

NOTES AND QUESTIONS ON THE BOOK OF II SAMUEL FOR INDIVIDUAL  
OR GROUP STUDY - PART TWO - CHAPTERS 7-12

So far in this book we have seen David's remarkable path to power over all Israel. His choice, not always respected by his followers, was that it should be through forgiveness, love, and free choice, not by force. Jesus wants to be King in us on the same basis, through self quitting and us progressively welcoming Him into more and more meaningful control of our lives. There are all sorts of battles along the way as self still wants to have a hand in the process. As David rejected help from the family and followers of Saul so Jesus refuses assistance from us as we try to change ourselves and others, except on the basis of willing surrender. This was the problem in the New Testament with those who wanted to add rules to salvation by grace through faith alone.(Acts 15:1; Gal.1:6) They had to be opposed because they were unwittingly offering a different gospel.

Just one issue in David's life undermined the growth of his kingdom, his multiple marriages, and will continue to cause damage. The problem will grow worse in this next section. Faithfulness in home life cannot be separated from fruitfulness in ministry.

The key to David's success as king would be the place of the word of God. First it had to move into the heart of his kingdom and then into daily life for his people. This is Jesus' plan for His kingdom in us. In chapter six the ark containing the word of God is finally restored to Jerusalem, the heart of the kingdom. Jesus wants His word to be central in the hearts and minds of His people. Now David hopes the process can go further...

**CHAPTER SEVEN** When David compares his beautiful wooden palace with the humble tent which contained the ark and the presence of God, he feels uncomfortable. God's house should be better than his, so he wants to build a temple. Nathan the prophet agrees at first but then God tells him to wait. The Lord promises David that it will be his son who will build the temple and reign for ever. His role will be to prepare for this. At first sight it will be Solomon who would fulfil this promise but while he constructs a building, Solomon later becomes unfaithful and so his descendants do not last as a dynasty. It would one day be Jesus, the son of David, who will build His house, the church, in our hearts and reign for ever.(Matt.16:18; Eph.2.19-22). David accepts this plan by faith.

**CHAPTER EIGHT** With David firmly established as king of the whole nation, and the ark back in the centre of government, victory over his long-time enemies follows. When Christ rules unreservedly in our hearts, and His word governs our thinking, victory over the habits which have so long defeated us follows. Our mistake so often is to think that we can defeat old habits without first putting Him in charge.(Rom.8:31-39) The chapter ends by naming David's close friends who shared in his victory. God intends that we should share victory as a body not just as individuals.

**CHAPTER NINE** One of the evidences of enjoying Christ's victory in our own lives is in our longing to show God's mercy and grace to those who are hopelessly defeated. So often if we think we are winning over old habits we become self

righteous and judgemental towards what we see as the failures around us. In chapter 4:4 we were introduced to Mephibosheth, the last surviving son of Saul, crippled as the result of a childhood accident. This unfortunate young man has been hiding away from David in poverty and fear of discovery and punishment. Instead of seeing him as a threat to be destroyed, David sees opportunity to show love to Saul's son and Jonathan's younger brother. The result is delightful as Mephibosheth is welcomed to David's table as an honoured guest, though totally undeserving. He responds in worship. Jesus and Paul later urge the same kind of grace towards enemies in expectation that it will melt their hearts.(Matt.5:43-46; Rom.12:18-21)

**CHAPTER TEN** The death of an old friend from his days of adversity gives David another opportunity to show grace, to the grieving son. David sends people to console Hanun, whose father, Nahash, had been an enemy of Israel defeated by Saul,(I Sam.11) but had presumably been one who had later sheltered David and his men when they were on the run. Instead of appreciating the gracious gesture, Hanun humiliates the messengers by cutting off half their beards and half their clothes. David responds by war, and the Ammonites and their Aramean allies are defeated. God offers us mercy and grace but if we throw it back at Him in mockery of the cross we face His judgement.

**CHAPTER ELEVEN** The conflict with the Ammonites continues but it provides the background for a series of tragic mistakes with lasting consequences. Instead of leading his men as he had in chapter 10, David takes a vacation and stays home in Jerusalem. Late one day David rises from his bed, walks on the palace roof and sees a beautiful woman bathing. He discovers she is Bathsheba, the wife of one of his mighty men and close friends, Uriah, who is away fighting the Ammonites. He invites her around, they sleep together and she becomes pregnant. Horrified by the embarrassment this will cause, David tries first to blame the baby on Uriah by giving him leave from the army, supposedly to report to him. Uriah, mindful of the instruction in Exod.19:15; and I Sam.21:4,5 to soldiers to stay away from women while on duty, does not go home to his wife even after, on the next night, David gets him drunk. David in desperation sinks now to murder, sending him back to the army with a letter to Joab instructing him to abandon Uriah on the battlefield to be killed by the Ammonites. Bathsheba and David go through the appearance of mourning and then marry at the earliest respectable opportunity. There could hardly be a clearer example of grace withheld when David steals from his friend, first his wife, and then his life.

**CHAPTER TWELVE** Nathan is given the terrible responsibility of going to the king to tell him that what looked respectable and proper to others did not deceive God. He confronts David with his adultery and murder through a parable which first makes David angry and then deeply convicted. On the basis of repentance, Nathan is able to assure David that God has forgiven him but on the other hand sin has consequence for others and the child will die. David prays desperately for his sick son in the hope that somehow God will not do what He said, but accepts the outcome when the child dies. In a remarkable demonstration of the completeness of God's forgiveness, the Lord gives David and Bathsheba a new son, Solomon. David has learned his lesson and leads his army against the enemy rather than staying home and leaving it to others.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OR FURTHER STUDY

1. In what ways was David's plan to build a temple for God a good idea which would form a basis for understanding the New Testament church?(I Cor.3:16; 6:19; II Cor.5:1-10) What on the other hand was the danger of putting God into a solid building which could not move?(Acts 7:46-50) What is the danger of this today?(chap.7)
2. What can we learn from David's victories over his enemies about the principles of victory over the world, the flesh and the Devil in our lives?(chap.8)
3. Look elsewhere in the Bible,(II Cor.1:3-7; Rom.5:6-8; Matt.25:31-46) to see how David's treatment of Mephibosheth parallels Jesus' treatment of us.(chap.9)
4. How does the story of David and Hanun illustrate the way in which grace and judgement can both be part of the plan of God?(chap.10)
5. How could it be that such a great man of God could fall so far? What other Bible stories record major failure by men of God? How can we avoid David's mistakes?(chap.11)
6. Read Ps.51 as David's prayer after Nathan spoke to him. How does this story help us to understand what should be the pastoral care of leaders who have crashed morally?(chap.12)