

ADULT BIBLICAL EDUCATION SERIES

Vol. II, Book 5

God Rules His People Through Earthly Kings

prepared by

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TEACHER'S GUIDE



Pictured on the cover is the Sower, examining the young tree, which shows progress of growth from the tender plant of Volume II, Books 1-4.

Here, we might think of the words of James 5:7: Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it ...

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Teacher's Supplement to Volume II, Book 5

God Rules His People Through Earthly Kings

(I and II Samuel)

The introductory material for the teacher, containing guidelines, helps in preparing to teach a lesson, elements of a good lesson, etc. which was printed in the Teacher's Supplement for Vol. II, Book 2 (pp. 1-3) will not be repeated. You may wish to reread that material before beginning to teach this quarter of lessons.

Below, we will give some helps for the teacher in approaching each of the lessons of this quarter. Remember, the suggestions are based on the expectation that each student will have read the lesson material, so that the teacher can build on what the student has already read.

LESSON ONE

Introduction to the Lesson:

Remind the class that the scope of this entire quarter of lessons is God's movement in bringing the people out of the dark period of the judges into spiritual light once again.

Show them that Samuel and David are the primary subjects in this section, as men whom God raised up to bring His people back to Himself.

Show the class that His leading the people by Samuel, and later by David, was testimony of God's having worked through the whole period of the judges, raising up families to serve Him and choosing out of those families leaders who could lead His people.

Particularly note for them that in this quarterly the twelve lessons are also grouped into six major parts, each part illustrating the theme of the entire quarter, namely, that God was indeed ruling His people through earthly kings. God remained King.

They should be aware that Lesson One is under the heading of Part One, which shows that God raises up men to lead His people, in this case, Samuel.

Point One: The times of neglect of the Word of God bring times of loss and grief in the church.

Remind them of the era of the judges, which we have just been studying in the immediate past, and how that period began by those of Joshua's

era neglecting their duty in respect to the Word of God. Such neglect of the Scriptures brought great grief and loss to Israel, which the people of Israel gradually became aware of.

Later on, we see, after the time of Solomon, who set an example of neglect of the Word of God, that once more the people of Israel were plunged into an era of darkness, after they had been led into the light by Samuel and David. Solomon's neglect brought great grief to Israel and division and great losses to the people as a whole.

You may also point out that in the days prior to the prophet Elijah, there was a similar situation in which the people had laid aside God's Word and been plunged into spiritual darkness and the prevalence of Baalism among the Israelites.

The same is true after the time of Josiah, whom God raised up to teach the people God's Word. When Judah neglected that Word, after his death, they once more plunged into a period of spiritual depravity that brought on the Babylonian captivity.

You could also remind them that after the days of the last Old Testament prophet, Malachi, apparently the people, once more, neglected God's Word, and because of this, moved into some 400 years of silence from God until the coming of our Lord.

Here you may wish to use Amos 8:11, which speaks of times of a famine of God's Word. This kind of famine is a direct result of the people's neglect of God's Word and failing to take advantage of the privilege they have of studying that Word when they can.

In the New Testament you may point to Paul's warning in II Timothy 4:3, that days will come when men will turn aside from the truth and seek false doctrines.

The church of Laodicea, described in Revelation 3:14-17, well illustrates what can happen to any church that refuses to take God's Word seriously.

In this point exhort the students to examine their own church to determine whether that church has been, or is now, neglecting its opportunities to study the Word of God and whether or not already signs of spiritual loss and grief have set in.

Point Two: The answer to the church's failure and losses is found in a return to God and His Word with the whole heart.

Here you will wish to begin by showing how Samuel led the people back to God in accord with the opening verses of I Samuel, chapter 7. No doubt Samuel himself had in mind returning the people to recall the words of Deuteronomy 6, which taught the people to honor God's Word in their lives and to love the Lord with all their heart, soul and mind. In essence, Samuel was challenging the people to return to that moment of Exodus 19, when they stood before God, called out of Egypt into the wilderness to be the people of God.

You may note also how Elijah, on Mount Carmel according to I Kings 18:30, 31, 36, was very careful to show the people that the answer to their spiritual problems was to return to the foundations of the faith of their fathers.

You shall certainly wish to call to their attention the words of II Chronicles 7:14. In the New Testament remind them that Christ taught that if men will not hear Moses and the prophets, then there is no hope for them (Luke 16:31). Here, Jesus was saying that what is needed when the people of God have neglected His Word is not some miracle, but simply a return to the things of God.

In II Peter 1:16-21, we find a similar lesson, when Peter, though he had seen the glory of God on the mountain top, yet spoke of the Word of Prophecy, the Scriptures, as a more sure foundation on which to build our lives. What Peter was saying is that we do not need new revelations when the church has strayed from God; we simply need to turn to the old revelation He has given us in His Word.

Here you will wish to exhort the members of the class to study God's Word diligently and not to grow weary in that endeavor.

Point Three: God uses those committed to Him and prepared by His Word to lead his church to revival.

You may begin by pointing to Samuel, who was prepared from youth to be God's instrument for leading the people to God once more.

Likewise, David, as we see from many of the Psalms he wrote from the time he was a youngster, diligently studied and meditated on the Word of God, and applied its lessons to every facet of his life. You may point to I Samuel 17:34-37, as an example of this.

Also Josiah, in leading the people of God back to the Word of God, clearly had expressed from his young life a concern for Scripture, and he

sought to build the kingdom in his day on a firm Scriptural foundation.

Note that Ezra is described as a ready scribe in the Law of Moses, meaning that he was ready to be God's instrument to lead the people into revival because he had diligently studied the Law of Moses until that day.

Paul mentions how, when he was called of God, the first thing he did was spend several years alone in the wilderness in preparation for a lifetime of ministry in the Gospel. And Apollos is described as a man well-versed in Scripture, and therefore, was useful in service of Christ.

Here you will wish to exhort the class to be leaders among the people of the church in seeking ministers of the Word for that church and teachers of the Word in the Sunday School classes, such as have prepared themselves adequately for that task; and not just to select anyone who is willing to do the job.

Suggestions for discussion:

You may wish to discuss the state of God's Word in your own church, utilizing questions 1 through 5.

You may also discuss ways in which the members of that class may become better prepared for revival, utilizing questions 6-9.

LESSON TWO

Introduction to the Lesson:

Call to the attention of the class that this lesson deals with that period of transition in Israel from a society led by judges to one led by kings, and that from now on Israel would be a monarchy until the day of the fall, first of the northern kingdom and then eventually of the southern kingdom.

Emphasize to them, however, that through it all God rules His people, as we have noted in the last lesson, and that He is the only true Sovereign of the church.

Stress that the primary focus in this lesson is to be upon Samuel and his leadership in a most difficult and discouraging time. By studying carefully the way Samuel handled himself through this crisis, we can learn a great deal about what good leadership is all about.

Point One: God's servant and the leader of His people must be blameless.

Stress here that by "blameless" we do not

mean that he must be perfect, without any sin, though that is always the ultimate desire of God for all of His children. But in particular, by blameless we mean that he must not have any ulterior motives of self-aggrandizement or enrichment in his seeking to lead God's people, but must seek with his whole heart to lead them in accord with the will "of God.

You may wish to point to the example of Abraham we studied earlier, who, as he was prepared to be the leader of his family, was called by God to walk before Him and be perfect.

You would want to show that God taught this lesson to the people through the experience of Moses, when He would not approve of Moses' taking on the leadership of Israel until he had himself observed God's Law in the matter of the circumcision of his children. Likewise, God refused to let him lead the people into Canaan because, at one time, he became careless in his responsibility to glorify God.

Focusing upon Samuel as the example before us from which we are to learn today, stress his willingness to have his whole life examined by the people. He was that great a man of integrity.

Later, we see the example of David who, in one careless moment, forgot that he was under God's Law, and, acting as though he was above the Law of God, he took what he wanted for himself — another man's wife. For that he had to pay dearly.

Jesus, in teaching the disciples in the New Testament, as you recall, stressed the lesson that we cannot have two masters, but we must cling to the one: God; and reject the other: mammon, or Satan.

You may wish to mention, also, Paul's example as he reviewed his life before the Ephesian elders in Acts 20 and presented it as an exemplary life.

Particularly, you could point to I Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7, 11 and I Peter 5:2, as New Testament exhortations to ministers to be above reproach in respect to their motivations in the ministry.

Help the class to see their responsibility in praying for their minister and other leaders in the church to be men of integrity and to live blameless lives before the flock.

Point Two: God's servant and the leader of His people must be bold.

Here you may begin by the example of Samuel, who did not hesitate to take the people to task for their sins and make them face up to those sins, not giving up on them but refusing to ignore

their faults, because he wanted to bring them to repentance.

Later, you could use the example of Elijah before Ahab, who boldly withstood not only Ahab and Jezebel, but also the majority of the prophets of that day, who were committed to Baal.

Later still, we have the examples of Amos and Jeremiah, prophets who continued to speak God's truth in the face of strong opposition from kings, priests and prophets of that day, who had deserted God.

Ezra and Nehemiah were also examples of men not afraid to speak the truth to the people of God when they saw that the people had erred.

The New Testament ministry of Christ is a continuing example of the kind of boldness God desires in his leaders, as Jesus spoke against the predominating powers in the church of that day, the Pharisees, and continued to uphold God's truth to the day of his death.

Point to Acts 4:29, where the disciples, when it was evident that they were going to be persecuted by the majority in the Jewish congregation because of their testimony, did not pray that the persecution would stop or that they would be taken somewhere else to minister, but simply prayed for boldness.

Lay it upon the hearts of the members of the class to pray for their leaders that they may be bold to speak God's truth. ;

Point Three: God's servant and the leader of His people must be compassionate.

Here you could begin with the examples of Moses, reminding them of his compassion toward the people of God at times when they sinned and were under the wrath of God.

Samuel, of course, is our prime example in this lesson, and we should recall the way in which Samuel refused to desert these people, even though they had personally hurt him by their rejection of him and God as their King.

You may wish to mention, also, the example of David who showed great compassion on the people of God when God was angry with them and about to destroy great numbers of them toward the end of David's ministry.

Jeremiah showed great compassion when, after the fall of Jerusalem, he refused the invitation of King Nebuchadnezzar to go and live in comfort in Babylon. He chose rather to stay with the remnants of the people that were in Jerusalem, though it would have been a life of great hardship for him.

In the New Testament, Christ continually both taught and set the example of compassion as he dealt with and trained his apostles.

You may wish to point to I Peter 5:1-7, in which Peter, in particular, writes to the elders of the church urging them to exercise all love, compassion, and concern for the flock that God has entrusted to them.

In the close of this lesson you will want to stress to the class the importance of continuing to pray for the leaders in their church that they may be men of compassion and longsuffering in dealing with the flock.

Suggestions for discussion:

You may wish to lead the class in a consideration of good leadership in the church, and how the members of the class may be instrumental in improving that leadership among the ministers, elders and deacons. You will be able to utilize any or all of the questions in the meditation section in such a discussion.

LESSON THREE

Introduction to the Lesson:

Point out to the class that this and the next lesson are under the heading of God's putting down those who have exalted themselves, and shows that the Lord not only raises up the meek and humble but casts down the proud; in this case, Saul. You will want to call attention to the evident signs that Saul was slipping and that he was proving not to be able to be the king of God's people.

The main issue in this lesson is centered around the man, Saul, and why God was displeased with him and why He rejected him from being king of Israel. Note that this is an important lesson for us today, as well, where it shows what constitutes failure in God's sight.

Point One: Leaders in the church fail when they do not obey God's Word.

You will wish to note here that God is not indifferent to the neglect of His Word by those whom He has called to lead His people. Moses' failure to circumcise his son is an example of a leader of God's people who, at one stage in his life, was careless about God's Law himself. It nearly cost Moses his life. And this is recorded in Scripture as an admonition to all whom God has placed in positions of leadership in His church.

They are not above God's Law and cannot take

liberties with the Law.

This was Saul's problem. He was indifferent to the Law of God and sought to set it aside as pleased him. And for this, ultimately, he was judged by God and removed from his office.

David, likewise, sinned against God, putting himself above God's Law, thinking that he was immune to judgment from God. David learned differently, as we shall see.

Later in Israel's history you can note the trend of the times in which false prophets, priests and kings laid aside God's Law until the Law was trampled under foot by most of the leaders. Only a few true prophets, a faithful priest or king now and then, upheld the Law of God, the rest ignoring it. And this brought, not only ultimately their overthrow, but the overthrow of the kingdom of Israel, as well.

Under this point you may particularly wish to make note of II Corinthians 2:14-17, where Paul rejoiced in the triumph Christians have always through Christ, and stresses the fact that he is not of those who have corrupted the Word of God, but as of sincerity has spoken faithfully what God's Word has said. In other words, Paul has upheld God's Law; and by that he succeeds in the eyes of God, no matter what men may think.

This is in full harmony with Psalm 1, which stresses that the righteous who are subject to God's Word and show that subjection in their own lives, will succeed, will flourish in the eyes of God. Those who fail in God's sight, no matter how successful they may be in men's sight, are those who lay aside the Word of God.

You will wish to make the class fully aware of the importance of this, specially to those that have any place of leadership in God's church. Just as then, even so now we all stand accountable to God for how we have upheld His Word, not how successful we have been in the eyes of men.

Point Two: Leaders in the church fail when they refuse to acknowledge their disobedience and will not repent,

Again, you may wish to start with a notation of Saul's own refusal, after he had been confronted with his sin and disobedience. As we shall see later, the great difference between Saul and David was not in whether they sinned or not, or the degree of their sin; the great difference between the two men was in how they handled their sin. But we shall deal with that more fully when we come to David. Right now, you may simply stress the fact that Saul refused to repent when given opportunity to do so.

LESSON FOUR

By contrast, Moses did repent before God and accepted meekly and humbly God's judgment on him and went on to live faithfully. David did the same.

King Ahab of Israel, later, is an example of one who refused to acknowledge his sin, and who was removed by God, with all of his family, from leading the people of God.

In Jeremiah's day, again we note how the people, listening to the false prophets, refused to acknowledge their sins before God and were judged by God for it.

In the New Testament, there is the example of the Pharisees, who were leaders of God's people and yet, who refused to confess and acknowledge their sins when shown those sins by Jesus. For that reason, the Pharisees, and even the whole Jewish people, were set aside as the leaders in the church.

You may wish, particularly, to call attention to I John 1:8,9,10, which calls every believer to confess his sin and warns that if we do not acknowledge our sins before God, we will have no part with Christ.

You can point out that in the messages of Christ to the seven churches, in the Book of Revelation chapters 2 and 3, Christ calls the various churches to repentance for their sins.

In this point of your lesson, therefore, you will wish to make note of the fact that we all do sin — leaders and followers alike in the church. And, therefore, we all have need of acknowledgement of that sin and repentance, and we have the assurance of God that if we do repent, acknowledging our sin and not trying to deny or cover it up, God will forgive us and will continue to use us in His Kingdom's work. But leaders fail in God's sight when they adamantly refuse to acknowledge their wrong. They then are of no use whatever to God in His church's work.

Suggestions for discussion:

You may wish to lead the class in a consideration of the motivations for our daily actions. Here you will particularly want to be concerned with the difference between motivations based on what is expedient or approvable by man, and motivations that are guided by what is right in accord to what God has taught. You could use questions 1, 3, 4 and 7 in this discussion.

You can also lead a discussion of motivations in worship in the church. Let the class individuals suggest both proper and improper motivations in worship based on the fallacy in Saul's own worship of God. Here you can utilize questions 2, 5, 6 and 8.

Introduction to the Lesson:

In this lesson our focus of attention is on three men, Saul, David and Jonathan, and their reactions to one another. In particular, we see Saul's attitude change toward David, whom he first admired, then suspected and finally feared enough to wish to kill him. Jealousy in his own heart ultimately surfaced in hate and desire to kill David.

On the other hand, Jonathan reacted in the very opposite way to David and showed great love for this one who would take his place as the head of the people of God.

In the study of this lesson we shall particularly need to point out that God's true servant ought to be using Jonathan as his model showing his merits in contrast to his father's faults.

Point One: God's servants in the church support those chosen by God to lead.

Here you will want to point out Saul's opposition to David in contrast to Jonathan's great support of David from the beginning.

You may wish to compare this with the way in which Daniel's three friends supported him, though it was clearly Daniel who was raised up to be the leader among them.

In the New Testament there is the example of Christ's support by the disciples who followed Him in contrast to the Pharisees, who fought Jesus almost from the beginning of His public ministry.

In a similar way Paul was supported by many in the churches to which he ministered, who accepted him as their leader and teacher; but in contrast, there were also in those same churches many Judaizers and other enemies who did all they could to oppose Paul in his ministry.

You may wish to point to Philipians 2:3, in which Paul challenges all believers not to do anything through faction or vainglory, but in humility of mind to count others as better than themselves. Jonathan was a prime example of this, while Saul was the opposite.

Stress for the class the importance of this lesson in relationships between leaders and those whom they lead in any individual church or denomination. God's work will not go forward if those whom God has raised up to lead are constantly opposed by others out of jealousy.

Point Two: God's servants in the church rejoice in leaders who are men of God (show faith in God).

You may wish to begin by noting Saul's fear which stemmed from his competitive view of David. You may also mention the later fear of many of the false prophets and priests in Israel toward men like Elijah and Amos and Jeremiah. You may recall for the class how, in Amos' day, the priest withstood this prophet of God and tried to send him back south away from Israel.

In contrast, note Jonathan's reaction of joy and delight in the man, David, as he saw the great faith that was in David and admired him for his commitment to God.

In Jesus' day as well, there is the stark contrast between the multitude who rejoiced in His day, and the Pharisees who, in their petty jealousy, were always saddened by the presence of Christ.

Here you may point to Philippians 2:4, which challenges each of us not to look to his own things, but to the things of others. Jonathan was an example of this. His concern was far more for David than his own personal ambitions. Another good passage to illustrate this point is from Romans 12:15, where Paul challenges all believers to rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with those that weep. Here you will want to charge the class to learn to rejoice in the triumphs of others and not always to feel competitive toward others in the church who are seeking to serve God.

Point Three: God's servants in the church humbly accept God's will.

Here, again, Jonathan and Saul must be contrasted. Saul, on the one hand, resisted to the death God's choice of David over him and his son.

Later, we see the son of David, Adonijah, oppose Solomon's choice as successor to David in I Kings chapter 1.

Jonathan, in contrast, is a great example of one who was willing to lay aside all personal gain and ambition to honor the one that God had chosen, David.

This is not unlike Moses' own willingness to lay aside the leadership in preference for Joshua to prepare Joshua to lead when he realized that God would not allow him to bring the people into the Promised Land.

You may point to John 3:30, where John the Baptist very beautifully expresses the humility that is required of God's children, as he willingly laid aside his place of leadership in the early period of Christ's ministry, saying that He, that is

Christ, must increase and John must decrease.

You might note also, that in John, chapter 21, Jesus' point in dealing with Peter and John was to teach them to be willing to accept whatever assignment God gave to each. Peter was somewhat jealous of John's permission to live on while he must die, but Jesus rebuked him for such an attitude.

We see, also, in the case of Barnabas and Paul, that Paul was obviously to take over the leadership of missionary work among the Gentiles and that Barnabas' role would be a lesser one; yet, Barnabas graciously accepted that role and faithfully served the Lord encouraging and preparing other men like John Mark to be missionaries later.

Here it is important for the class to see that when all of God's servants humbly accept whatever role God has given them and recognize and follow those whom God has called to lead them, they work for the harmony and good of the church in the order which God has established.

Suggestions for discussion:

You may wish to lead the class in a discussion of jealousy and its harm in the church, utilizing questions 1, 6, 7 and 8 (Refer to I Cor. 13).

Another discussion question derived from this lesson could be built around the qualifications we are to look for in church leaders. Here you may utilize questions 2 and 3.

LESSON FIVE

Introduction to the Lesson:

In this lesson we begin the third part of the quarterly, which deals with God's protection of His own. Here we will be particularly looking at how God protects David as He is moving to remove Saul from being king.

Remind the class that as David saw the hand of God deliver him time after time from the hand of Saul and saw men betray him into Saul's hands, he learned to lean only on the Lord and trust in Him and not in men.

Point One: God is able to protect His own from their enemies.

You may wish to begin this point by reminding them of Abraham's error when he went down into Egypt. Fearing the Egyptians, he lied. But he need not have done that. God was with him and protected him from those who could have harmed him.

You may also wish to mention Moses' error in taking into his hands to kill an Egyptian when he was abusing some of his people, rather than in trusting God to lead him to help the people. For this reason, Moses was detained some forty years in becoming the leader of the people.

David's lesson was certainly learned over a long period of time as he saw that in spite of the attempts of Saul and those who helped him to capture and kill David, they were not able to do so, because God willed him to live.

You may also wish to remind them of Elijah's flight after the people failed to stand with him. He fled from Jezebel and had all but given up any hope himself, feeling that he might as well die. However, God showed him that He could and would protect him and sent him back to do His work.

You may mention also Jeremiah's period of suffering and the many enemies that he had. Yet, he was persistent in his determination to speak God's Word, and God protected him from all of his enemies.

In the New Testament you can point to the way in which, time and again, Jesus escaped the hands of His enemies until it was His time to die.

Particularly, Romans 8:31 ff., treats of the assurance that all believers can have that nothing can separate us from the love of God. This means that so long as He desires He can and will protect His own. We have no need to be afraid of our enemies, therefore.

We see in Acts 4:29, that the early apostles asked for boldness, assured that God would protect them from their enemies.

Point out to the class that this does not mean that all of God's children will always escape the hands of their enemies. Sometimes it is God's will, for His glory, that they lay down their life for Him. Such was the case with Stephen and other martyrs mentioned in the New Testament and in the history of the church since that time.

Help the class to see that the main point here is that God's children need not fear those who may oppose them because of their faith or their stand for God's truth. They can be assured that so long as it's God's will for them to have a testimony, He will deliver them out of the hands of their enemies. They do not have to spend their time trying to outwit the enemy. They can simply look to God's help and be assured that it will come.

Point Two: God expects respect for those whom He has appointed as leaders. (This does not mean approval of such leaders, if they

err from God's Word.)

Under this heading we will discuss two sub-points.

Sub-point One: We are to respect those whom God has appointed as leaders because God appointed them and they are due to give an account to God.

You may begin this point by emphasizing how the people, particularly under the leadership of Aaron and Miriam and also under the leadership of Korah, at times sought to rebel against God's appointed leader, Moses. God always taught the people through these experiences that they must give respect to those whom He had chosen.

You can mention, too, how, in the case of Joshua, God again worked through him in such a way as to teach the people to respect him.

In the case of David and Saul, we have noted in this lesson how, throughout the time Saul was seeking to kill David, David, nevertheless, respected and honored the king because he was God's anointed one.

Likewise, later in Israel's history, though the prophets often stood up and spoke against the sins of the kings of Israel, they did not involve themselves in any kind of plots against them nor did they seek to lead the people to disrespect those whom God had appointed.

We see how, in the time of Babylonian captivity and later, Daniel showed respect to Nebuchadnezzar as king of Babylon, though he did not approve all that Nebuchadnezzar did. He was free to speak out against his sins. Likewise, in the time of the Persian kings, Esther and her cousin, Mordecai, and later Ezra and Nehemiah showed due respect to those appointed by God.

In the New Testament, you can point to Jesus' evident respect both for Caesar, the secular ruler over Him, and the High Priest of the Jews.

You may wish, particularly, to point to Romans 13:1-7, where Paul expounds on the respect that is due secular rulers in the world, even though they may be wicked men.

Here, help the class to see that it is not the part of faithful Christians to seek to overthrow that government, whether secular or in the church, which is led by men who are less than faithful to God. But, of course, there are legitimate means authorized by God's Word, by which unfaithful leaders in the church can be removed. And there is no prohibition to such action.

Likewise, in the political field, we should see that as Christians we need more to trust in God

and less to trust in human rebellions and overthrows of government.

Sub-point Two: We are to respect leaders because God is their Judge and our Avenger.

Remind them of David's words to this effect. And then you may also wish to point to such incidents as the rule of the Egyptians, which God ultimately overthrew; the domination, in the time of the judges, by many foreign lands, which, one by one, were also expelled; the overthrow of Babylon by God when the Babylonians, in pride, rebelled against God's authority; and the ultimate overthrow of Rome in the early part of the Christian era.

In terms of spiritual leaders who were overthrown, we can mention the numerous prophets, priests and kings of Israel who were wicked and whom God expelled by His own authority. They were all accountable to Him and ultimately were removed by God.

In the New Testament we can think of the Judaism of that day and its leaders which ultimately were overthrown and driven from Jerusalem in A.D. 70 by the power of Rome, because they had not pleased God. Also we should note that many of the Jewish people and leaders were converted to Christ; such as, many priests and Pharisees, and in particular, Paul. Stress in this point that it is important that we not run ahead of God in taking part in the overthrow of any who have authority over us. It is far better to look to God and wait patiently for Him to do what He will, knowing that they are under His judgment and that we are not to avenge ourselves, but leave vengeance to God.

Suggestions for discussion:

You may wish to lead a discussion in how we, as members of the church, may show our respect for leaders in the church without approving of their wrongdoing, if such a circumstance does exist. Here you could utilize questions 5, 6, 7.

You may also lead a discussion of how believers grow in spiritual maturity through times of hardship and trial. With this discussion you may utilize questions 2, 3, 4, and 8.

LESSON SIX

Introduction to the Lesson:

In this lesson we will be looking at the last days of Saul, in particular. We will be seeing how

God made them days of judgment in the church, where those in the church who did not please Him were removed that others might take their place of leadership.

For this reason, the emphasis of this lesson will be built around the concept of the days of God's judgment in the church. And we shall seek to learn from this study important lessons regarding God's judging the church from time to time through its history.

Point One: Days of God's judgment in the church are days of growth for the faithful.

You may begin by pointing out how, in the wilderness, while many of the Israelites were punished because of their unbelief, nevertheless, a whole new generation grew up in the context of that punishment and became a strong and mature people. You may point to I Corinthians 10:1 ft, which develops this thought and shows us that we should learn important lessons from that experience in Israel.

You can also point back to the era of the judges when God was punishing the church for its sinfulness. Nevertheless, during that time there were families who were seeking to be faithful to God and which were growing spiritually and were to be the foundation for the further development of God's people in the Old Testament; such as, the family of Naomi and Ruth and Boaz, or the family of Elkanah and Hannah.

Remind them of David's spiritual growth and his growth in power during the time that Israel itself was having to suffer under the poor leadership of Saul.

You may point also to the period of the Babylonian captivity which was a punishment to Israel for her continuous sin over so many centuries. Nevertheless, even in that time God was strengthening the faithful; such as, Daniel, Ezekiel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Mordecai and many others, who, later, would make strong spiritual contributions to the people of God.

You may also, in the New Testament period, mention the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, which was God's punishment to Israel for her rejection of the gospel. At the same time, it is a period of great expansion, growth and maturity for the church that Jesus Christ had established which would go on to survive the downfall of Jerusalem and spread to the ends of the earth.

Here, impress the people with the importance of realizing that even in times of judgment in the church, God does not leave Himself without witnesses and does strengthen those who will be

faithful to Him.

Point Two: Days of God's judgment in the church are days of silence from God for those who reject His Word.

You may begin by showing the silence in the period of Judges, when, for many generations, the Word of God was not heard among the people because their fathers had turned their backs on God's Word and had sought to live in Canaan without it.

You may also note a second period of prolonged silence from the time of Solomon until the time of Elijah, when there was little of God's Word spoken among the people, a period when the kings turned their backs on God and many false prophets and false priests arose.

The long 400-year silence after the time of Malachi is typical of God's dealing with His people when they ignore or set aside His Word. Malachi warned them that this would come to pass, if they did not honor God. And evidently in his day, the people were beginning to reject the truth of God once more.

You may remind them that Amos, in 8:11, of his prophecy warns that such days of famine of the Word of God will surely come when the people refuse to hear Him.

In the New Testament, Jesus warns similarly all men that if they turn their backs on the Word of God, they cannot expect that God will speak to them in any other way. Refer to Luke 16:31.

Here you will want to emphasize the important responsibility that we have in the church of holding faithful to God's Word and continuously proclaiming that Word to men, particularly in the church.

Point Three: Days of God's judgment in the church are days of death for the unfaithful.

Of course, this truth is first taught to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Paul summarizes it clearly in Romans 6:23, when he says that "the wages of sin is death." But that means death not only for those outside of the church, the pagans of the world, but also those in the church who have refused to obey God's Word.

You may mention the numerous people who fell in the wilderness and refer to Jude 5.

Help them to see that this was Saul's inevitable judgment. He who turned his back on obedience to the Word of God and sought to live his life and rule his kingdom as he pleased, in the

end was brought to death — God's judgment on him for his refusal to honor God.

In Habbakuk's message, beginning in 2:4, we have a developing picture of the inevitable judgment of God against all sinners who do not believe, whether they be in the church or out of the church. Jeremiah 25:29, indicates that God must begin His judgment where His Word has been taught most clearly; namely, in the visible church.

For this reason, it is in I Peter 4:17, that we learn that judgment must begin at the house of God. And when the judgment of death comes, it will certainly strike all in the house of God who have not truly believed in Him.

Suggestions for discussion:

In this lesson we suggest that you lead a discussion on our spiritual warfare today as compared with the Old Testament warfare of David. Here you may use questions 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7 in particular.

LESSON SEVEN

Introduction to the Lesson:

In this and the following lesson we will be emphasizing the activity of God in lifting up the humble. Just as God put down proud Saul, He also lifted up humble David to the head of the kingdom of Israel.

Point out to the class that it was through David that God ultimately united Israel and gave her her greatest strength and her brightest history.

Note that this was a transition period between the leadership of Saul and that of his successor, David. David, during this time, displayed great patience and wisdom. He showed his faith in God to establish his kingdom and did not run ahead of the Lord.

Particularly, you will want to stress the fact that this lesson seeks to point out some principles of David's kingdom, and your objective as teacher will be to show how these become a type of the principles that are to be seen in the Kingdom of God.

It would be appropriate to introduce the various points of this lesson by reminding the class of Ephesians 1:4, in which we read that God chose us in Christ to be holy and without blemish before Him in a bond of love, both with God and with one another. This constitutes, in essence, the outline for this lesson, which will deal with principles of God's Kingdom, which are reflected in the kingdom of David.

Point One: God's Kingdom is established on the principle of faith in God. This corresponds to God's original purpose to have a Kingdom established by faith in Christ, as Ephesians 1:4 declares.

You may wish to begin with Abraham of whom it is written that he believed in God, and his faith was reckoned to him for righteousness. This was the basis of the establishment of the family of Abraham which ultimately became the kingdom of Israel. His offering up of Isaac, at a later time, was indicative of his trust in God to provide what was necessary for his salvation and that of his children. You may also wish to note that the entire sacrificial system was designed to direct the people to trust in God, realizing that they were not able to deal with their own sins.

David displayed great trust in God. He had learned to trust only in God, through the many years of his exile from his homeland, when he was fleeing from Saul.

Remind them, too, that Habakkuk 2:4, shows that it is always the principle of God's Kingdom that the just shall live by his faith in the Lord.

This was the message of all of the prophets who taught the people that they must learn to wait on the Lord and look to Him as their Savior. God's Kingdom is established on the principle of faith in God.

In the New Testament you need only remind them how frequently the doctrine of faith in Jesus Christ is taught, as you point to John 3:16, as one of a multitude of verses that specifically teach us that our entrance into the Kingdom of God is by faith in Christ alone.

Remind them, too, that the writer of Hebrews, in the eleventh chapter, shows that faith is at the heart of the relationship of all of God's people to Him.

Help the class to see that in our day it is essential that we remember that God's Kingdom is established on the principle of faith in God; that means, assurance about what is not yet seen, a certainty about that which is not obvious to the world.

We know God's Kingdom exists; we know it because of faith in Jesus Christ. The rest of the world does not see the Kingdom of God. It is, therefore, incumbent upon us to bear witness of that Kingdom to all men.

Point Two: God's Kingdom is established on the principle of mutual love,

This corresponds to the teaching in Ephesians 1:4, that we were chosen in Christ to be in a bond

of love.

We know that Jesus Christ spoke of the love He had with the Father, and we understand from that that the Kingdom of God itself is grounded in mutual love among the Persons of the Trinity, a love that was subsequently shared with creatures made in the image of God.

You may want to call to their attention that Abraham was called the friend of God, James 2:23. You can also note Moses' great emphasis on love, particularly in Deuteronomy, where he teaches the people that they are the people of God because God has loved them, and then, that God has called them to love Him and one another,

We have noted David's great love of God, and we see it reflected in many of his Psalms. We see how he learned to love God and his fellow-men, particularly through the example of the love between Jonathan and David.

Remind the class that Hosea's letter is particularly concerned to show God's great love for His people, even when they were not lovely.

You can certainly deal with the lesson of Christ that the essence of the Law is love for God with all of our heart and also love for one another.

And finally, John's first epistle may be mentioned. It is an epistle of love and shows that love is the essence of the relationship between God and His people, and thus, that God's Kingdom is established on the principle of mutual love.

Urge the class to consider this seriously, as they look around them in the church to determine whether love is clearly manifest among the members.

Point Three: God's Kingdom is established on the principle of the integrity of God's Word and the call for the integrity of God's people.

You may wish to begin by reminding them of God's promise to Abraham and how that promise of a seed and a land were faithfully kept by God, as we read in the Pentateuch and Joshua. Scripture shows that all of God's Word — everything He has promised — is or will be completely fulfilled.

Particularly, point out the integrity of God's Word as it is presented by Isaiah the prophet. You may point to Isaiah 40:8 or 55:11. Remind them of how Moses taught God's Law as the only standard by which the people were to reflect that they were the children of God. Remind them, too, that God had called Abraham to walk before Him and be perfect, thus, calling him to the greatest

integrity (Genesis 17:1). Note, too, that Christ, in the Sermon on the Mount, does not lower that standard by which God calls all of His to the utmost integrity. They are to be perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect.

You could close by noting Paul's urging all believers to press on toward that goal of perfect integrity, as it is expressed in Philippians 3:14-16. Remind the class that it is always the principle of God's Kingdom that His Word is utterly reliable, and that we can, therefore, mould our lives in accord with it without any fear that such lives will fail or be disapproved by God.

Suggestions for discussion:

We would suggest that you have the class discuss the responsibility of showing mutual respect and love among the members of the church. Particularly, have them pursue the question of how we show our respect for one another in the church. You could utilize questions 2 through 7 in this discussion.

LESSON EIGHT

Introduction to the Lesson:

Call to the attention of the class that in this lesson we are continuing to see how the Lord lifted up David from his humble position and established his kingdom to be a lasting kingdom, so that ultimately, it was a type of the very Kingdom of God itself.

Point One: The church is strengthened as we seek first God's Kingdom and glory.

You may begin this lesson by reminding the class of David's great desire to honor God by building the Temple in Jerusalem. He desired to do this in order that the glory of Jerusalem might be the Temple and not the king or the king's residence there.

You may go back to the time of Abraham and point out God's call to Abraham, that he had been chosen by God in order that he would teach his children to go in the way of the Lord, that is, to glorify God by their life, particularly, as they learn to do righteousness and justice — marks of the Kingdom of God. Here you can refer to Genesis 18:19.

Later in the history of Israel, as God called them out of Egypt and to Mount Sinai, we read in Exodus 19 how God called the people to glorify Him by becoming a kingdom of priests, a people that would continually serve and honor God.

Throughout the Old and New Testaments, the doctrine that the church is God's inheritance and that it belongs to Him and is to be set aside for His glory is clear.

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ teaches His disciples very early in His ministry that their greatest concern should be to seek first God's Kingdom and His righteousness. Here you may refer to Matthew 6:33.

Finally, you could point to Ephesians, the first chapter, where Paul develops the thought of the people of God as the inheritance of God, that which God shall receive unto Himself. Particularly, note Ephesians 1:10-12.

Point Two: The church is strengthened by God's determination to bless His people.

Here you may begin by noting God's response to David's desire to build a Temple to the glory of God in Jerusalem. God immediately began to tell David what He purposed for him and his house in the future.

Again, you may return to the time of Abraham and point out that when God first called him, He began to speak of the great blessings and heritage that He would give to Abraham and to his seed, and how, through him, He would bless nations all over the world. Here note Genesis 12:2, 3. Later, God expressed in the covenant He made with Israel how He intended to bless the people, if they remained faithful to Him, giving them a rich heritage in Canaan.

As Old Testament history developed, the Lord increasingly, through the prophets, pointed out to Israel that her real inheritance was not in this world. It was not of this earth; it was an inheritance in a new heaven and a new earth that would be made possible to them through the work of Christ, their Redeemer. Particularly, point to Isaiah 53, where we are told that Christ, when He has finished His work, will divide the spoils, that is, the rewards given to Him, with those who have trusted in Him.

In the New Testament again, return to Ephesians the first chapter, and here, point out verses 4, 13, and 14, which show that not only are we the heritage of God, but God, by sending the Holy Spirit upon us, has assured us that we, too, will receive a rich inheritance.

Peter speaks of this inheritance also in I Peter 1:4, calling it an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that will not fade away, reserved in heaven. Thus, unlike the inheritance of Canaan in the Old Testament, the inheritance we receive through Christ is permanent and lasting and sure.

Point Three: Our response to God's good purpose ought to be humble gratitude.

Remind the class of David's attitude and response when God has told him all the wonderful things He intends to do for him. David was overwhelmed, realizing that it was not because of anything he deserved, but simply that God loved him.

You may go back also to the time of Jacob and remind the class from Genesis 32:10, how Jacob finally came to realize God's good purpose in his life and confessed humbly that he was not worthy of even the least of the blessings that God had given to him. In neither of these was there pride.

You could also point to the prophet Isaiah, who, in the sixth chapter, is humbled before a Holy God as he realizes what God has done for him in cleansing him of all of his sin and who is ready, therefore, to serve God.

Likewise, Habakkuk, as we read in chapter 3, is ready to suffer whatever is necessary before God, he is so filled with gratitude for what God has assured him through faith.

In the New Testament you may wish to point to the example of the Apostle John who never could stop speaking of the fact that Jesus had loved him. John was, to his dying day, overwhelmed by the love of Jesus for one such as he.

Paul, therefore, at the end of the great exposition of the Gospel and defense of that exposition, which he makes in Romans, finally, in the 12th chapter, calls to the attention of all believers what God has done for us, humbly challenging each believer to commit himself into the hands of God. Here you may refer to Romans 12:1, 2.

Stress to the class that it is important that we all learn to express humble gratitude to God and never to take for granted the good things that He has done for us. We can never out give Him. We can only continually thank Him for His abundant and superabundant love toward us.

Suggestions for discussion:

You may lead a discussion in the class on the ways in which we, as believers in Christ, can show our gratitude to God for all He has done for us in Christ. In this discussion you could easily utilize questions 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6.

LESSON NINE

Introduction to the Lesson:

As you introduce this lesson, remind the class of the blessings that God had promised to David and David's humble gratitude expressed at that time. But show the class that this does not mean that from this point on David would never have any more trials or failures. In this world, as Christians, we are constantly besieged by the temptations of the world; and even though we love the Lord and are grateful to Him, we do sin. It is important, therefore, to learn from this lesson regarding David's sin, how to cope with sin before the Lord.

Remind the class that God could not permit any of His children to sin and ignore that sin. The tragedy that came in David's life did break his pride, though David himself grew stronger spiritually by the experience.

Point One: God will not permit His children to ignore or overlook their sins.

Begin by showing David's experience of sin and seeking to live without acknowledging that sin, only to be confronted by the Word of God through the prophet, Nathan, which convicted him that he was, before God, a guilty sinner. David could not be allowed to ignore his sin.

You may go back to the time of Abraham and remind the class, according to Genesis 17:1, that after Abraham had sinned against God in taking Hagar as his wife, to try to raise up a seed without God's help, God rebuked him by silence for several years and then, when He spoke to him, challenged him to learn to walk before God and be perfect; thus, convicting him of his past sins. Likewise, remind the class of Moses' experience: that at the beginning of his mission for God, Moses himself was convicted of his sin in failing to circumcise his child. Then later, because Moses did lose his temper and failed to glorify God, again, God faced him with his sin and would not permit him to go into Canaan.

Point out to the class that all of Israel's sins were a subject of continual grievance to God; and through the prophets, He reminded them over and over of the sins of their lives and would not let them forget or overlook them. Much of the content of the prophets deals with Israel's sins.

Jesus, in the New Testament, begins His public ministry by teaching the disciples that sinning against God is very serious, and the Law of God will not be set aside so that they can escape guilt for their sins. He shows them that they sin every day in thought as well as in deed,

and challenges them to learn to be perfect as their Father in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:48).

God continually confronted Peter with his own sins and made him face those sins before the Lord, before Jesus ascended into heaven.

Remind the class of Ephesians 1:4, which states the goal of God, that all of His children should be holy and without blemish in His presence. Connect this with Paul's own testimony of his experience in Philippians 3:12-14, testifying that he continually strives toward that goal of perfection, which has been set for him in Christ.

You may remind the class, therefore, that this is why the Law of God is important for us. It is a gauge to determine our lives and how faithful they are to the Lord.

Help the class to see the importance of this point and the importance of their seeking daily to be aware of their sins. Remind them that only through continuing to study God's Word and hearing what He has to say can we be convicted of our sin as we ought to be.

Point Two: God does not promise to excuse His children, who sin, from the consequences of those sins in this world.

Begin this point by stressing the fact that there is a great difference in how God deals with the Christian's sin, so far as this life is concerned and eternity. God, in promising to forgive us our sins, does not likewise promise that we will be free of the consequences of sins we may commit in this world.

Show them that this is one of the great points of David's life: that he was a man who sinned against God, though a child of God, and who, for the rest of his life, had to face and deal with the consequences of those sins.

You could go back to Abraham's life and show how there, too, much sorrow and grief came in his life from the time he went unto Hagar.

Likewise, Rebekah, because of her sins with Jacob in plotting against her husband, deceiving him, would never again see Jacob alive. He fled from their home and did not come back while she lived.

You can also remind the class of Moses' sin and its consequence, in that he was not permitted to go into the land of Canaan, something that he had desired to do very much, God does not treat sin lightly.

Also, Joshua's error in making peace with the Gibeonites opened the door to great suffering for Israel, during the period of the judges when the pagans lived among them and many times

dominated them, and often corrupted them spiritually.

Israel's suffering through much of her history was due to her sins and the consequences which God would not let her forget, even though many in Israel were the children of God.

In the New Testament you could point, particularly, to Hebrews 12:7-13, which deals with the importance of our enduring suffering because of discipline from God and growing spiritually in the midst of it.

Help them to see that the greatness of David was his ability to cope with sin and to grow spiritually in spite of the consequences of his sins, which he did have to endure. Remind them that this was the great difference between David and Saul. David could grow spiritually in spite of his sins, but Saul, who refused to confess his sins, could not.

Challenge the class to see the importance, therefore, of distinguishing between the consequences of sins, which all Christians may have to face in this world, and the ultimate forgiveness of sins, which is promised to everyone who trusts in Christ. His sins will not be held against him by God, but in the world he will have to pay the consequence.

Point Three: God does assure every believer that his sins, if confessed (acknowledged), are forgiven in Christ,

Begin this point by reminding them of the difference between our deliverance from the consequences of sin in this world and forgiveness of our sins before God now and for eternity.

Remind them of how God was quick to reassure David that his sin was forgiven, just as soon as he acknowledged it, which is shown fully in Psalm 51. Contrast Saul, who refused to acknowledge his sins and who never knew the forgiveness of God.

Point out the passage in Isaiah, in which God assures all who come to Him with a contrite and humble heart that they will be forgiven and that He has room in His heaven for them (Isa 57:15).

In the New Testament, note, particularly, I John 1:7-10, which is a cardinal passage teaching Christians the necessity of confessing their sins and assuring them of forgiveness. Likewise, Romans 8:31 ff., tells how we do have a complete triumph in Christ: that none can accuse us before God once we have trusted in Jesus.

Conclude the class by challenging the members to see the importance of their acknowledging their sins before God daily, lest

they store up an attitude of pride in their hearts.

Suggestions for discussion:

You may lead a discussion on how to glorify God in the midst of our being disciplined by Him and paying consequences for the sins we have committed. Here you could utilize questions 1, 3, 8, 9 and 10.

You may also lead a discussion in learning how to confess our sins to God, referring to questions 2, 5, 6, 7 and 11.

LESSON TEN

Introduction to the Lesson:

In this lesson our focus is on the rebellion of Absalom. We had noted that it was due to two things: David's own neglect of his children, the failure of discipline; and Absalom's ambition to be king. Remind the class that our attention, primarily, is not on Absalom, however, but on David and how he and his friends reacted under adversity.

Point One: Threats to the people of God often come from within the church.

Note that threats to David and David's kingdom frequently came from within his own family. This would be a good point to show the importance of discipline, both in one's own personal family and in the family of the church. This lessens the danger of threats against the well being of the church.

You can go back to the time of Isaac's family and the fact that even within that family was one man, Esau, whose life was a threat to the well being of the people of God at that time.

Later, Korah, a priest in Israel, sought to lead a rebellion against Moses and Aaron. Here, too, a threat came from a most unexpected place among the leadership in the church in the wilderness.

Remind the class that throughout the rest of Israel's history there arose many false prophets, priests and kings in Israel which threatened to undo the good work of the people of God.

Even among Jesus' select twelve apostles, one was a traitor and a threat to the well-being of that flock, namely, Judas.

In the early church as well, we have the appearance of Ananias and Sapphira who were clearly a threat to the church.

Jude, in verses 11 ff., enumerates Old Testament examples and says that such people

exist in the New Testament church as well, and calls them rocks hidden in the love feast of God's people; suggesting that they are a great threat and danger to the well-being of the church.

Challenge the class, therefore, to be aware of the existence of such threats within the church and of the necessity for officers who are faithful in the task of examining the people and disciplining those who have proven to be a threat to the peace and good of the church.

Point Two: In times of distress, God's children ought to be concerned chiefly for the good of Christ's Church.

Here you may begin by reminding them of David's great concern for the safety of the Ark and of the city of God, above his concern for his own safety. He was not selfish but trusted God that he would be restored if it pleased God.

Recall to the class the boldness of prophets like Elijah, who stood up against Ahab and Jezebel; and Amos, who withstood the wicked priests of the northern kingdom; and Jeremiah, who opposed the false prophets of Judah.

In all of these cases, the boldness of the prophets should be particularly noted and the fact that in times of the church's distress due to threats either from without or within, boldness on the part of God's children is called for.

Jesus Himself sets the example for this boldness in His earthly ministry. He followed a course that was very unpopular with those who were opposed to God's truth, within the people of Israel in his day. Likewise, the apostles, after Pentecost, prayed for boldness to be able to stand when they were persecuted.

Point out how Paul, in his concern for the good of the whole church, was willing to go to Jerusalem and risk his own life or imprisonment in order to bring harmony in the church there.

Help the class to see that in times of the distress or threats to the church, pet projects and ambitions should be set aside and all concerns should be directed toward what is good for the Church of Jesus Christ.

Point Three: God's people ought to rally around those who most honor God and His kingdom in times of distress.

You may begin by reminding them of how David's friends came to him in a time when to be associated with David was to risk one's whole future. Nevertheless, these were people who loved him for what he had done for the people of

God, and they were willing to stand with him in support, in a time when he needed it very much.

You might also contrast the experience of Elijah, who, in his day, felt all alone, with none of those who trusted in the Lord coming to his support and encouragement, causing him to have to face the distress in Israel at that time without the knowledge of such friends.

Also Daniel, in his great stand before the King Nebuchadnezzar — an encouragement to his people — was strongly supported by the three friends who were with him. And though they gain less attention than Daniel in the Book of Daniel, they, nevertheless, proved to be a sustaining power used by God to uphold him in times of trial and distress.

In the New Testament, we note how the apostles gained great strength in the Book of Acts, as they suffered persecution at the hands of the religious leaders of the Jews, and then came back to the church and were encouraged by the members of the church, and joined with them in prayer for God's strength.

Urge the class to think in terms of those in the church who, for their stand or their faithfulness, have been brought into distress; or those who, in times of attack against the church, have stood up to withstand the wiles of Satan. They need our support and in Point Three: God's people ought to rally around those who most honor God and His kingdom in times of distress.

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the religious leaders of the Jews, and then came back to the church and were encouraged by the members of the church, and joined with them in prayer for God's strength.

Urge the class to think in terms of those in the church who, for their stand or their faithfulness, have been brought into distress; or those who, in times of attack against the church, have stood up to withstand the wiles of Satan. They need our support and encouragement. We should always rush to the side of those who are faithful to God's Word and not simply take sides because of personal preferences.

Suggestions for discussion:

You may lead the class in a discussion of what it means to be a true Christian friend, utilizing questions 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9, in particular.

LESSON ELEVEN

Introduction to the Lesson:

In this lesson your special attention should be on the way in which the Lord sustains His children when they face various trials. Like David, many of the difficulties we face in life are due to our errors. Nevertheless, if we are persistent, as David was in his faith toward the Lord, we will succeed in not becoming bitter because of the trials, but better.

Point One: As we grow spiritually, our hearts become increasingly sensitive to sin in our lives.

You should begin by pointing out how David, in his latter days, was increasingly aware of his sins. Whereas, in the early part of his leadership, David could commit adultery and murder and not be aware of these sins. In his latter days, even when he had numbered the people, his own heart smote him, indicating that it was increasingly sensitive to what pleased and what displeased the Lord. Show that this is a normal growth for all Christians, and that God does not reveal all the things in our life that displease Him at once. But, as we learn to walk closer with Him, we become increasingly aware of ways that we have been displeasing Him.

Jacob's increase in awareness of his sin, in the latter part of his life, is one example; and Job's awareness before God after God had shown him

new light, indicate that all believers grow in sensitivity toward their sins, as they grow spiritually.

You might also mention Isaiah's awareness before the Lord, in the glory of the Lord, as he drew closer and closer to God, as we read in Isaiah 6.

Peter's experience with Christ, as it is recorded in John 21, shows how, as he drew nearer to the Lord, he also became increasingly aware of his sinfulness in the presence of Christ.

Help the class to see that it is normal and to be expected that as we mature spiritually, we will be increasingly sensitive to sins in our life.

Point Two: When we bear responsibility in the church, we are often faced with difficult choices.

Begin by reminding the class that David had many difficult choices to make in the latter part of his life as he regained leadership of Israel. Some of these difficult choices were problems of his own making and due to his neglect of discipline.

Going back to the life of Abraham, you can point out the difficult choice he had between Isaac and Ishmael that was due to a problem he had himself caused, by lying with Hagar.

Jacob, likewise, was faced with a difficult choice between Reuben and Judah, for the leadership of his family. Jacob painfully had to reject Reuben, his first born and his early pride, because Judah had proven to be more faithful than Reuben.

You could also note the experience of Joshua and his mistake in dealing with the Gibeonites. Nevertheless, in the latter part of his life, he was able to challenge all the people to choose faithfully to serve God.

Esther, likewise, as queen in Persia, had a very difficult choice to make. Her responsibility put her in the unique position of having to make a choice to protect her easy life in the court or to identify with her people and bear suffering with them.

Likewise, Paul and Barnabas had a painful choice to make in the New Testament when they began their missionary work. That choice had to do with their continuing to work together or separating, which was better for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

Paul frequently wrote to Timothy about the difficult choices he would have to make as a responsible leader in the church and the necessity for his doing so, and not neglecting those responsibilities.

Point Three: We may, if we are wise, grow through the trials in our life.

Here you can begin by pointing out how David did grow spiritually through all of his trials and did not become bitter because of them.

You can point to Isaac's growth that made him able to choose Jacob over Esau toward the end of his life, having learned better from God.

Naomi is an excellent example to remind the class of how one can grow spiritually through trials and not become embittered by them.

Elijah is another example of a child of God who sought to do what was right, and yet, saw his efforts fail, only to grow in spiritual insight by the painful experience he endured.

We can assume that Jonah, likewise, learned by his failures in dealing with Nineveh and his own sinful attitude at that time, and that ultimately he became a faithful prophet of God, as the existence of the Book of Jonah itself would seem to indicate.

Point to Psalm 73, in which the psalmist testifies that at first he became bitter because of the prosperity of the wicked and his own seeming failures, but he was reoriented by going into God's house and by recalling God's reward of the righteous and punishment of the wicked, in the end. So he grew spiritually and wrote this Psalm which has been a help to many Christians ever since.

Remind them that in Hebrews 5:9, the writer of Hebrews teaches us that even Christ, through what He suffered, grew.

From Philippians 4:12, you can show how Paul testifies that through all the hardships of his life, as a minister for Christ, he learned both how to abound and had to be abased. Challenge the class to learn to grow spiritually in every experience of their life and to see each experience as having meaning for their good, through the light of God's Word.

Suggestions for discussion:

You may lead the class in a discussion of how we can learn both to abound and to be abased, that is, how we can learn to handle prosperity and also humiliation and defeat, and grow in both experiences. Here you could utilize easily all of the questions in the book in this discussion.

LESSON TWELVE

Introduction to the Lesson:

Much of David's life is reflected in what he wrote. The lesson today focuses upon one of the Psalms of David which expresses pretty much his attitude, carried throughout his life.

By this Psalm we are able to see right into the heart of David and understand something of his great faith and how the Lord had caused him to grow, even through the many trials he faced.

We are concerned with his recognition of God as his sole refuge, and with his commitment to God's Word as his sole guide in life, and his awareness that what he wrote was inspired by God's Holy Spirit.

Point One: The believer's sole refuge in the world is the Lord.

Here you will want to begin with David's own life and, perhaps, review some of the experiences in his life that brought David to an increasing conviction that he had no refuge but the Lord.

You could go back to the time of Jacob for illustration of the same truth. Jacob himself, when he was faced with enemies before him and behind him, finally, humbly acknowledged that he had no refuge but the Lord.

Similarly, Joseph in Egypt, betrayed by his brothers, imprisoned in that foreign land, looked to the Lord as his only answer and refuge.

Perhaps this concept is expressed by David in Psalm 2, which concludes with the assurance that those who do find the Lord as their refuge are blessed. Indeed, the Psalm before us for study today says the same thing.

One other Old Testament personality comes to our mind, and that is Daniel. Daniel learned that all around him in the world were men who were out to get even with him because of his prosperity in the Lord. He had many enemies in high places who sought to destroy him. Nevertheless, he took God as his refuge, and God did not fail him.

Throughout the gospels we are impressed with the fact that Jesus constantly took refuge in the Lord in prayer. After the busy days of ministering to the people, he would often go aside, privately, even without his disciples, and spend much time in prayer.

Similarly, Paul, the Apostle, even while in prison, could take heart in the knowledge that the Word of God was not bound and that though men might hold him imprisoned by stones and bars, he could take refuge in the Lord and know that he was safe there.

You will want to urge the class to examine

their hearts to be certain that they have taken their refuge in the Lord and in Him alone, and are not looking to any false security in this world.

Point Two: God's Word is a believer's sole guide to all truth, and that Word is all given by inspiration of God.

Here, too, you will take as your starting point the experience of David. David, himself, constantly guided everything he did by the express will of God, His Word. Often here, and in his Psalms elsewhere, David speaks of the greatness of that Word and what part it has played in his life. You might refer them to Psalm 19 or Psalm 119, though there are many other passages as well.

One particular Psalm that comes to mind is Psalm 1, where the righteous one is described as he who rejoices in the Word of God and meditates on it day and night. It is that which makes it possible for his life to bear fruit to the glory of God.

In the New Testament, we see that the disciples quickly learned that Jesus was the only source of their life and that His words were words of eternal life. You may point specially to John 6:68.

You could also bring to the attention of the class the two great verses which speak of the inspiration of Scripture in the New Testament, II Timothy 3:16, 17, and II Peter 1:21.

Suggestions for discussion:

You may wish to lead a discussion on Christ as our refuge today from the world and how this is so, utilizing questions 1, 3, 4, and 9.

Another discussion subject might be the practical application of that knowledge that the Bible is God's Word to our daily lives. Here you could utilize question 8.

LESSON THIRTEEN

A Review Lesson:

Part I, the test, may be done at home, or in the class individually or together. If the class is not disposed to do it at all, this entire part may be omitted; however, it is an excellent opportunity for the class to review what has been covered and to see whether they have grasped some of the significant truths in this quarter of study. You, as the teacher, ought to encourage all to test their progress. Working together in the classroom may be a good way to handle this, to encourage the others. If tests are taken individually, it is best not

to make the results known publicly.

The questions have been arranged so that the pupils may check the answers in the lessons.

Questions are by the lessons, for easier reference.

Below, you will find the answers to the questions.

1. T	21. T	41. T	61. T	81. T
2. F	22. F	42. F	62. F	82. F
3. T	23. F	43. F	63. F	83. F
4. F	24. T	44. T	64. T	84. F
5. T	25. F	45. F	65. F	85. T
6. F	26. F	46. F	66. T	86. T
7. F	27. F	47. F	67. F	87. F
8. T	28. F	48. F	68. F	88. F
9. F	29. T	49. F	69. F	89. F
10. T	30. T	50. T	70. T	90. T
11. F	31. F	51. F	71. F	91. T
12. T	32. F	52. T	72. T	92. T
13. F	33. F	53. F	73. F	93. T
14. F	34. F	54. F	74. T	94. T
15. F	35. F	55. T	75. F	95. F
16. T	36. T	56. T	76. F	96. F
17. T	37. F	57. T	77. F	97. F
18. T	38. T	58. F	78. T	98. T
19. F	39. F	59. T	79. T	99. T
20. F	40. F	60. F	80. T	100. T

Part II, the review of the quarter on the basis of Ephesians 1:4, ought not to be omitted; and if there is not time in class, because of the test, to go over this content, then urge the class to read and reflect on what is summarized in this section at home. It may be useful simply to read these paragraphs in class and have discussion of them afterwards.