

General Church Education



David Enlarges the Kingdom & Numbers the People

2 Samuel 20:1-10; 24:10-25

Lesson 31

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 5: The Lord Is King of Kings

For ages 10-11

David Enlarges the Kingdom & Numbers the People

2 Samuel 20:1-10, 24:10-25

Teacher Background

David fled into the wilderness and returned as king of Israel. Then Sheba, a Benjamite rebel, tried to lead the northern kingdom away. While countering the attack, David's commander Joab killed Amasa. Then as Joab laid siege to Maacha, he struck a deal with a woman who arranged for Sheba to die in exchange for saving the city. Later, during a famine, David learned that Saul had harmed some Gibeonites. David agreed that the Gibeonites could hang seven of Saul's descendants, and the famine ended. Following this David disobeyed the commandments and 'numbered' the people incorrectly. Therefore the Lord sent a plague. David made sacrifices and the plague ceased.

In this action-packed story innocent people suffer for the choices of others. It is easy to see how people's choices affect others. This scenario is played out many times in the Word. While the Lord did not want bad things to happen, he knew that even worse things would happen if people's wrong choices did not have consequences.

Focus Points

- Sheba rebels against David and Joab secures his throne.
- During a famine David learns that Saul mistreated the Gibeonites and makes atonement.
- David disobeyed the Lord in numbering the people and to stop the ensuing famine sacrificed to the Lord.

Readings from the Writings

“Numbering the children of Israel was forbidden, because ‘numbering’ meant arranging...all the truths and forms of the good of faith and love in their entirety. And since...setting these in order belonged to the Lord alone...numbering them was a transgression like that committed by those who lay claim to the truths of faith and forms of the good of love as their own.”
Arcana Coelestia 10218

“A ‘plague’ denotes the penalty of evil....” *Arcana Coelestia* 10219

In many places in the Word anger, wrath, and vengeance are attributed to God and He is said to punish. He who believes this in simplicity like a child is not condemned. But he who so far confirms these things in himself as to believe that anger, wrath, vengeance, and all like things are in God, and that God punishes and casts man into hell from anger, wrath and vengeance—he is condemned because he has destroyed the genuine truth that God is Love itself, Mercy itself, and Good itself.” See *True Christian Religion* 256

Teacher Activity Overview

The lesson offers students the following choices:

Recitation

Learn the Lord's Word by heart.

“The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;
The God of my strength, in Him I will trust.” (2 Samuel 22:2,3)

Projects and Activities (see back for answers)

Choose one or two.

Questions

Use short sentences to answer the questions.

Game: David's Life and Kingship

Discover how David's choice to do more and more evil things changed his reign by playing a game alone or with a partner. Color the game board. Find a red, green and yellow marker or colored pencil, die, and game marker for each player. Trace the path of David's reign as king.

Additional Project and Activity Choices for Parents and Teachers

Calligraphy

Decorate a quote from David's Song of Praise. Online at [UPLOAD AND ADD](#)

Discussion: Letting Friends Help

As a young man David won many battles against the Philistines. But in his old age he needed friends to help him fight these battles. Like David, we sometimes need help fighting battles against evil spirits. How do friends and family help you become a better person? How might you ask for help if you are struggling against evil spirits?

David Enlarges the Kingdom & Numbers the People

2 Samuel 20:1-10; 24:10-25

Vocabulary

siege—surround a city so nobody can come in or go out

atonement—doing something right to fix a wrong that has been done

census—an official count of a population

Rebellion of Sheba

David returned to Jerusalem as king over Israel and Judah, but there was conflict between them. Soon a rebel named Sheba led the northern people of Israel away from David, saying,

“We have no part in David, Nor do we have inheritance in the son of Jesse; Every man to his tents, O Israel!” (2 Samuel 20:1)

David called Amasa to gather the men of Judah for him. Amasa had once been a captain in Absalom’s army, and was now a captain over David’s army. However, Amasa took a long time to come so David called his commander Joab to pursue Sheba.



Joab did as David commanded and went to find Sheba. On his way he met Amasa. It is not clear why David acted as he did next. He pretended to be Amasa’s friend and greeted him with a kiss. But while he kissed Amasa, he stabbed him and left him to die. Then Joab and David’s men chased Sheba.

When they came to the walled city of Abel of Maacha, they set up a siege. A wise woman called out from the city and asked if she could speak to Joab. She made a deal with him. If Joab would spare the city, she would throw Sheba’s head over the wall. The woman convinced the citizens to kill Sheba, and threw his head down to Joab. The people blew trumpets in victory and Joab returned to Jerusalem, captain over all

A Famine in the Land

Now there had been a famine in the land for three years. When David asked the Lord why it was happening, He replied that Saul had killed some of the Gibeonites. So David asked the Gibeonites

“What shall I do for you? And with what shall I make atonement, that you may bless the inheritance of the Lord?” (2 Samuel 21:3)

The Gibeonites asked for seven of Saul’s descendants to hang them for Saul’s sin. This would have been difficult for David because he always treated Saul and his descendants with respect. However, he managed to protect Mephibosheth, the son of his good friend Jonathan.

It was hard, but David gave the Gibeonites the men and the Gibeonites hanged them. Rizpah, the mother of two of these men, mourned for her sons and protected their bodies as they hung

on the hill. When David heard this, he fetched the bones of Saul and of his friend Jonathon, and the bones of the men who had been hung and buried them in the tomb of Saul’s father. And so the Lord brought the famine to an end.

For a time, David continued to hold power in Judah and Israel while his armies and their leaders conquered his enemies. They would no longer let David fight and did not want to lose their leader. However, David once again forgot the laws of the Lord.

David Numbers the People

David wanted to check Israel’s fighting strength by counting and organizing his warriors. This seems sensible. But David ignored the laws the Lord had given about this. Each man that was counted was to offer the Lord half a shekel of silver.

“Everyone among those who are numbered shall give half a shekel according to the shekel of the



sanctuary.” (Exodus 30:12,13)

Making this offering was like saying that the Lord had all power over Israel’s enemies. David sinned because he did not take an offering from every man he counted. Even though he was sorry, he could not escape punishment.

David Is Punished

The Lord gave David a choice of three punishments: famine, being pursued for three months or a plague. David chose the plague. He believed that only the Lord could send disease and that He would be more merciful than any man. However, when he saw that 70,000 people had died he asked the Lord to spare his people who had done nothing wrong. He begged the Lord to punish him and his house.

Then a man called Gad came to David and told him to set up an altar on Araunah’s threshing floor. Although this may have seemed strange, David offered to buy the threshing floor. Araunah wanted to give it to him. He said,

“May the Lord your God accept you.” (2 Samuel 24:23)

David refused to accept the gift of the threshing floor or the animals that Araunah offered him. He believed that the sacrifice had to be from him, and he was right. When he had offered the sacrifices the Lord stopped the plague.

True Repentance

People who trust in themselves and not in the Lord, and who disobey Him are always punished. The Lord cannot take the punishment away until a person feels sorry for what they have done and returns to the Lord with their whole heart and mind. The story of David’s offer of buying of the threshing floor and offering sacrifices is about David returning to the Lord. Like David, we have to give up our bad desires and thoughts to truly change. The Lord does not expect us to be perfect, but He does ask us to be sorry, to try again, and to work harder the next time we are tempted to choose badly.



Activity Overview

Recitation

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Questions

1. Who led a rebellion against king David?
2. Which part of the kingdom rebelled?
3. How did the rebellion end?
4. Why did the Lord bring a famine to the land?
5. What difficult thing did David have to do to bring the famine to an end?
6. Why was what the Gibeonites asked David to do so hard for him?
7. What did David do for Saul, Jonathan, and the seven descendants who were hanged?
8. The Philistines and Israel were an old enemies. Which of the Philistines chose to attack David when he was weary?
9. Why didn't David's men allow him to fight against the Philistines?
10. Who fought against the Philistine giants instead?
11. David did not follow the law when he numbered the people. As a result, he had to choose a punishment. What punishment did David choose?
12. Which would you have chosen and why?

David’s Life and Kingship

Play this game alone or with a partner. Start by setting up the game board.

1. If there is something good on a square color it green.
2. If there is something bad on a square color it red .
3. Color all other squares yellow.

Put a marker on start. Roll a die and move as many spaces as you roll. If you land on a green square, roll again. Move ahead the number of spaces rolled. If you land on a red square, roll again and move backwards the number of spaces rolled. How many rolls did it take to finish the game? Was the fame during the first or the second half? What does this tell you about David’s choices?

<i>Start</i>	Samuel anoints David king			The Lord is with David			
		David defeats Goliath			Saul tries to kill David		
			David flees from Saul				David is made king of Judah
	David is made king of Israel				David commits adultery		
David sends Uriah to die in battle			The son of David and Bathsheba sickens and dies			David numbers the people without following the law	<i>Finish</i>

Answers

Lesson 31

Questions

1. Sheba, a Benjamite, 2. the north, 3. Sheba was killed, 4. Because Saul had harmed the Gibeonites, 5. make amends for what Saul did, 6. Give the Gibeonites seven of Saul's descendants to hang, 7. He buried them, 8. Goliath's relatives, 9. He was too precious, 10. David's mighty men, 11. A plague.