

2 SAMUEL 5–7; 11–12; 1 KINGS 3; 8; 11

Introduction

The following “Witnessing Christ from the Old Testament” study covers 2 Samuel 5–7; 11–12; 1 Kings 3; 8; 11

[You can find the LDS outline of study and resources here.](#)

LDS Study Focus

LDS study material will focus on:

King David’s reign started out with so much promise. His undaunted faith in defeating Goliath was legendary. As king, he secured Jerusalem as his capital and united Israel (see [2 Samuel 5](#)). The kingdom had never been stronger. And yet David gave in to temptation and lost his spiritual power.

The reign of David’s son Solomon likewise started out with so much promise. His divinely received wisdom and discernment were legendary. As king, he extended Israel’s borders and built a magnificent temple to the Lord. The kingdom had never been stronger. And yet Solomon foolishly allowed his heart to be turned away to other gods.

What can we learn from these tragic stories? Perhaps one lesson is that regardless of our past experiences, our spiritual strength depends on the choices we make today. We can also see in these accounts that it isn’t our own strength or courage or wisdom that will save us—it is the Lord’s. These stories show us that Israel’s true hope—and ours—is not in David, Solomon, or any other mortal king, but in another “son of David”: Jesus Christ ([Matthew 1:1](#)), the Eternal King who will “forgive the sin of [His] people” if we “turn again to [Him]” ([1 Kings 8:33–34](#)).

Biblical Focus

2 Samuel is a continuation of 1 Samuel, which presented Israel’s transition from a theocracy (God guiding and directing his people) to a monarchy (an earthly king ruling).

The division of Samuel, which was one book, into two books, is according to the principal characters who dominate the scene: Samuel (1 Samuel 1–12); Saul (1 Samuel 13–31); David (2 Samuel 1–24). 2 Samuel traces the kingship of David.

The David account in the Bible is one of the most complex story arches. The Holy Spirit allows us to see a man who guides his people with such power and might and yet, at the same time, is brought low by the same sort of selfish sins as ordinary people.

2 SAMUEL 5–7

Don't Touch or Die

The battles and struggles with Saul are over, and David is finally king over Israel! Uzzah's tragic story is amidst the joys of this establishment and battle victories. His tale presents an opportunity to discuss the seriousness of sinning against God.

What a scene, a parade with unbridled pomp and circumstance; 30,000 men were heading to Baalah to get the ark of the Lord to bring it to Jerusalem. However, the ark transport goes badly. They hit a bump in the road, and when Uzzah reached out to keep the ark from falling off the cart, God struck him dead.

What was the sin that was worthy of instant death? Previously, God had commanded the priests to transport the ark with poles placed in the rings on either side (Exodus 25:14). God also commanded no one to touch the ark (Numbers 4:15). Uzzah had good intentions as he prevented the ark from falling; however, touching it put him in the presence of the Holy God where no sinner could survive. Although our sins may seem minor, any sin against God and his commands is worthy of death.

Did David agree with God's wrath against Uzzah? It appears not. Even David had to learn that God's judgment is not like humans. David was outraged at what God did to Uzzah, and God had to help him see why he had to respond in the way he did.

Let's Try This Again

Three months after Uzzah's death, David brought the ark to Jerusalem. However, this time, David was careful to do all that the Lord had said. The sons of Kohath, members of the priestly family, were designated to carry the ark of the covenant. When they had gone six steps, David stopped the procession and offered a sacrifice of a bull and a fattened calf.

Why the sacrifice? The sacrifice was more than a religious rite for David and the people. It was a reminder of God's forgiveness for all those participating in that celebration. Moreover, this sacrifice and its significance stood in stark contrast to what the people had experienced just months before.

David led the ark parade into Jerusalem. In a way that his wife despised it because she deemed it undignified, David danced as the ark was brought into the holy city. He rejoiced that he and the people might be able to renew their worship of the Lord God of Israel, and he had a plan to make worship the heart and core of Jerusalem.

A House for the Lord

After these years of fleeing and fighting, David is finally settled in his palace. He now desires to show his thanks to the Lord by building him a permanent dwelling. I wonder if it was difficult for Nathan to go back to David and say, "Yeah, about that whole temple thing. God doesn't want you to build it after all."

1 Samuel 7 presents a beautiful play on the word *house*. As David offers to build God a house (a temple), God flips the blessing and promises to build David an *eternal house*. David's relationship with God was never about what David would do for him, but only about what God would do for David.

This eternal house was the promise that the coming Messiah would be from David's line. Through the future King, Jesus, the Son of David, God would bless the whole world.

Conversation Starters:

- How does God's judgment against Uzzah make you feel?
- How serious is God about minor sins? Does God view any sin as a "minor" sin?
- What made David behave the way he did when he brought the ark into Jerusalem?
- What does it mean that Jesus is our King? How has he built a house for believers? (John 14:2)

Sharing Personally:

2 Samuel 5–7 reminds me that doing what appears to be the right thing is not always the right thing in God's eyes. First, God struck down a man, Uzzah, for merely touching the ark of the covenant to protect it from hitting the ground.

Then, God told David that he would not be the one to build a house, a temple, for him because he had too much blood on his hands. Throughout his reign, God continued to teach David and his people Israel to trust in him and him alone.

There are times when I desire to do good things in my way rather than in God's way, and I, too, need to be redirected to trust in God and his Word rather than in my ingenuity or inclinations. Nevertheless, God's way is always the best because his way is ultimately for his glory and the good of his people.

2 SAMUEL 11–12

The Downward Spiral of Sin

LDS resources use the story of David and Bathsheba as an opportunity to discuss the dangers of pornography. That could be a fine application, but it might distract the conversations from dwelling on the sin and grace that saturates the text.

Finally, David's life had calmed down. Saul was long dead, and David's kingship was firmly established. He no longer had to spend every minute looking over his shoulder and calculating his survival. Sometimes, even the strongest believers forget their need for God when life is good.

David's sin seemed to start small, but it quickly spiraled and multiplied. How did David get here? Sin started as a complacency. He wasn't at war with his men like he was supposed to be, and David did not respect God's design for marriage. He already had multiple wives and concubines. He had already gotten away with objectifying women. What was one more? Lust sprouted and produced roots of coveting.

David stole a wife that wasn't his, manipulated, lied, and murdered. It all erupted into consequences that plagued David, his family, and his kingdom for years to come.

Sin and scandal became the new normal for the royal family, yet there was a bigger scandal at work behind the scenes, the scandal of God's grace.

Nathan Confronts and Then Comforts David

Like Adam and Eve, David tried to hide his shame. For a year, his guilt separated him from God. Although he deserved such separation, God came looking for him. God did not wait for David to repent before he acted. The Good Shepherd would seek and find his lost sheep.

Mormon theology teaches that repentance and forgiveness are all about what man must do for God by turning from his sin and keeping commandments. That's not what took place here. David was lost, and if God had not sought him out, he would have been lost forever. God didn't wait for David to move towards him first; he came to get him because he loved him, and he was lost.

The prophet Nathan artfully employed law to help David confess and understand that his sins deserved death and condemnation. "Then David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord.' Nathan replied, 'The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die'" (2 Samuel 12:13).

Look how quickly Nathan absolved David of his sin! But here is the scandal of the gospel. David had to do NOTHING to receive forgiveness. No other religion gives away life and forgiveness for free.

David had acknowledged his sin, and God had assured him of forgiveness through Nathan. But although God had forgiven David entirely, Nathan told him he would still have to bear the consequences of those sinful acts.

Nathan spoke by inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit. He let David know that because his sin had given public offense and was used by the enemies of God as an occasion for ridicule, the consequences of his sins would be widely spoken of and would send a message for all people of all time to heed.

Conversation Starters:

- How did David break all 10 of the commandments?
- Read [Psalms 32](#) and [51](#) and list the words David used to describe his guilt and shame. Then, add the words David used to describe forgiveness and grace to that list.
- Why do you think Nathan used a parable to convict David?
- Why are we tempted to delay or withhold forgiveness from certain people?
- How did David feel about the man who confronted his sins and offered him forgiveness? (Look up [1 Chronicles 3:4](#).)
- What if sin had no earthly consequences?
- How does this story remind you of the Parable of the Prodigal Son?
- How did David's sin affect his family and his kingdom?

Sharing Personally:

In 1 Samuel 11–12, the story of David and Bathsheba, I see how shocking God's grace and forgiveness truly are. A covetous, adulterous, murderous man hid away from God, buried beneath his guilt and shame. But before David did any act that showed repentance, God pursued him! God sent Nathan to reveal his sin, and God sent Nathan to immediately forgive him.

What did David do to deserve that forgiveness? Absolutely nothing.

Thank you, God, for pursuing sinners like David and me! "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Psalm 51:7).

Additional Resources:

For more on the story of David and Bathsheba, specifically focused on Bathsheba, see the article [Beloved of the Lord: Bathsheba](#) on beyeperfect.org.

1 KINGS 3; 8; 11

Wisdom (1 Kings 3)

David's son Solomon, the child of Bathsheba, was the new king of Israel. Initially, it seemed like he would be the ideal king with the ideal kingdom. Still, his faithfulness to the Lord gradually eroded so that his leadership would devastate the nation of Israel.

God came to Solomon in a dream to offer him anything he wanted. Solomon's prayer reflected a heart that loved God's people. He requested an understanding mind and a listening spirit. The servant-leader understood his inadequacies and the gravity of his work. Wisdom would only come as a gift from the omniscient Creator. The following chapters and the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs, show evidence of the great wisdom God gave Solomon.

For a time, this wisdom blessed the whole nation in many ways.

Solomon Dedicates the Temple (1 Kings 8)

King David had planned to build a temple for the Lord, but the Lord told him "No." Therefore, he made all the preparations to set up the project for his son, Solomon.

In his dedication speech, Solomon correctly identified who made all of this possible and who had placed him and his family into the powerful position in which he found himself. Solomon recounted to the people all that God had done and continued to do in Israel for his people.

His speech here is worth contrasting with what happened to Solomon and the country when they forgot the Lord and began to follow after their passions and desires and the ways of the nations around them.

Solomon concluded his speech prophetically, talking about how the people would fall into great sin and turn away from the Lord. Was he aware that he would be the one to lead the people into this sin and in a direction away from God? Solomon was already aware that there is "no one who does not sin" and that all require forgiveness.

The beginning of National Idolatry (1 Kings 11)

At the midpoint of Solomon's reign, after the temple was finished, God again came to Solomon to remind him of his promises and warn him ([1 Kings 9:1-9](#)). Solomon and his sons must obey the Lord, or the Lord would reject them and the temple. Sadly, this was not merely a warning, but it was a prophecy of future idolatry and its consequences.

First, Solomon accumulated chariots and gold and silver, two things that God had forbidden the kings to do ([Deuteronomy 17:14-17](#)). Then we learn about Solomon's many foreign wives. The author of the Book of 1 Kings places the blame for Solomon's downfall on them.

It's shocking to see that the wisest man ever to live and the man who built the grandest temple ever constructed would disregard the Lord. How did it happen? He despised God's design for marriage and united himself with the very heathens God had forbidden the Israelites to marry. It seems that the turning of Solomon's heart was gradual. At first, the altars were for the convenience of his wives, then ([1 Kings 11:5](#)) he participated in idol worship, and finally, the entire nation joined him ([1 Kings 11:33](#)).

The consequences of Solomon's evil devastated the whole nation so that it would never recover. Israel was divided into two ([1 Kings 12:16–24](#)). All of the kings of the Northern Kingdom did evil in the eyes of the Lord and led their people into sin along with them. Only eight out of the twenty kings of the Southern Kingdom followed the Lord.

Solomon's increased ability to discern good and evil multiplied the wickedness of his actions. A wise man would have understood the consequences of taking unbelieving wives and supporting their idolatry.

Solomon's life exemplified that wisdom and righteousness are not the same. One can be renowned for their intelligence, but that has nothing to do with righteousness.

The reign of Solomon left Israel longing for not only a wise king but a righteous one.

Conversation Starters:

- **What did Solomon teach the people about sin and forgiveness in his temple speech?**
- **Solomon desired to please his wives at the expense of pleasing the Lord. Who do we desire to please? How can that desire cause harm to our faith?**

Sharing Personally:

It is hard to reconcile the fall of Solomon in 1 Kings 11. How could the wisest man ever to live lead God's people to idolatry? Just as a rich man can be overconfident in his wealth, so too a wise man can trust in himself. At some point, Solomon stopped humbly looking to God as the source of wisdom and esteemed his own thoughts and desires as best.

True wisdom never comes from inside of ourselves, but only from the mouth of the Lord.

God teach me to humbly understand and accept all that you say.