

2 Samuel 5:1-12; 6

Aim of Lesson

To show how king David was taught the lesson of obedience.

Background study

Revise the details concerning the ark of the covenant, find suitable illustrations, and a map showing Hebron and Jerusalem. Read 2 Samuel 2-4; Exodus 25:10-22; Numbers 4:1-15; 1 Chronicles 15:1-4 and 11-15.

Suggested outline of lesson

Remind the children that David had been anointed to be king when he was still a lad, living at home in Bethlehem. Many years had now passed, during which he had been through some exciting, frightening, and some very sad experiences. He had lived in Saul's royal household and had known what it felt like to be hated and hunted by that jealous king. There had been several opportunities to take his revenge on Saul but he had always repaid evil with good, and had never tried to take by force the kingship he knew would be his. Saul was now dead, and so were three of his sons. But because David was not the natural heir he could not immediately assume the kingship. What was he to do? As always, he turned to the Lord for help and guidance, and waited for God to direct him. Contrast David's humble and godly attitude with the faithless pride of Saul.

David, and his household, moved to Hebron because God told him to. And there he waited. At last it was time for God's plan for David to be fulfilled. It is interesting to note that, when the elders of the tribes of Israel assembled at Hebron to invite David to be their king, the reason they gave was that he had been a great military leader. They recalled the days, prior to his persecution by Saul, when David had been their champion and the commander of the army. They remembered, too, that God had chosen him (2 Samuel 5:2). Recall the incident of David's anointing by Samuel, which was a private declaration of God's choosing of David, and describe how the anointing at Hebron was a public ceremony to be compared with that of a coronation. The children will be interested to know that anointing - the exact procedure needs to be explained - still forms a part of the present-day coronation service in England.

At first David stayed in Hebron, but after seven years he led his people against the Jebusites and captured their city, Jerusalem, and made his own capital in the place which God had chosen. He was no doubt also a wise young king and knew that it was important for the nation to have a centrally-placed capital city, in order to maintain its unity. He undertook a building programme to strengthen and enlarge the city. (The supporting terraces or Millo (2 Samuel 5:9) were the reinforced foundations for the stronghold of the city which was also David's palace.)

Stress the fact that God was blessing David, and that David acknowledged that he was ruling on God's behalf (quote chapter 5:10-12). Having captured Jerusalem, and made it the City of David, David was now anxious to bring to the city the ark of God, which was a special box symbolizing God's presence amongst them, and containing reminders of God's laws, his love, and his power. David also knew that the action would unite the tribes of Israel, so he made the task a matter of priority. The city was to become the religious, as well as the political, centre of Israel.

But David, in his haste to do what he considered to be pleasing to God, on this occasion neglected to seek God's guidance on the matter of transporting the ark. The people were fired by David's enthusiasm, and the procession took on a festive air. In relating this incident emphasize the sharp change in emotions, for this first attempt to bring the ark to Jerusalem ended in tragedy. The people's excitement turned to fear and bewilderment as Uzzah was struck down. David was angered by this act of God, for he had thought that what he was doing would please God. In fear and dismay he abandoned the project. The ark was left in the house of Obed-Edom and this man was so greatly blessed by the Lord that David's courage and enthusiasm returned and he made plans for the second stage of the ark's journey to Jerusalem.

David realized that he had disobeyed God's instructions regarding the carrying of the ark (Exodus 25:14), and that he was responsible for Uzzah's death. Had the ark been carried in the proper way there would have been no necessity for Uzzah to touch it - something not even the Levites were allowed to do.

Describe the care which David exercised when planning again for the ark to be carried to Jerusalem, and try to capture something of the praise and rejoicing that rang throughout the city when the ark arrived.

On that occasion their joy was even greater because they were assured of God's approval and blessing. It seemed as if the whole nation was at last united in praising their God. David returned home brimming with happiness. How hurt he must have been by his wife's reproach. Cold and unmoved by the presence of God, Michal did not share David's enthusiasm, but censured him for abandoning his royal dignity. David, however, was proud to have praised God with his whole being.

Relevance to the children's lives

Do you know what obedience means? We can see from this lesson that God expects obedience from his people. If he asks us to do something, he wants us to obey him in every detail, not in a half-hearted way as if it doesn't really matter. Think of some of the things God has asked us to do, and talk about the reasons for rules and laws.

Worksheets

The numbered letters read 'They anointed David king over Israel'.

Prayer

Dear Lord God, thank you for giving us rules to live by. We know you have done this because you love us and want us to be happy. Please help us to obey the instructions you have given us in the Bible. Amen.

Memory verse

“Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart” (Psalm 119:2).