God and the house of God uppermost in his heart.
3. David received the message from Nathan, then went in to pray, asking God to fulfill His Word (28–29). How much more we would receive from lessons and sermons if only we spent time with God afterward and “prayed” the message in. David had asked permission to build an earthly temple; God responded by promising him an eternal kingdom! This tremendous act of grace left David humbled before the Lord, and in his prayer, the king praises the greatness of the Lord.

**2 Samuel 8 David’s Military Victories**

1. King David first sought the kingdom of God and His righteousness, then settled the ark as soon as he himself was well settled.
2. Then, King David triumphed over all his enemies. With the Lord’s help David subdued all the enemies around him and Israel enjoyed rest. His enemies were either killed or made slaves.

**2 Samuel 9 David’s kindness to Saul’s family**

1. David had pledged to Jonathan that he would never forget the covenant of friendship that had bound them together. He therefore called Ziba, a servant of Saul, and asked him if some member of Saul’s family had special need. Ziba replied that Mephibosheth, the lame son of Jonathan, was still alive. David immediately sent for him, restored Saul’s personal estate to him, and supported him on a royal pension. In humility Mephibosheth referred to himself as David’s servant and as a dead dog, that is, worthless. David instructed Ziba and his 15 sons and 20 servants to farm Mephibosheth’s land and to treat him as David’s own son. David’s provision for Mephibosheth and his letting him eat at the king’s table again demonstrated David’s heart. In all this David showed kindness for Jonathan’s sake.