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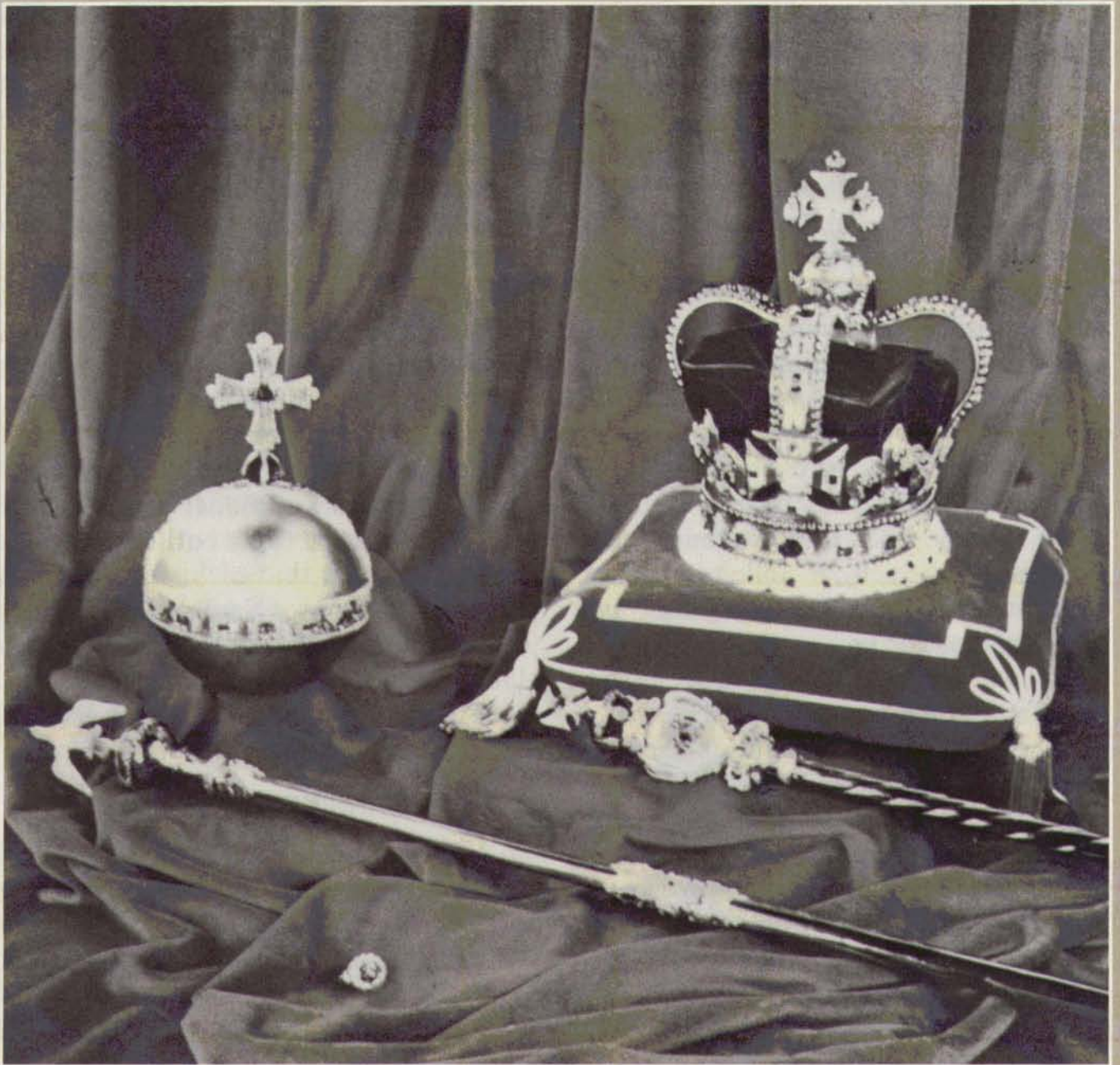
LEVEL 6

BIBLE

LESSONS



LESSON 4



David, King of Israel

DAVID, KING OF ISRAEL

How well do you know King David? What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you think of him? A shepherd tending sheep on the lush hillsides of Judea? Or a courageous young man who slew the Philistine giant Goliath? Perhaps you think of the Psalms he wrote, his great loyalty or even his sins. But have you ever thought of David as a man after God's own heart who will rule the nation of Israel in the soon-coming World Tomorrow?

In this lesson you will continue to learn more about David and you will better understand why he is called a man after God's own heart. You will learn many valuable lessons from David's life which, if followed today, will result in abundant blessings and opportunities for you.

As we learned in the last lesson, Israel's first king was Saul. He was a man who would not remain obedient to God. As a result, God rejected him as king over Israel.

God then led Samuel to anoint David as king of Israel. David did not become king immediately, however. God wanted

to test him to be absolutely sure of his loyalty and obedience. God wanted to be sure that David would rely on Him to fulfill His promise to make him king over Israel.

On two occasions David had the chance to kill Saul, but refused. David realized that God is the one who removes certain people from office and gives their positions of authority to others. God eventually did remove Saul from being king by allowing him to be killed during battle with the Philistines.

When news of the death of Saul and his son Jonathan reached David, he was grief stricken (II Samuel 1:11-12). He did not rejoice over other people's downfalls, even that of his enemies. To show his respect for Saul and his love for Jonathan, David composed a Psalm lamenting the death of these two men. You can read this Psalm in II Samuel 1:17-27.

LEARNING TO BE KING

A short while after Saul's death, God instructed David to go to Hebron in the land of Judah. It was here that the men of Judah anointed David king over their tribe. But Abner, captain of the army of Israel under Saul, took Ishbosheth, a son

ABOUT OUR COVER . . .

The British Crown Jewels. These royal symbols of authority are kept in the Tower of London.

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of Saul, and made him king over the rest of Israel. Even though Abner had no authority from God to do this, God permitted it.

Rather than take matters into his own hands, David patiently waited and trusted God to make him king over all Israel. During the seven years David was king over Judah, God continued to test him to see if he would remain humble and small in his own eyes. You may remember that Saul allowed his position as king to go to his head, and did not remain small in his own sight (I Samuel 15:17).

While king of Judah, there was constant warfare between the house of Saul and the house of David. But David grew stronger and stronger while the house of Saul became weaker and weaker.

God slowly worked out events so that David would become king of Israel. Thinking to please David and gain his favor, two of Ishbosheth's most trusted men plotted and slew Ishbosheth. How did David react when these two men gloatingly told him of their wicked deed? Turn to II Samuel 4:10-12 and

fill in the blanks. "When one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead, _____, I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag, who _____: How much more, when _____ men have slain a _____ in his own house... And David commanded his young men, and _____."

David did not stand for disloyalty. David mourned the death of Ishbosheth and showed his respect for Ishbosheth by having him buried in a special tomb. These acts made it plain to the people of Israel that David had a strict regard for justice.

KING OVER ALL ISRAEL

David was now ready to become king over all Israel. He had become king over Judah when he was thirty years old. During the seven long years, he learned how to administer and govern a nation.

Battles continued with the house of Saul while David was King of Judah.



Illustration by Basil Wolverton

He proved his loyalty and obedience to God. God now saw to it that he would become king over all Israel.

After Ishbosheth's murder, the leaders of Israel acknowledged David as their rightful king. They anointed him king over all Israel at Hebron.

One of the first outstanding acts of David as king over Israel was the taking of the Jebusite city of Jerusalem. Located in the central part of the nation it became an ideal capital. Throughout the centuries since then, the city of Jerusalem has been one of the most famous and important cities in the world. It is the headquarters of three of the world's major religions — Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

As Israel became stronger and more united under his leadership, David continued to obey God's laws, even as he had as a youth (Psalms 71:17). And he continued to remind the nation of the necessity of obeying their Creator, and putting their trust in God for protection against their enemies.

After hearing of the growing fame and strength of their enemy, the Philistines prepared to fight David and his army in the valley of Rephaim near Jerusalem. David sought God's guidance and direction to show him what to do. Turn to II Samuel 5:19 to see what David asked of God. "And David inquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? Wilt thou

_____?
_____? And the Lord said unto David,
_____: for I will doubtless _____ the Philis-

tines into thine hand." How did David respond to God's instructions, and did Israel win the battle? For the answer, turn to II Samuel 5:25. "And David _____, as the Lord _____; and smote the Philistines. . . ."

DAVID BRINGS THE ARK TO JERUSALEM

After having defeated the Philistines, conditions in Israel were relatively peaceful. David thought it would be a good time to bring the ark of God to Jerusalem. So he gathered together 30,000 chosen men of Israel — soldiers, priests and musicians. They went to the hill town of Kirjathjearim and loaded the ark on a cart pulled by oxen.

Singing and dancing as they went, the whole procession slowly moved toward Jerusalem. Suddenly, the oxen stumbled and tilted the cart sharply, rocking the ark. Fearful the ark would fall and hit the ground, a Levite named Uzzah leaped and grabbed the ark to steady it. But he was instantly killed by God as a result of touching the ark. Hundreds of years earlier, God had instructed the priests to carry the ark on poles put through rings on each side of the ark. When carried in this manner, it would not be touched by human hands. But apparently these instructions had been forgotten.

David moved the ark no further and left it at the house of Obededom. After carefully studying the scriptures on how to move the ark, David decided once again to bring it to Jerusalem. This time

the priests carried the ark as God had instructed. As they traveled along the roadside, David danced before God with all his might.

One lesson we can learn from this incident is that we are responsible for obeying the instructions God has given to us in the Bible. God expects us to know and live by all his laws. And if we break them, we can expect to suffer a penalty.

GOD'S GREAT PROMISE TO DAVID

In time God blessed David and the nation of Israel with a period of rest from their enemies. David began to consider how much better his personal surroundings were than those of the ark, which was housed in a tent. David appreciated God's goodness and abundant blessings. He desired to thank God in a very special way.

David called the prophet Nathan to the palace and told him, "I live in a beautiful palace, in great luxury, while the ark of God dwells in a tent. I want to thank God for his greatness and kindness by building a house for God. Is it God's will for me to do this?" (II Samuel 7:1-3.)

That night God revealed to Nathan a wonderful promise He would make to David. The next morning Nathan rushed over to the palace and told David the good news. Turn to II Samuel 7:13 to see what God said about a yet future son of David. "He shall build an house for my name, and I will _____ the _____ of his kingdom _____."

It is the throne of David to which Jesus Christ will soon come to rule over all nations. The story of that throne and its vitally important meaning is explained in Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's book *The United States and Britain in Prophecy*.

The reason God did not allow David to build the temple was because he was a man of war (I Chronicles 28:3). But David's son Solomon would be a man of peace, during whose reign the temple would be built.

David was so overwhelmed that God would establish his throne forever, he could hardly stammer his gratitude before God. Turn to and read II Samuel 7:18-22. "Then went King David in, and sat before the Lord, and he said, _____, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? . . . Wherefore thou art _____, O Lord God: for there is _____, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears."

It was this attitude of selfless humility and meekness which led God to call David a man after His own heart (Acts 13:22). Unlike Saul before him, David continued to remain small in his own sight. He knew that everything came from God, and God Himself deserved all the honor, glory and credit.

During David's reign, the many victories God continued to give Israel caused David to be greatly respected by his enemies. Silver, gold and other valuables collected from the defeated

enemies were added to a special treasury which was to be later used by his son in building the house for God (II Samuel 8:9-14).

TEMPTATION LEADS TO SIN

Early one evening as David walked on the roof of his palace, his glance came upon a woman below. She was a beautiful woman who was taking a bath. David knew better but he started to think more and more about her. Instead of resisting temptation, David allowed his thoughts to turn to lust. As a result he asked her over to the palace. It was there that he broke the _____ commandment and committed adultery with her.

Several months went by and David thought no one would ever discover his sin. He was horrified when Bathsheba asked to see him and told him she would have a baby.

Instead of repenting, David tried to cover up his sin. He sent for Bathsheba's husband, Uriah the Hittite, who was a loyal and brave soldier fighting for Israel in David's army. "If Uriah stays with his wife a few days," David thought, "Uriah will think the baby is his."

But David's plan failed. Uriah refused to see his wife out of respect for his fellow soldiers on the front. "Why should I go and enjoy myself with my wife while my fellow soldiers are enduring the hardness of battle? I will not go and see her!" (II Samuel 11:11-13.) David suddenly felt trapped. He feared what the people might do if



David noticed Bathsheba from his palace roof.

they learned of his sin.

In desperation, David plotted a murder to cover up his adultery. He sent Uriah back to battle and told the captain, Joab, to put him in the most dangerous place where he would be killed. Uriah was later killed by the enemy, but it was David who was responsible for Uriah's death (II Samuel 11:15-17).

SECRET SINS EXPOSED

After a brief period of mourning for her dead husband, Bathsheba married David. Turn to II Samuel 11:27 to see what God thought of David's actions. "... But the thing that David had done _____ the Lord."

God sent the prophet Nathan to expose David's sins. To show the extreme seriousness of the situation, Nathan told David a story. "There were

two men living in a city. One was very wealthy and the other very poor. The poor man owned only one lamb which was the family pet. The wealthy man had many sheep. One day a traveler visited the rich man. Instead of feeding the guest with one of his own lambs, the rich man stole his neighbor's pet and fed it to the guest" (II Samuel 12:1-4).

David became very angry after hearing this story. "Tell me who did this wicked deed," he demanded. "This man shall surely die!" Nathan's answer stunned David. "You are that man! You have dishonored and disobeyed the very God who protected you from Saul and the foreign armies. You have despised God's commandments by plotting the death of a loyal and trusted man with whose wife you committed adultery" (II Samuel 12:7-9).



David repented deeply of his sins.

David knew Nathan spoke the truth. Suddenly he felt very guilty. He had tried to hide his sins, but they had been exposed. Even though he was king of Israel, like everyone else, he was certain to suffer—to pay a penalty for breaking God's commandments.

But Nathan continued, "Because of your sins, the sword shall never depart from your house. Your family will continually fight and kill. A neighbor will take your wives and openly claim them as his own" (II Samuel 12:10-12).

At this point the full realization of his terrible sins hit him. David then confessed his sins, telling Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord" (II Samuel 12:13). Be sure to read David's heartfelt and prayerful repentance which is recorded for us to read in Psalms 51.

Nathan then assured David, "Now that you have repented, God has forgiven you. He will not take your life, but because you have set a poor example as a servant of God, causing God's enemies to blaspheme Him, your unborn child will die" (II Samuel 12:13-14).

The son did die, but God later gave David and Bathsheba another son. Because their marriage was now legal in God's eyes, God blessed them with Solomon (II Samuel 12:24). The name Solomon means peaceable.

REBELLIOUS SONS CAUSE TROUBLE

On one occasion, David's oldest son, Amnon, was terribly cruel to his half-sister, Tamar, and physically

harm her (II Samuel 13:1-19). It was not long before David found out what Amnon had done. David was grieved and angry, but he unwisely did not punish Amnon because Amnon was his first son and David had a special liking for him. It was this weakness, the failure to properly discipline his children, that caused David much heartache and grief later in life.

Tamar's brother Absalom, Amnon's half-brother and another of David's sons, decided to take the situation into his own hands. For two years Absalom plotted the murder of Amnon. It was during a large banquet held at Absalom's house that Absalom ordered his servants to kill Amnon (II Samuel 13:22-29).

You can see how one sin often leads to another. How many times have you tried to get even when another person, perhaps a brother or sister, has done something wrong to you? Getting even is never right in God's sight. We should rely on God to correct those who may try to hurt us. We should also never harbor grudges, and always follow the instruction given in Ephesians 4:26: "Be ye _____ and _____: let not the sun go down upon your _____."

Fearful of his father David, Absalom fled with his family and servants to Geshur, in the area of Syria, for about three years. David eventually pardoned Absalom and allowed him to return to Jerusalem (II Samuel 13:38-39; 14:21). Even then, two more years went by before David allowed Absalom to visit



Illustration by Basil Wolverton

Absalom's army was quickly defeated by David's troops.

him at his palace. David did not want the people to falsely assume that Absalom was not guilty simply because he was a prince.

VANITY AND PRIDE LEAD TO CIVIL WAR

Absalom was well known for having killed his brother Amnon, but many Israelites admired him because he was a prince and a handsome man (II Samuel 14:25). When David was old and near the end of his reign, Absalom began to lust after his father's throne. Amnon's death led Absalom to believe he would be the one to succeed his father. Just thinking of the power and prestige spurred Absalom to try to hasten the time when it would happen.

Absalom also became quite vain. He wanted the people of Israel to look to him. Absalom tried to impress them by riding about the country in fancy chariots (II Samuel 15:1). As a result of Absalom's clever maneuvering and

granting of many favors, he won the hearts of the people of Israel to his side (II Samuel 15:6). To many, Absalom was a more exciting and interesting person than his father David.

Once the conspiracy had gained momentum, Absalom gathered his followers at Hebron and there pronounced himself king. He planned to attack Jerusalem in a violent effort to overthrow his father David and seize the government. David and his family and servants were forced to flee Jerusalem and seek refuge elsewhere.

God was allowing these events to occur as a result of David's past sins concerning Uriah and his wife. Though God had not forsaken David, God was allowing him to be punished for his sins.

After taking Jerusalem, Absalom took over the king's palace. Following the advice of one of his advisors, Absalom took as his own wives the concubines David had left at the palace. This fulfilled the prophecy in II Samuel 12:11 when Nathan told David a neighbor would take his wives and openly claim them as his own.

Before mounting an assault against David's forces, Absalom first decided to increase the size of his army. He made this decision as a result of the advice given him by Hushai, one of David's trusted counsellors whom David sent to infiltrate Absalom's ranks. This gave David the extra time he needed to gain support to defend himself and his followers.

Before the battle, David told his men

not to harm Absalom. Because God was on David's side—he had been punished enough now—Absalom's army was defeated. Fleeing from the approaching troops, Absalom rode beneath the low branches of an oak tree. Somehow he got caught in the branches. The mule he was riding raced forward, leaving him dangling with his feet off the ground.

When Joab heard that Absalom was caught, he rushed to the scene. Instead of obeying David and protecting Absalom, Joab killed him on the spot. Though God had granted David the victory and restored the throne to him, David was very grieved at the death of his son.

To show thanks to God for His protection and blessings, David composed a beautiful song. Be sure to read this song, which is recorded for us in II Samuel 22:2 to 23:7. This song shows us the attitude David tried to maintain during his life.

Let's now look at several verses which show David's trusting attitude. Turn to II Samuel 22:7 and fill in the blanks. "In my _____ I called upon the Lord, and _____ to my God: and he did _____ my voice out of his temple, and my cry did enter his ears."

Like David, we should trust God always to deliver us from our troubles and from those who seek to hurt us. What did David say in II Samuel 22:2-3: "And he said, the Lord is my _____, and my _____, and my _____; The God of my rock; in him will I _____ . . ."

David also realized that God is a

merciful God who will have mercy on us when we repent of our sins. How did David describe God in II Samuel 22:26-27? "With the _____ thou wilt shew thyself merciful, and with the _____ man thou wilt shew thyself upright. With the _____ thou wilt shew thyself pure. . . ."

ANOTHER TEMPTATION

During a time of relative peace and security in the land of Israel David began to feel powerful and secure. He called for Joab and said, "Go now throughout all the tribes of Israel and count the number of men fit for military duty. I want to see how our military might compares to our enemies."

But Joab protested, "Why do you desire to do this wicked thing in God's sight. We must rely on God to fight our battles for us, not on our own military strength. Battles are not decided by the plans of men and the strength of their arms. The God of Israel decides who wins!" (II Samuel 24:2-4.) But David ordered the census taken anyway.

When the census had been completed, Joab returned and told David there were 1,300,000 valiant fighting men in the armies of Israel and Judah. Suddenly, David realized he had done wrong. He realized that by this act of numbering the people he was looking to man's strength and not God's protection.

Turn to II Samuel 24:10 and read of David's repentant attitude. "And David's heart _____ (pained, grieved) him after he had numbered the people. And David said unto the Lord, I

have _____ in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the _____ of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly."

God sent the prophet Gad to David. "You realize God requires us to pay the penalty for our sins. Even though you are king, you are not exempt. Because you have done this thing, punishment will come to Israel. God will allow you to choose the form of punishment," he said. "Choose one of the following: either seven years of famine in Israel, three months of vicious attacks from enemy nations, or three days of pestilence from God" (II Samuel 24:13).

David sat for a time in silence. He realized God was again calling him to account for a sin. He looked to God for mercy. II Samuel 24:14 shows which punishment David chose and why. "And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait; let us fall now into the _____; for his _____ are _____: and let me not fall into the hand of _____."

The next day reports came to David that thousands of Israelites were dying suddenly, with no apparent cause. After three days and the deaths of 70,000 Israelites, David was deeply sorry and repentant. The prophet Gad came to David again. "God knows you deeply regret the wrong you have done. God will end the plague if you quickly build an altar and offer sacrifices on Mount Moriah."

David immediately rushed to the Mount, which was just outside the city

of Jerusalem. David bought the land at the top of the Mount and there built an altar and offered sacrifices to God. God showed His approval by sending fire from heaven to kindle the flames on the altar and then stopped the plague. The site of the altar on Mount Moriah eventually became the site of the temple Solomon built.

David spent the rest of his life making final preparations for the temple his son Solomon would build. David prepared the materials and set aside much of his wealth to pay the construction costs and to decorate the temple. David gave Solomon the complete plans and instructions God had given him (I Chronicles 22:1-19; 29:1-19).

PARTING WORDS OF ADVICE FROM A WISE FATHER

Not long afterward, when David was about to die, he gave Solomon some valuable advice. Turn to I Kings 2:2-3 and fill in the blanks. "I go the way of all the earth: be thou _____ therefore, and shew thyself a man; And keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to _____, to keep his _____, and his _____, and his _____, and his _____."

Why did David advise Solomon to keep God's commandments? See the latter part of verse 3: "...that thou mayest _____ in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself."

Shortly thereafter, David died after

having served 40 years as king of Israel and Judah. Turn to I Chronicles 29:28 and notice how God described David. "And he died in a _____ old age, _____ of days, _____, and _____: and Solomon his son reigned in his stead."

DAVID'S POSITION IN THE WORLD TOMORROW

In the World Tomorrow David will be made king over all the tribes of Israel (Ezekiel 37:24). Though David made mistakes, he later repented of them. He tried to obey God in all areas of his life. His humble, obedient, trusting and loyal attitude are several of the reasons he will be given such an exalted and powerful position.

How can David's attitude be summed up? Turn to II Samuel 23:3: "He that ruleth over men must be _____, ruling in the _____. The many Psalms written by David show his trusting and upright attitude towards God. What did David write about learning God's law? Turn to Psalms 119:97: "Oh how _____ I thy _____! It is my meditation _____."

David studied and pondered over God's Law all day long. He learned how to apply it to every situation in life. This gave David wisdom as he shows us in verse 98: "Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies."

In the next lesson, we will study the life of King Solomon, whom God called the wisest man on earth.

BIBLE MEMORY

Psalms 51

1. David was called this by God.
2. Why didn't God immediately make David king over all Israel?
3. Unlike Saul, David remained this way.
4. What lesson did David learn when Uzzah was struck dead by God?
5. What was God's great promise to David and his posterity?
6. How did David try to cover up his sin with Bathsheba?
7. What story did Nathan use to reveal to David the seriousness of his sins?
8. David's heartfelt prayer of repentance is recorded in which chapter of the Bible?
9. Absalom rebelled against his father and attempted to _____.
10. What did David's numbering of Israel imply?
11. What did David do upon realizing he had sinned?
12. Why did David advise his son Solomon to keep God's commandments?
13. What will be David's position in the World Tomorrow?

MATCHING

Can you remember the important people and events you studied, and the lessons you learned? Answer the questions or complete the statements in the left-hand column from the right-hand column. Jot down the correct letter next to each number.

- A. Little in his own sight.
- B. He plotted the murder of Uriah the Hittite.
- C. Psalm 51.
- D. "A man after God's own heart."
- E. take over the throne of Israel.
- F. He repented and asked God to forgive him.
- G. That of a wealthy man who killed his neighbor's pet lamb.
- H. So he would prosper in all that he did.
- I. God wanted to be sure he would trust and obey Him.
- J. We are responsible for obeying God's instructions.
- K. That he had begun to trust in man's strength and less on God's protection.
- L. That his throne would be established forever.
- M. King over all the tribes of Israel.