



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

DECEMBER 16 2023

Scripture Story: 2 Samuel 5:6-25; 6; 7; 9; 10.

Commentary: *Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 70.

the golden age of Israel



Photo by Terrill Thomas

flashlight

“The kingdom of Israel had now reached in extent the fulfillment of the promise given to Abraham, and afterward repeated to Moses: ‘Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.’ Genesis 15:18. Israel had become a mighty nation, respected and feared by surrounding peoples. In his own realm David’s power had become very great. He commanded, as few sovereigns in any age have been able to command, the affections and allegiance of his people. He had honored God, and God was now honoring him” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 716).

keytext

“Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.”

(2 Samuel 7:16, NIV)

what do you think?

Choose the best response to the statements below:

When things are going well for me, I feel . . .

- a. guilty
- b. worried that it can't last
- c. excited
- d. grateful

I think that God has blessed me . . .

- a. a little bit
- b. not that much, right now
- c. a great deal
- d. not at all

did you know?

Historians think King David probably ruled from about 1004-965 B.C. It was during his reign that Israel became recognized as a nation rather than just a collection of tribes. King David established Israel's power in two ways: first, by defeating Israel's enemies, particularly the

Philistines, and second, by forming alliances with friendly neighboring countries. "His authority was recognized from the borders of Egypt and the Red Sea to the banks of the Euphrates." (See www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org.) He united the 12 tribes and established the nation's capital at Jerusalem. David's reign was later looked back on as the "Golden Age" of Israel's history.

INTO THE STORY

"After the king was settled in his palace and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, he said to Nathan the prophet, 'Here I am, living in a palace of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent.'

"Nathan replied to the king, 'Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the LORD is with you.'

"But that night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying:

" 'Go and tell my servant David, "This is what the LORD says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling. Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to a n y

of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?' " ' "

" 'Now then, tell my servant David, "This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth. And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies.

" ' "The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever." ' "

(2 Samuel 7:1-16, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

What was the secret of David's success as king?

Once David had established peace in Israel, what was his next goal? Why was this important to him?

Why did God not want David to build a temple for Him? (See 1 Chronicles 22:8-10 for more detail.)

What had God done for David in the past?

What promises did God make to David for the future?

How do you think David might have felt after receiving this message from the Lord? Read 2 Samuel 7:18-29 for David's response.

How do you think you would feel receiving a message like this?

What has God already promised you in His Word that compares?

punch lines

"He gives his king great victories; he shows unflinching love to his anointed, to David and to his descendants forever" (**Psalm 18:50, NIV**).

"I will sing a new song to you, my God; on the ten-stringed lyre I will make music to you, to the One who gives victory to kings, who delivers his servant David" (**Psalm 144:9, 10, NIV**).

"And now, LORD God, keep forever the promise you have made concerning your servant and his house. Do as you promised, so that your name will be great forever" (**2 Samuel 7:25, 26, NIV**).

"You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end" (**Luke 1:31-33, NIV**).

further insight

"Truth, uprightness, purity, have been pointed out as secrets of life's success. It is faith that puts us in possession of these principles."—Ellen

G. White, *Education*, p. 253.

"Success in any line demands a definite aim. He who would achieve true success in life must keep steadily in view the aim worthy of his endeavor. Such an aim is set before the youth of today. The heaven-appointed purpose of giving the gospel to the world in this generation is the noblest that can appeal to any human being."

—Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 262.

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read 2 Samuel 7:18-29.

Success affects different people in different ways. After experiencing many hardships in his youth, David was richly blessed by God when he became king. Sum up in your own words how David responded to the blessings God had given him:

What can we learn from David about how we should respond to the good things God does for us?

Sunday

Read 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20.

As David reflected on how God had blessed him by making him king, he wanted to do something to honor God in return. His idea seemed like a good one: he would build a permanent temple in which to worship God, to replace the movable tabernacle that had been God's house in Israel ever since the days of wandering in the wilderness.

What was the first thing David decided to do to secure God's presence in his new capital city? How did God respond? What was God's response to the second part of David's plan?

Monday

Read Acts 2:29-36.

God promised David that a king from his line of descendants would sit on the throne and rule Israel forever. At first glance, this seems like a promise that was not fulfilled. The line of kings descended from David ruled only until the Babylonian captivity—and for most of that time, the nation was divided into two kingdoms, Israel and Judah, with the kings of David's line ruling only in Judah.

Christians believe that God's promise was

fulfilled in a spiritual sense through Jesus, who came from King David's family line and whose reign will last into eternity. What evidence can you find in the Bible for that view?

God's promises to us are not always fulfilled in the way we expect them to be. God's plan may be far greater than we can comprehend, yet we can always trust Him to eventually bring good out of whatever happens.

Tuesday

Read Psalm 144:9, 10.

As Ellen White points out in the *Flashlight* quote the reign of David was a golden age for Israel in terms of power and influence among the nations. For a brief time the 12 tribes were united into one kingdom that was victorious over its enemies and prosperous within its own borders.

Why do you think God blessed David's rule in spite of the very human and serious mistakes he made? What can we do to open the way for God's blessing in our lives?

When our lives are in harmony with God's will, it's easier for God to pour out His blessings on us and to use us to bless others.

Wednesday

David experienced success during the early years of his reign. He had worked hard and earned that success, but success has its dangers as well as its benefits. A successful person can come to believe that he is "self-made."

While David never lost his sense of gratitude to God, unfortunately he fell to the temptation to put his faith in himself. How is it possible to be successful while not becoming overconfident, or acting as if ordinary rules don't apply to you?

Thursday

Read James 4:10.

How well do you handle success? Check one or more responses below:

- I haven't experienced enough success to know.
- Success worries me. I'm not comfortable with it.
- I'm grateful when God sends good things my way.
- I get conceited and make mistakes when things are going well.

When you are trying to succeed at something—school, sports, anything that's important to you—you probably pray and ask God to help you do well. Next time, also pray that if you succeed, God will help you to handle success well and use it to glorify Him and benefit others—just as David did during the "golden years" of his reign.

Friday

Read 2 Timothy 2:15.

Gratitude is good for you! When you reflect on the good things in your life, it lifts your spirits and strengthens your faith in God.

Make a list of 10 things you are grateful for. (Use the Notes pages in the back of your study guide.) Pray a prayer of thanks to God for those blessings. Then, think of other people who have been part of those good things. Write a card, note, or email to each of those people to say thanks for what they have done for you.

this week's reading*

Patriarchs and Prophets (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 70.

**Beginning of the End* is a special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#URlhF1rB09s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.