



Imperial Academy Bible Lessons



The Nation of Israel

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Why did God raise up the ancient nation Israel to be His *chosen people*?

God says He is not a respecter of persons. So He did not select the Israelites to receive special benefits and blessings because they were His favorite. God chose Israel for a responsibility and a purpose.

About 2,000 years after Adam and Eve rejected God in the Garden of Eden, people had become so numerous and so evil that God decided to create a nation that could show the rest of the nations the blessings that come from obeying God and the curses that come from disobeying God.

God chose to work with a man named Abraham. He would test him and put him through major trials. And if he would be faithful and would draw close to God, then God would draw close to him. Abraham did exactly that: He showed faithfulness and obedience throughout his life.

God revealed His law to Abraham and to his descendants and gave them an opportunity to follow Him and to be an example to other nations.

God said Israel was like His firstborn child (Exodus 4:22). A good father does not love his firstborn more than his other children, and God does not love Israel more than He loves other nations. But He does use His firstborn as an example. If His firstborn obeys Him and other nations follow that example, it ultimately leads to establishing God's Kingdom on Earth!

In the last lesson, you learned the promises God made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In this lesson, you will learn how the 12 sons of Jacob became the fathers of the twelve tribes of Israel. You will learn how these tribes grew into a mighty nation, and how this nation came to be ruled by a king after God's own heart. To

learn this amazing history, all you need is your Bible, a pencil and a prayerful attitude!

JOSEPH IN EGYPT

God blessed Jacob with 12 sons. His 11th son was Joseph: He was the firstborn child of Rachel, Jacob's favorite wife.

Jacob did become a respecter of persons, and he allowed himself to have a favorite son: Joseph. Joseph's 10 older brothers became jealous. As Joseph grew into a teenager, he began receiving extraordinary dreams from God about how his brothers would one day bow down to him (Genesis 37:5-9). Joseph told his brothers about these dreams, which was unwise.

Now Joseph's brothers were extremely jealous of him. They actually began to plot how to get rid of Joseph. Their opportunity came when Joseph was about 17 years old. Jacob sent Joseph to check up on his older brothers while they were herding sheep several days' journey away from home. When Joseph arrived, his brothers seized him, threw him in an empty well and then sold him to a caravan of Midianite slave traders. They told their father, Jacob, that a wild animal had killed him.

The Midianites took Joseph to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's bodyguard. Joseph had gone from being a favored son who received dreams from God to being a slave in a foreign land! But he still trusted God.

Fill in the blanks using Genesis 39:2-5 to see what life was like for a man who was a slave—but who trusted God: “And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a _____; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made _____ did to _____

in his hand. And Joseph found _____ in his _____, and he served him; and he made him _____ over his _____, and all that he had he put into his hand. And it came to pass from the time that he had made him _____ in his _____, and over all that he had, that the LORD _____ the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the _____ of the LORD was upon all that he had in the _____, and in the _____."

While Joseph worked in Potiphar's house, however, Potiphar's wife became attracted to him and wanted to commit adultery with him. She repeatedly tried to make Joseph sleep with her, but Joseph stayed faithful to God's law against adultery and always refused.

One day, when Joseph was alone, Potiphar's wife grabbed him by his coat and demanded that he sleep with her. But Joseph slipped out of his coat and ran. Angry that Joseph had rejected her, Potiphar's wife showed Joseph's coat to her husband and told him that Joseph tried to harm her. Potiphar believed his wife and threw Joseph in jail (verses 16-20).

Joseph had gone from young slave to trusted servant to innocent prisoner! Yet he still trusted God and obeyed God's laws.

Read verses 21-23 to see how God prospered Joseph: "But the LORD was with Joseph, and showed him _____, and gave him _____ in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison _____ to Joseph's hand all the _____ that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the LORD was with him, and that which he did, the LORD made it to _____."

Later, the pharaoh's butler and his chief baker were thrown into the same jail; they were both suspects in a conspiracy against the pharaoh. When each of them had a strange dream, God gave Joseph the ability to interpret the meaning of their dreams (Genesis 40:1-19).

Joseph told the butler that he would be freed from jail and given back his old job. He informed the baker that he would be hanged for treason. Both prophecies came true! Joseph asked the butler to tell Pharaoh that he was innocent, but the butler forgot about him and Joseph remained in prison for two more years.

Then Pharaoh himself had an unusual dream. The butler remembered Joseph and informed Pharaoh

that he knew a man who could interpret dreams.

The pharaoh sent for Joseph and told him about his dream. After listening to the pharaoh's dream, God revealed to Joseph that it meant Egypt would be blessed with seven years of plenty, then cursed with seven years of famine. Joseph advised Pharaoh to store away one fifth of all crops during the years of plenty, so that the Egyptians would have enough food to survive the seven years of famine. Pharaoh was so impressed with Joseph's wisdom that he appointed Joseph to be the prime minister of Egypt. In one day, Joseph went from foreign slave prisoner to second in command over the Egyptian empire!

Pharaoh was impressed with the young Israelite, but Joseph specifically denied personal credit for the interpretations.

Fill in the blanks using Genesis 41:16 to see Joseph's response to Pharaoh: "And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is _____ in _____: _____ shall give Pharaoh an _____ of _____."

The years of famine came: Jacob's family in the neighboring territory of Canaan began to run out of food. Jacob sent his 10 eldest sons to Egypt to try to buy some grain. When these Israelites arrived in Egypt, they encountered the chancellor. They did not recognize that he was Joseph, but Joseph recognized them.

Joseph had not seen his brothers since the day they ganged up on him and sold him to strangers. He did not tell them who he was. Instead, he accused them of being spies. He said he would not believe that they were innocent brothers who just wanted to buy food unless they brought their youngest brother, Benjamin, to Egypt. Benjamin was special to Jacob, because he was Rachel's only other son besides Joseph. The brothers were afraid to ask their father to let Benjamin go to Egypt.

Turn to Genesis 42:21 and fill in the blanks to see what these brothers thought: "And they said one to another, We are verily _____ concerning our brother [Joseph], in that we saw the _____ of his _____, when he _____ us, and we _____; therefore is this _____ come upon us."

The brothers felt guilty that they had sold Joseph into slavery. They still did not know that he had become the Egyptian chancellor with whom they were dealing. Joseph made matters worse for them by hiding their



Joseph's cup is discovered in Benjamin's grain sack.

money inside their grain sacks. When the brothers discovered the money on their way home, they thought the Egyptians would accuse them of stealing.

When the famine worsened, Jacob eventually allowed Benjamin to go to Egypt, since it was the only way the family could obtain more food. Joseph was overjoyed to see Benjamin, but he still did not tell his brothers who he was. Once again he told his steward to hide the brothers' money in their grain sacks. He ordered that his own personal silver cup be placed in Benjamin's sack.

After the brother's left, Joseph had Egyptian soldiers arrest them for theft. When the brothers were brought before Joseph, they were afraid he would never let Benjamin go and that their father would die in sorrow. They bowed before Joseph and begged for mercy, just as Joseph had seen in his dream when he was a teenager. At that moment, Joseph could not hold it in any longer!

"I am Joseph!" he said. "Does my father live?"

The brothers were shocked and greatly troubled. The young brother they had sold into slavery was now the second-most powerful man in the world! But Joseph was kind and forgave his brothers, because he focused not on himself or on them, but on what God was doing (Genesis 45:5).

Joseph sent his brothers to bring Jacob and the rest of the family to Egypt.

ISRAEL BECOMES A NATION

The pharaoh welcomed Joseph's family and gave them Goshen, the most fertile land in Egypt, as their

domain. They became herdsmen and shepherds, and Pharaoh set some of them over his own cattle.

Joseph introduced Pharaoh to his father, Jacob. Jacob told Pharaoh that he had lived a long and hard life. His deceit toward his father and his brother had not paid off in a comfortable, easy life free of heartache and suffering. But the fact that he believed and obeyed God meant that God was with him—He took the promises made to Abraham and Isaac, and continued them through Jacob (whom He named Israel) and through Jacob's 12 sons.

Now the descendants of Abraham would finally become a nation.

God blessed the Israelites: They grew in wealth and prosperity. By the time Joseph died, there were thousands of Israelites. But they were still inside Egypt, with no homeland of their own.

After Joseph died, a new pharaoh came to the throne. He feared that Egypt's enemies might be able to ally with these foreign Israelites who lived among the Egyptians. If that happened, they could destroy his empire from the inside out. He also decided that he could oppress the Israelites and make them into his slaves.

In Egyptian slavery, the Israelites lost and forgot much of their heritage. Many or most of them forgot the laws, the faith and the obedience they inherited from their 12 fathers and from Jacob, Isaac and Abraham. They forgot the God of Abraham and were influenced by the pagan religion of Egypt.

For more than 100 years, the descendants of Abraham lived with minimum freedom and maximum hard labor. The Egyptians turned the Israelites into property that they could buy, sell, overwork, abuse and even murder!

Yet the more the Egyptians oppressed the Israelites, the more their population grew. Eventually, the pharaoh decreed that all Israelite baby boys be killed (Exodus 1:22). This would slow down the Israelites' population growth and make it so that the only Israelites left would be women. They would have no Israelites to marry, their children would be considered Egyptian, and the Israelite race would eventually cease to exist.

During this crisis, a baby boy was born in secret. His mother hid him from the Egyptians in the hut she lived in for three months. But then the boy was too big and too noisy to safely hide. She put him in a basket



Moses's mother sends him down the Nile River in a basket.

she had made out of reeds and put it on the Nile River. Now this baby's life was in the hands of the only One who could save him: the God of Abraham.

The basket did not tip over. It was not discovered by soldiers or by any other Egyptian who would carry out Pharaoh's order and drown the child. It was discovered by Pharaoh's daughter. The princess felt sorry for the baby and chose not to obey her father's evil command. In fact, she decided to raise this Israelite child as her own son. She named him Moses.

This was the miraculous power of the God of Abraham!

As an adopted grandson to Pharaoh, Moses grew up in the royal palace and was trained by the best teachers in Egypt. According to a Jewish historian named Josephus, Moses became a successful general in the Egyptian military.

Moses was accepted as an Egyptian, but he and others knew that he was actually an Israelite. He

did not know it yet, but God was preparing him for leadership—not over Egypt, but over Israel.

When Moses was about 40 years old, he saw an Egyptian taskmaster beating an Israelite slave. He became so angry at the taskmaster's cruelty that he killed him. He buried the taskmaster's body in the sand (Exodus 2:11-12).

When Pharaoh found out what Moses had done, Moses ran for his life to the land of Midian. There he married a Midianite woman and lived as a shepherd for 40 years.

Fill in the blanks using verses 23-25 to see what happened in Egypt during those decades: "And it came to pass in process of time, that the _____ of _____ died: and the children of Israel _____ by reason of the bondage, and they _____, and _____ came up unto _____ by reason of the bondage. And _____ heard their _____, and _____"

remembered his _____ with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of _____, and _____ had _____ unto them.”

Now was the time God appointed to deliver the nation of Israel out of slavery. The one God called to lead them was Moses. One day while Moses was herding his flocks, God appeared to him in the form of a fire that burned in a bush yet did not consume it (Exodus 3:2-3). When Moses walked closer, a voice from the bush said, “Moses! Do not come near; put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” When Moses obeyed and removed his sandals, the voice said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.”

“I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt,” God said, “and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters; I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites. Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring forth my people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt.”

Moses feared the voice of God, but he also feared the power of Pharaoh. “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?” he responded. “The Israelites will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, ‘The LORD did not appear to you.’” Moses did not have enough faith in God.

To strengthen Moses’s faith, God performed miracles, turning his staff into a snake and back again, and making his hand leprous and then whole again. God also said that Moses’s brother, Aaron, would serve as his spokesman (Exodus 4:14-16). Moses was corrected, his faith was strengthened, and he obeyed God and set out for Egypt.

EXODUS FROM EGYPT

When Moses and Aaron arrived in Egypt, Aaron spoke for Moses and told Pharaoh, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.’” Pharaoh replied, “Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and moreover I will not let Israel go.”

This command only made Pharaoh angry. Instead of letting the Israelites go, he took away their straw

supply so that they had to glean it themselves at night in order to still produce the same number of bricks the taskmasters demanded from them each day. Now the Israelites were suffering even more, and they blamed Moses for it! If he had not stood up for what God said, their enslavement could have continued without this additional burden.

But God already knew that Pharaoh would not free the Israelites so quickly. He had a plan not only for the Israelites but for Pharaoh, the Egyptians and all the false gods of Egypt. The Egyptians believed in river gods, earth gods, sky gods, a frog-headed goddess, a god that looked like a golden calf, a serpent goddess who protected Pharaoh and numerous other gods. The Israelites themselves had also begun to believe in these false gods.

God chose to free the Israelites in a way that would prove that all the gods of Egypt were nothing but myths.

To accomplish this purpose, God devastated Egypt by sending 10 supernatural plagues. Each of these plagues was unique. Each one not only disproved that the Egyptian gods had any power to prevent it, but it also proved that these gods did not exist! God turned the Nile into a river of blood, disproving the river gods. He filled the country with millions of frogs, thus disproving the frog-headed god. Each plague disproved another god or group of gods.

During the plagues, Pharaoh would panic and promise to free the Israelites. Yet as soon as God removed a plague, Pharaoh would change his mind.

You can read about each of the 10 plagues in Exodus 7-12.

The 10th and final plague finally broke Pharaoh’s will and caused him to let the Israelites go. This plague had to do with the firstborn. Through Moses, God told Pharaoh that the Israelites were like His firstborn child. If Pharaoh did not free the Israelites, God would kill every firstborn man, woman, child and animal in Egypt. Moses publicly warned the Egyptians and the Israelites that this catastrophe was coming. But Pharaoh ignored the warning.

To see the results of Pharaoh’s rebellion, fill in the blanks from Exodus 12:29-31: “And it came to pass, that at _____ the LORD _____ all the _____ in the land of _____, from the _____ of _____

that sat on his throne unto the _____ of the _____ that was in the dungeon; and all the _____ of _____. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a _____ where there was _____ . And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and _____ from among my people, both you and the _____ of _____; and go, _____ the _____, as you have said.”

The next day, the Egyptians were desperate for the Israelites to leave. After enslaving them for several generations without pay, they now gave the Israelites silver and gold. The Israelites left Egypt with great joy that night. God led them with a miraculous cloud during the day and a fiery pillar at night (Exodus 13:21).

Nearly a week later, living in a desolated land with so many dead and with all the slaves gone, Pharaoh once again changed his mind. He mustered his army to pursue the Israelites and recapture them. The Egyptian army closed in on the Israelites while they were camped by the Red Sea.

When the Israelites saw the Egyptians, they complained to Moses, saying, “Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, in bringing us out of Egypt?”

See Moses’s reply in Exodus 14:13-14: “And Moses said unto the people, _____ you _____, _____, and see the _____ of the _____, which he will show to you to day: for the _____ whom you have seen to day, you shall see them again _____ . The _____ shall _____ for you, and you shall hold your peace.”

God moved the pillar cloud to block the Egyptian forces, and He told Moses to stretch his staff over the Red Sea. When Moses obeyed, the waters parted and a path of dry land appeared across the sea floor. The millions of Israelite men, women and children walked through this path to safety (verse 22).

Pharaoh saw this incredible miracle and yet led his army onto the dry sea floor to pursue the Israelites. Once all the Israelites had reached the other side, Moses lifted his staff again and the walls of water

crashed back together, crushing the Egyptian army! God had completely delivered Israel from the bondage of Egypt.

Despite this mighty miracle and others, however, most of the Israelites never fully trusted God. God led them to the Promised Land, territory He had promised Abraham where they could have a nation of their own. But the Israelites were too afraid of the Canaanites who lived there and lacked faith that God would perform more miracles. God punished their disobedience and faithlessness by making them wander in the wilderness for 40 years.

When the Israelites finally did enter the Promised Land, they still lacked the obedience and faith to drive all the Canaanites out of the land as God had told them. They allowed many Canaanites to live among them, and they adopted many of their pagan religious practices.

As time went on, a cycle developed. The Israelites would reject God’s law, and God would allow a foreign power to oppress them. When the Israelites repented, God would raise up a leader called a judge who would lead the people to believe and obey God, and they would achieve miraculous victories. But then the Israelites would turn away from God once again. This tragic cycle repeated itself over and over for three centuries. This became known as the time of the judges, which is recorded in the book of Judges in the Bible.

Fill in the blanks for a one-verse summary of what the time of the judges was like (Judges 21:25): “In those days there was _____: every man did that which was _____ in his _____.”

ISRAEL DEMANDS A KING

Toward the end of the time of the judges, the 12 tribes of Israel were being led by a prophet and judge named Samuel. The nation prospered during this time because Samuel was faithful to God and taught others to believe God and obey His law. When Samuel grew old, however, his sons were the opposite of their father’s good example.

The Israelites saw that Samuel’s sons took bribes and judged people unfairly, and their leaders came to Samuel and demanded to have a king rule over them, like all the nations around them.

Read 1 Samuel 8:7 to see how God answered their request: “And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto you: for they have not _____, but they have _____, that I should _____ over _____.”

God told Samuel to warn the people what to expect if they got what they wanted: a king like all the other nations. A king would take their sons to fight in his army, take their daughters to be his servants, and take portions of their property (verses 11-18).

Fill in the blanks using 1 Samuel 10:17-19 to see how Samuel continued to warn the people: “And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to Mizpeh; And said unto the children of Israel, Thus says the LORD God of Israel, I brought up Israel _____, and _____ out of the hand of the _____, and out of the hand of all _____, and of them that _____ you: And you have this day _____, who himself _____ you out of all your _____ and your _____; and you have said unto him, Nay, but set a _____ over us. Now



Samuel was very close to God, and sought His instruction.

therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands.”

But the people still demanded a king, so God led Samuel to anoint a man from the tribe of Benjamin named Saul as king. The people were proud to have him as king.

At first, King Saul tried to follow God’s instructions. He was humble, and God was able to win miraculous victories with him. But the new king had a serious weakness: He cared more about what the Israelites thought than what God commanded!

One of Saul’s first responsibilities as king was to protect the people from the invading Ammonite army led by King Nahash. With God’s help, King Saul and his army totally destroyed the Ammonites, chasing them until only a few scattered soldiers escaped (1 Samuel 11:11).

A couple of years later, the Philistines attacked southern Israel. Once again, King Saul led an army to defend Israel, but the soldiers were afraid of the Philistines. Saul tried to encourage them by saying that Samuel would arrive soon. Because he was a prophet of God, Samuel could offer a sacrifice to God and ask for His help to defeat the Philistines.

Saul decided not to wait for Samuel, however, when the soldiers began to lose faith. Because he feared what the people would do, Saul took matters into his own hands and offered the sacrifices himself, even though he knew God commanded that only priests could offer sacrifices (1 Samuel 13:9).

Samuel arrived just as Saul had finished offering up the faithless, illegal and profane sacrifices.

Read verses 13-14 to see what Samuel told Saul: “And Samuel said to Saul, You have done _____: you have not kept the _____ of the _____ your _____, which he commanded you: for now would the LORD have _____ your _____ upon Israel _____. But now your _____ shall not _____: the LORD has sought him a man after _____, and the LORD has commanded him to be _____ over his people, because you have not kept that which the LORD _____ you.”

If Saul would have feared God, believed and obeyed God instead of worrying about the enemy and worrying about what his own people thought, his descendants



The giant Goliath terrified the Israelites.

could have ruled over Israel forever. But because of Saul's disobedience, God removed his lineage as the royal family of Israel.

Instead, God would look for another king who would obey His law—a man after His own heart.

ANOINTING A NEW KING

Some time after this event, God sent the Prophet Samuel on a secret mission to Bethlehem. God told him to travel to the home of a man named Jesse. There, from among Jesse's eight sons, he would find the next king of Israel!

When Samuel came, Jesse had his seven eldest sons ready, but he had his youngest son tending the sheep. He thought that David could never be the one God had chosen to be the king. Samuel was very impressed by Jesse's older sons, but God told Samuel that none of them was the one He had chosen.

Fill in the blanks using 1 Samuel 16:7 to see what God told His prophet: "But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD sees not as man sees; for man _____ on the _____, but the LORD looks on the _____."

Samuel asked Jesse if he had another son. Jesse replied that David was in the field, keeping the sheep.

When David arrived, God revealed that this teenager was the one Samuel must anoint as the future king of Israel.

David had a childlike, humble and obedient spirit. God did not want another king like Saul. He wanted a humble, obedient man who would tremble at His word and not at the pressure of the people. In this way, David represents every person who will be born into God's Family. You do not have to be handsome or beautiful or impressive: You have to be childlike, humble, believing and obedient.

King Saul's years of disobeying God had changed him. His moods swung from suicidal depression to violent rage. Saul lost God's Holy Spirit and suffered from demonic influence. His advisers became concerned and sought out a man who could play music on the harp to calm Saul's troubled mind (verses 14-16). The young man who had developed this skill while tending his father's sheep was a respectable young man named David.

Whenever David played, the evil spirit departed from Saul, and the king's mind had peace.

Over time, a close relationship developed between David and King Saul. Saul appointed David to the honorable position of serving as his armorbearer in battle. Although David knew that God had chosen him to replace Saul, he did not show jealousy toward Saul or impatience with God's timing. Instead he loved his king and served him faithfully.

During this time, the Philistines again invaded Israel. King Saul mustered an army and marched out to drive them back. When the two armies encamped across from each other, an enormous, 10-foot-tall giant came out from the Philistine camp. His name was Goliath. Each morning, he mocked and scorned the men of Israel and the God of Israel, challenging them to fight him.

After 40 days of Goliath's taunting, David came to Saul's camp to deliver food to his brothers.

When David heard Goliath insulting God, he grew angry. "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" he demanded to know.

King Saul saw that David had more faith in God than any of his men, and he allowed David to get ready for battle. David took his sling and five smooth stones. Then he walked forward to fight Goliath.

Goliath jeered at the sight of a poorly armed young man coming forward to represent Israel's honor. He scorned it as a joke. "Am I a dog, that you come at me with a staff?" Goliath jeered. "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the fowls of the air."

Read 1 Samuel 17:45-47 and fill in the blanks below to see what David was focused on when his life was on the line: "Then said David to the _____, You come to me with a _____, and with a _____, and with a _____: but I come to you in the _____ of the _____ of _____, the _____ of the armies of Israel, whom you have _____. This day will the _____ deliver you into _____; and I will smite you, and take your _____ from you; and I will give the _____ of the host of the _____ this day unto the _____ of the air, and to the _____ of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a _____ in _____. And all this assembly shall know that the LORD _____ not with _____ and _____: for the battle is the _____, and _____ will give you into _____."

David knew that Goliath was a far greater fighter, but he also believed God would give him the strength to defend His honor and the honor of Israel. So David stepped out in faith to fight for God.

When Goliath heard David's challenge, he rushed him. But David quickly loaded a stone and whirled his sling above his head. He snapped his wrist forward and hurled the stone toward Goliath, striking him in the forehead. The giant crashed to the ground. David ran toward the colossal warrior, yanked his huge sword from out of its sheath, and cut off Goliath's head with his own weapon.

When the Israelite soldiers saw that Goliath was dead, their courage returned. King Saul's army attacked the Philistine forces, forcing them to flee the country. Following the example of David's courage and faith in God, Israel was victorious!

When the people came out to celebrate the victory, the women sang, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." David had become the hero of Israel.

Turn to 1 Samuel 18:8 and fill in the blanks below to see how Saul reacted to this victory song: "And _____

was very wrath, and the saying _____ him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David _____, and to me they have ascribed but _____: and what can he have more but the _____?"

As Saul became more envious and bitter, David's harp music could no longer cause the evil spirit to leave the king alone. On two occasions, Saul became so murderous that he attempted to kill David with a spear (verse 11). When he failed, he ordered his son Jonathan and his servants to kill David. But Jonathan was a very close friend of David. Together with his sister Michal, who was David's wife, Jonathan helped David escape from the king.

David fled to the mountains of Judah. Although the king had made him his enemy, about 600 men believed in David and followed him, living with him as outlaws for several years.

Saul repeatedly pursued David. On two occasions, David actually had the opportunity to kill King Saul and end his exile, but he refused to raise his hand against God's anointed king. He believed that the only one who had the right to remove Saul from office was God Himself.

REIGN OF KING DAVID

When David was 30 years old, God removed Saul from the throne by allowing him to be killed in battle against the Philistines. David and his men wept for Saul, who had been a good man before disobedience and faithlessness corrupted him.

David was then crowned king of the tribe of Judah. The other tribes supported Saul's surviving son, Ishbosheth, for seven years before God allowed David to be crowned king of all 12 tribes of Israel.

God allowed all these trials to test David's faith. Because David obeyed God's instructions, even though he had to endure years of waiting and suffering, God blessed him with a long, prosperous reign over Israel. Not only did God allow David to unify all 12 tribes of Israel, but He also strengthened King David to subdue both the Philistines and the Moabites.

Even though King David strove to obey God, he sometimes stumbled and committed some very serious sins. Although he sinned, he never turned his heart toward sin and completely away from God like Saul had. Instead, King David set one of the best

examples recorded in the Bible of how to repent deeply toward God!

One of King David's weaknesses was beautiful women. One evening, King David went for a walk on the roof of his palace and saw a beautiful woman bathing. This was Bathsheba, the wife of one of David's "mighty men" (2 Samuel 11:2-3).

David should have gone back downstairs to pray to escape the temptation; instead he allowed himself to succumb to Bathsheba's beauty.

He summoned Bathsheba to the palace and committed adultery with her. Bathsheba got pregnant. To keep his sin from being discovered, David began to scheme and commit more sins. He sent a message to Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, to come home and be with his wife, so everyone would think the baby was fathered by Uriah. But Uriah had more character than David at this point. He would not sleep with her while his fellow soldiers were still out in battle.

David then had some men try to get Uriah drunk so he would then sleep with Bathsheba, but still Uriah did not do so. David was getting desperate and further and further from God. Finally he instructed Uriah's commander to send him to the front line in the most deadly area of the battle, so that he would be killed. That is exactly what happened: Uriah and several other servants of David died on the battlefield.

David then took Bathsheba and married her. He thought he had gotten away with adultery and with murder. Then God sent the Prophet Nathan to teach David a deep lesson about repentance.

Turn to 2 Samuel 12:1-4 and summarize the words of Nathan: _____

King David grew very angry when he heard the prophet's story, exclaiming, "As the LORD lives, the man that has done this thing shall surely die."

"You are the man!" exclaimed Nathan.

Nathan showed the king that God knew everything David had done over the past months: "You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife and have slain him with the sword

of the children of Ammon!"

Notice how David responded. He could have denied the truth. He could have sent Nathan away and refused to admit the evil he had done. But right then he said, "I have sinned *against the LORD*" (verse 13). He acknowledged his sin, and he focused on God, even though he had also caused dishonor and death in the lives of Bathsheba, Uriah and many others in Israel.

Even after committing these dark sins, David realized that when he sinned, he was sinning not against people but against God.

King David then wrote Psalm 51, a song expressing his heartfelt repentance toward God.

God forgave David, but he would still suffer through years of warfare and family problems because of his grievous sin (verses 9-11). While David was naturally an evil man, like all human beings are, he became righteous because he really learned how to repent and change. Because of David's deep repentance, God prophesies that he will be resurrected at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to rule over the 12 tribes of Israel forever (Ezekiel 37:24).

BIBLE MEMORY The Ten Commandments

1. You shall have no other gods before God.
2. You shall not make any graven images of God.
3. You shall not take God's name in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy.
5. Honor your father and mother.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not lie.
10. You shall not covet what belongs to your neighbor.

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