

CHALLENGE 2014: BIBLE IN A YEAR

WEEK 12: 1 SAMUEL 21 — 2 SAMUEL 13 (MARCH 16 — 22)

Summary:

Chapter 21 begins with an interesting story of David and his faithful 'Mighty Men' on the lam and they find themselves hungry. David comes to Nob which is where the Tabernacle sacrifices are being performed. The only bread available was that Bread of the Presence that was kept for a week on the table in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle as a representation of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Only the priests were permitted to eat of the bread, yet David, as God's anointed King, was given the right to eat of this bread. What makes it even more interesting is that Jesus applies this instance to himself when his disciples are eating grain from the fields on the Sabbath Day. The answer is the same, God's anointed and those who follow him are to be provided for even if the technical rule of the Sabbath (or Priesthood) might forbid it (see Mark 2:23-28).

Of course, in addition to bread, David picks up Goliath's sword which had been stored there. He travels through Gath, has a strange occasion to behave like a crazy person so the natives will not see him as a threat, and then hides out in the Cave of Adullam.

What we have next is a series of cat and mouse actions between Saul and his men and David and his. In each case, Saul is typically a day late and a dollar short. As he closes in, David is escaping. What is interesting is that on two occasions, David has the opportunity to kill Saul yet chooses not to. The phrase, "who can strike down God's Anointed and remain sinless" (1 Samuel 26:9) must indeed echo in our heads, especially when we think of the Great Anointed one, Jesus, who was struck down for our sins. In the first of these cases, David encounters Saul in a cave and cuts off the corner of Saul's robe, only to grieve his action afterwards. In the second case, they catch Saul and his troops in camp and asleep without a posted guard, so steal Saul's spear and water jug, moving them outside of the camp to ensure that all knew what had taken place.

In these latter chapters, one could have a field day with Saul if one were into psycho-analysis. He is homicidal, paranoid, lying, twisting the truth, and pledging one thing and doing something entirely different. Sometimes people see this and read this as if these were just random stories put together in an awkward way to portray this king. I think that these accounts illustrate just how much damage to one's psyche it is when we try and hold on to something that does not belong to us. The more desperately we cling, the more foolish our actions become.

Saul goes as far as to visit a witch to summon the spirit of Samuel from the grave to give him counsel. There is some debate as to whether this is really the soul of Samuel being brought or some kind of evil spirit impersonating Samuel, but it seems to be that the vision is genuinely of Samuel and that the Witch was pretty fearful that her incantation had actually worked (no mirrors, lights, or camera tricks!).

Saul and Jonathan's deaths are recorded in chapter 31; the tragic part being Jonathan's death, faithful to his father.

2 Samuel

The second book of Samuel focuses on David's kingship, though begins with the funeral for Jonathan and Saul. Notice the respect with which David speaks of Saul in his eulogy. The bottom line is that no matter whether Saul were wicked or not, David considered it proper to offer honor where honor was due and demonstrate respect for the Anointed of God.

Notice, though, that David's consolidation of power did not come all at once. First, he had to subdue those loyal to the house of Saul and then second, he had to secure the allegiance of the northern tribes as well. And once all of that is done, and David establishes Jerusalem as the capitol city, David calls for the Ark of the Covenant to be brought down.

And it is in the bringing of the Ark that troubles really begin. Initially they did everything all wrong. They put it on an ox cart and showed it to all. It is clear in the spilling of the cart that God wished no part of this behavior and when Uzzah stuck his hand out to catch the Ark, God struck him dead. This sent the Ark right back to the house from which it came for three more months. Then, when David and his men chose to do things correctly, keeping the Ark covered for no one to see, carrying it with poles and by the priests, and then anointing the pathway to Jerusalem with sacrifices and praise. Then God blesses the actions, though David's first wife, Michal is not too pleased with the indignity of seeing her husband dancing before the Lord in nothing but a linen ephod that clearly did not cover much (her rebuke in 2 Samuel 6:20).

One of the most important promises of the Messiah comes in this section of the text, and that is God's promise to raise up a king who will remain on the throne forever (2 Samuel 7:12-16). This looks forward to Jesus for its fulfillment. David will centralize his power, but as things become established, he commits the unthinkable — he lusts after the wife of one of his Mighty Men who is out in battle. And David not only commits adultery with his friend's wife but also has his friend murdered on the battlefield in an attempt to cover up his sin.

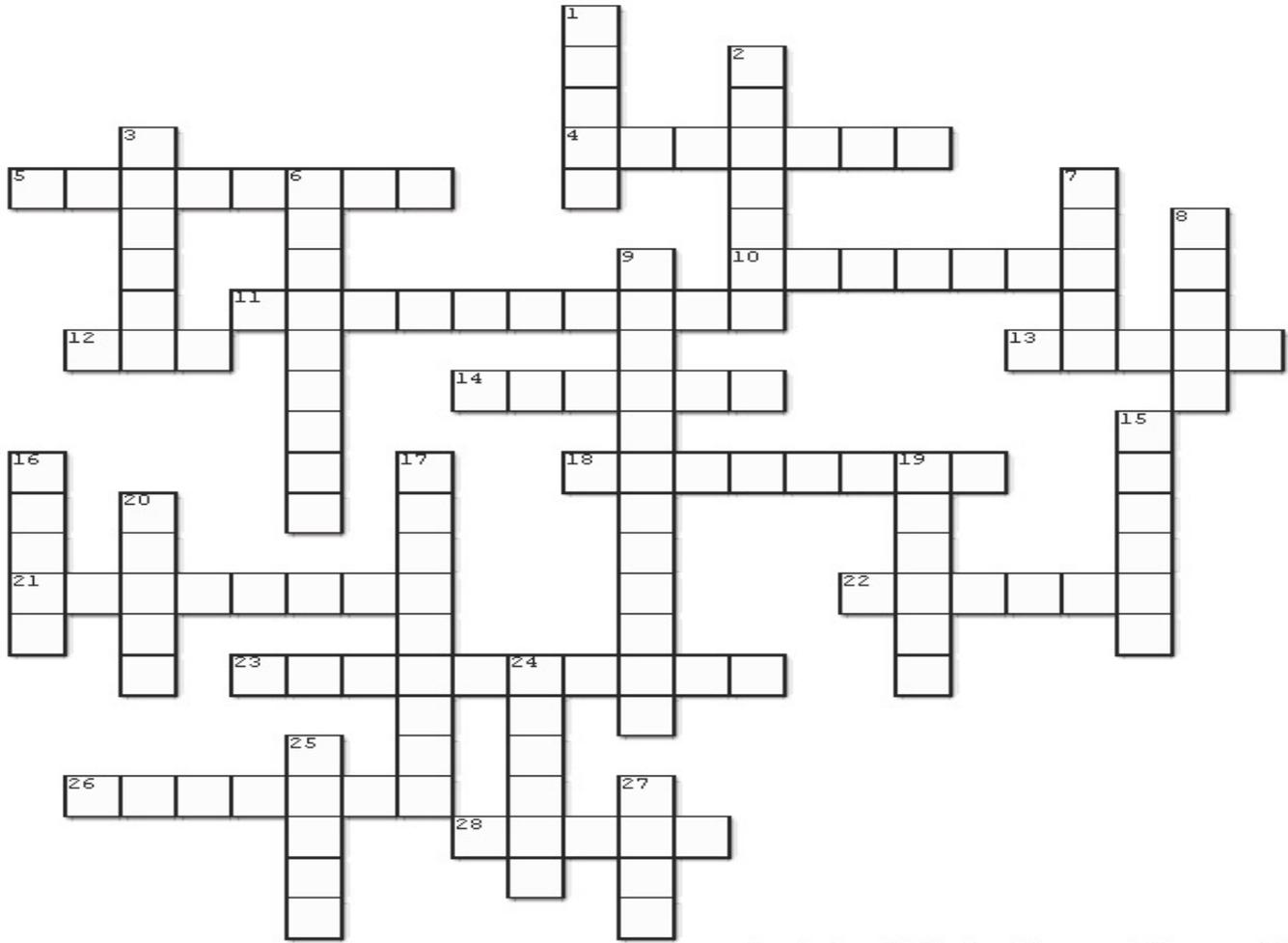
Yet, what is done away from the eyes of men is not done away from the eyes of God who sees and knows all things. Thus, God sends Nathan to rebuke his king. Notice that both crimes are deserving of the death penalty, yet God forgives a repentant heart. Psalm 51 is the psalm that David wrote to express his own heart after he is confronted in his sin. Our reading for the week ends with the rise in influence of David's son, Absalom ("Father of Peace"). And he will bring anything but peace to the empire.

Chromatic Notes:

- Note that the 12 loaves of the Bread of the Presence represented the 12 Tribes of Israel in the Presence of Yahweh. David's consumption of these 12 loaves is a reminder of his rightful rulership over these 12 tribes as the anointed king.
- Psalm 34 is written about this instance in David's life when he acts crazy in Gath. Some people get confused as in 1 Samuel the King's name is listed as Achish and in Psalm 34 it is listed as Abimelech. When you recognize, though, that Abimelech means, "Father of the King," you realize that while some have genuinely carried this name, it is also a title, and can be understood that way here, not to conflict with Achish's given name.
- Nabal's name means "foolish" (see 1 Samuel 15 for this account)
- A piece of trivia, Harry Houdini spent much of his spare time debunking the various spiritualists and other charlatans who preyed on desperate people who hoped to speak to their lost loved ones once again. Houdini was enraged that these "mediums" would use slight of hand and tricks to get people's money and would even disguise himself and play tricks on the "mediums."
- Often people struggle with God striking Uzzah dead. For the way the Ark was being treated, it is a wonder that God did not strike all of the people dead. For which is more defiling to the things of God...the earth God created or the hands of sinful men?
- Notice the prophesy of the king to follow David in 2 Samuel 7:14. God says, "when he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rods of men, with the stripes of the sons of men..." Though Jesus committed no iniquity, God laid upon him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6, 2 Corinthians 5:21). And indeed, this was fulfilled with the rods of men...the Roman Empire.

Week 12: 1 Samuel 21-2 Samuel 13

Complete the crossword below



Created on TheTeachersCorner.net Crossword Maker

Across

4. The name of the son of David who will cause so many problems for him later on.
5. Saul's son, friend of David, killed in battle.
10. After the death of their firstborn, David and Bathsheba conceive a second time giving birth to this boy.
11. He was originally made King of Israel before David achieved the support of the northern tribes.
12. How many steps were in between offerings when bringing the Ark to Jerusalem.
13. The name of Bathsheba's husband.
14. The prophet God sent to rebuke David.
18. This son of the priest of Nod escaped and reported Saul's murder of his father to David. 21. The household where the Ark was stored.
22. Saul and Jonathan were slain fighting on this mount.
23. This nation of people kidnapped two of David's wives amongst others.
26. David acquired the sword of this giant foe in Nod.
28. David runs into this impudent man who ends up being struck dead. (hint: his wife's name was Abigail)

Down

1. He was struck dead for touching the Ark.
2. Nabal's name means this.
3. David was in a cave in the wilderness of this region when he cut off a corner of Saul's cape.
6. David did this to all the chariot horses of Hadadezer.
7. The leader of Saul's army.
8. The woman that Amnon raped with Absalom's help.
9. The lame son of Jonathan.
15. David's wife who did not appreciate him debasing self.
16. Samuel went to a Witch who lived here (if you are a Star Wars buff, this name should sound familiar).
17. The priest in Nod who gave David the Bread of the Presence.
19. David fled to this unlikely foe for a season — the name of the king who trusted David as his Bodyguard).
20. David stole this from Saul while he was sleeping.
24. David delivers this town from the Philistines only to find out afterwards that they will turn him in to Saul if he did not escape.
25. This is where Samuel is buried.
27. David acts like an insane person when he arrives at this city