

Synthetic Bible Studies

Containing an outline study of every book of the Bible
with suggestions for Sermons, Addresses and
Bible Expositions

By

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LESSON THIRTEEN

II SAMUEL

In the Jewish canon, First and Second Samuel were regarded as one book; but it is obvious that Samuel was not its author beyond chapter 25. The remainder has been ascribed to different authors, but common consent, I believe, has fastened on Nathan or Gad (I Chronicles 29:29). Do not leave the consideration of Samuel altogether, without engaging in a character study of that wonderful man. One of the greatest in the Bible is he. See how GOD Himself estimated him in Jeremiah 15:1.

The book now under contemplation is chiefly concerned, as you have discovered, with the history of David, the facts of whose life need to be gotten well in mind for two reasons.

- (1) Because of the large place he occupies in sacred story as the great ancestor and type of CHRIST, and
- (2) in order to understand and utilize the Psalms.

One-half of the book of Psalms at least, was written by David; and written with reference to various occasions and experiences in his life.

To understand many of their allusions, therefore, how needful to understand the circumstances giving rise to them? Moreover, unless we understand those allusions how can we extract the real comfort from the Psalms either for ourselves or others?

The titles of some of the Psalms tell us when they were written, and this, of course, is a great aid; but in many cases the origin or connection only can be grasped by carefully reading the Psalm in the light of the whole story of David's life.

As a single illustration of the latter circumstance, read over again the story of David's connection with the city of Keilah in I Samuel, and then compare Psalm 31 for a possible likeness.

For the above reasons, it would be advisable to review I Samuel, especially chapters 16 to 26, which treat so largely of David's early history. For example, become familiar with his genealogy and connected topics.

- what was his father's name?
- the name of his tribe?
- his birth-place?
- what were the facts or incidents of his anointing?

Go over again the larger events under the head of his persecution. Recall Goliath, Jonathan, Ahimelech, Adullam, Keilah, Saul's deliverances at his hands, Ziklag, etc.

The Exaltation of David, Chapters 1-5

The persecutions of David at the hands of Saul are over, and now what follows?

- what shall we call the first great fact in book two?
- over which tribe is David first anointed as king?
- how long does he reign over this tribe alone, and in what place?
- who leads the struggle of the house of Saul against David?
- how does Abner meet his death?
- how long is David said to have reigned over the united tribes (5:4)?
- what was the capital of Israel (v. 5)?
- what other name was given it (v. 9)?

Notice the principle on which David still continued to act, as shown in the execution of the murderers, chapters 1 and 4. He will take no step towards the attainment of dominion except as led by GOD. A further illustration this, of the sense in which he might be called "**a man after GOD's own heart.**"

The Messianic Covenant, Chapters 6, 7

There are certain chapters in the Bible that might be called the Alpine heights of revelation.

Get hold of their facts, and see their relation one to another, and you have come into possession of the whole range of divine truth.

We have noticed some of them, e. g., Genesis 3, which gives the account of the fall, Genesis 12, the call of Abraham, Exodus 12 and 20, Leviticus 16, Deuteronomy 18, etc. Among these should be counted II Samuel 7, of which we are now to treat.

But let us see what leads up to it.

- where had the ark been deposited (see marginal note on 6:2)?
- what circumstances led to its being there?
- according to the book of Numbers, chapters 3 and 7, what tribe should have carried the ark?
- which division of that tribe?
- how should it have been carried?
- what mistake did David make in the matter?
- how was that mistake corrected on the second attempt? (Compare chapters 6, 12, etc., with I Chronicles 15).
- does the dancing of David on this occasion give precedent for the modern amusement of that name?
- where did David dance, in a ball-room, or the open air?
- did he dance with a companion, or alone?
- what was the motive or spirit actuating him, physical pleasure or the divine glory?

Let not this circumstance of the mistake in bringing up the ark be entirely passed over, without calling attention to the lesson it teaches about service.

David's motive in the matter was right - the ark should have been brought up. But his method was wrong - the ark should not have been brought up on a cart. GOD desires us to serve Him not only in the right spirit, but in the right way. This principle observed would keep many individual Christians and churches from being led astray in the execution of questionable plans for the carrying on of the Lord's work. Its violation now and again may explain the absence of divine approval and blessing on some of those plans which were nevertheless entered into apparently with an honest purpose and a good heart.

The Prophecy of CHRIST

This brings us to the center of this event.

- now that the ark is safely in Jerusalem, what further Godward thought comes into David's mind?
- what specific reason is assigned against his execution of this purpose (I Chronicles 22:8, 9)?
- what new blessing does GOD promise him however (7:11, last sentence)?
- to whom immediately did the promise in verse 12 apply?
- what expression in verse 13 points to the law of double reference hitherto explained?
- how does verse 10 also point to a time perhaps still future?
- what is the first sentence in verse 14?
- how is this shown definitely to apply not to Solomon but CHRIST (Hebrews 1:5)?

In this last-named passage, Hebrews 1:5, the apostle is comparing CHRIST with angels, showing his superiority thereto; and in the course of his argument explains, "**For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?**"

The inference is:

- (1) that GOD never said this to any angel, but
- (2) that He did say it to, or of, His Son.

And yet the place in which the expression is used in the Bible is this at II Samuel 7:14. Therefore putting this fact together with others, it seems to place these words in Samuel in the category of distinct Messianic prophecies. It is thus evident that when GOD tells David He will build him a house, He is referring not to a material building, such as David contemplated for the ark, but a dynasty, a kingdom, and one that should be set up, not in Solomon indeed, but in CHRIST.

Before leaving verse 14, I want to call attention to another rendering of the latter part of it, not only beautiful in itself, but adding very much to the proof of the Messianic character of the whole. It is that of Bishop Horsley, an English prelate of an earlier generation, and a Hebraist of acknowledged ability, who translates it thus:- "*When iniquity is laid upon Him I will chasten Him with the rod of men.*"

Thus is it not only made to apply to CHRIST, but to emphasize that particular feature of His work for man, His substitutionary sufferings, which gives the power and value to all the rest. It is of additional interest to know that this translation is corroborated by that of the great Methodist divine, Adam Clarke, who renders it much in the same language.

Did David Foresee CHRIST?

Our present chapter contributes something also to answer this question. For example, what was the effect of Nathan's message on David? As we read verses 18 and 19, it seems that he was overwhelmed with the feeling of GOD's wonderful purpose of honor and grace toward him, and compares the divine dealing with that of man to the disparagement of the latter. But the two Hebrew scholars already quoted give a different rendering of verse 19, which will be appreciated, I feel sure. It is this:- "*O Lord GOD, Thou hast spoken of Thy servant's house for a great while to come, and hast regarded me in the arrangement about the MAN that is to be from above, O GOD the Lord!*" According to this, David clearly apprehended CHRIST's day, as the latter said Abraham did, and was glad (John 8:56).

This view of the case is corroborated to a certain extent by Romans 4:5-8. It may seem strange at first that such a different combination of words could be gotten out of verse 19, but if you will turn to the corresponding passage in I Chronicles 17:17, you will discover how much more nearly it agrees with the English in that case. The Hebrew of II Samuel 7:19, is evidently peculiar, affording some justification, even in its English dress, and in so far preparing us for that thus given. It is these considerations, among others, that led to the reference to this chapter as one of the more important in the Old Testament, and which will plead, excuse for the space thus given to it.

The Great Downfall, Chapters 11, 12

The intervening chapters between the last great fact and this tell of David's many victories in the extension of his kingdom, illustrating GOD's interest in him (8:6-14), his own appreciation of it all (v. 11), and his righteous standards of government (v. 15), and natural goodness of heart

(chap. 9). But this only serves to deepen the shadow that now falls upon his history.

Who will dare trust himself in the light of what follows?

There is very little here that needs to be explained to hearts that are naturally corrupt, such as ours, but there is much that needs to be impressed in the way of spiritual instruction. See such passages as James 1:13-15, and 4:7. Contrast the dalliance of David with the brave flight of Joseph in Potiphar's house. Observe how one sin leads to another in the attempt to cover up adultery with murder. Verse 6 and the following leave David without excuse. No wonder the chapter ends in the way it does.

But see the kindness of GOD towards them whose hearts are right toward Him, even though they fall into sin, and black sin!

- what endeavor is now made to bring David under conviction for this sin (12:1-12)?
- how does verse 13 illustrate the contrast already spoken of between David and Saul?
- what shows that though our iniquity may be put away so far as eternal condemnation is concerned, yet earthly chastisement may follow (vv. 10-12, 15-18)? Compare also I Corinthians 11:32.
- what suggestion is found in verses 12 and 14 (of the lesson) as to a possible reason for GOD's acting in such a way?
- how does verse 25 show the perfect reconciliation which may take place with GOD on the ground of removal of sin? Look in the margin of the King James for the meaning of Jedidiah.
- does verse 23 indicate that David believed in the immortality of the soul, and the re-union of beloved ones in the future life?
- how may the last phrase in that verse be qualified by I Thessalonians 4:14?

Almost all Christians know that the Fifty-first Psalm was written by David as expressive of his penitence at this time and it should be re-read and analyzed in connection with this part of our lesson. The Thirty-second Psalm also is supposed to have been written at the same time, to show forth his gratitude for sin forgiven and joy restored.

Let it be read as well, noting:

- the Psalmist's experience under conviction (vv. 3, 4),
- the effect of confession (v. 5),
- the testimony to others (v. 6),
- the joy and peace expressed (v. 7), and
- the comfort and counsel of the Lord in reply to him (vv. 8, 9).

This will make a helpful Bible reading in connection with the story of the Psalmist's sin.

The Rebellion of Absalom, Chapters 15-20

The words of chapter 12:10-12 now begin to be fulfilled, and sadness and trial follow David to the end of his life.

There had been a triumphant note in the first part of his career notwithstanding his persecution by Saul, but the minor chords predominate after this. baseness and beauty have often been combined in the same person since the days of Absalom, but his ingratitude and treachery will never be forgotten.

Read the story of David's escape from Jerusalem (15:10-16, 30) in connection with the Third Psalm.

This will afford a good illustration of the way to really learn David's character. The Psalms show us his heart. The feelings expressed in this Psalm doubtless arose at the point indicated in II Samuel 15:12, 13. See where the source of his comfort lay, his confidence in GOD, his hope and courage as brought out in the Psalm. How helpful is such a revelation of his inner life to us at similar crises!

Observe how trial enables one to test people.

Read chapter 16 carefully with a view to character study:

- Ziba's meanness.
- Shimei's cowardice,
- Abishai's courage,
- David's humility,
- Hushai's friendship.

What an interesting personality is Joab! Separate what is said about him from all the rest, that you may obtain the real picture of the man.

- after Absalom's death what steps lead up to David's return (chap. 19)?
- what interesting text in verse 10 might be used for a discourse on the second coming of CHRIST?
- whose character most impresses you in chapter 19?
- which tribe takes the initiative for the king's return?
- to what feeling does this give rise (vv. 41-43)?
- can you give the details of Sheba's rebellion?

How all these burdens falling on David corroborated the saying in Proverbs 13:15!

The Conclusion of David's Life, Chapters 22, 23

While the record of David's last days and death is found in the next book, yet all will agree that the song of thanksgiving (chap. 22), and the postscript following in chapter 23, really bring the story of his life to a climax. Amid so much that is beautiful and uplifting in the highest degree consider especially the declaration in 22:36: "**Thy gentleness hath made me great.**"

Are not these words fit for the song of the redeemed around the throne? And the words in 23:2: "**The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His Word was in my tongue.**"

Where in all Scripture can be found a clearer definition of verbal inspiration?

~ end of Lesson 13 ~
