

Teaching Plan  
EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Date: July 29, 2018  
Lesson Title: "Restored"  
Lesson Passage: 2 Samuel 19:1-15

ABOUT THIS LESSON

King David, who was driven out of Jerusalem by Absalom's rebel forces, is now on his way back to the capitol city, where his claim to the throne will be restored. But, he is not quite there yet. When he reaches the Jordan River, he is met by a contingent of people from Judah who have assembled at Gilgal in order to escort him across the river (19:15). A major theme in this passage is the conflict between David's grief over the death of his son, Absalom, and the insistence of Joab, his army commander, that he should celebrate his victory over Absalom's rebel forces.

TEACHING/LEARNING GOALS

(1) Explain why Joab said to David, "you love those who hate you and hate those who love you." (2) Explain the distinction made between "the tribes of Israel" and "all the men of Judah" in the lesson passage.

BEGINNING THE LESSON

*To introduce the lesson, review the context of the events in the Bible passage (if available, a map will be helpful):* (1) When David learned that Absalom was headed toward Jerusalem with a force of Israelite rebels, he led a small contingent of his loyal troops away from Jerusalem in order to avoid a bloody battle within the city (2 Sam. 15:14-18). (2) David and his band headed eastward toward the wilderness beyond the Jordan River (15:23) and made camp at Mahanaim, a town in the region of Gilead (17:26-27). (3) The decisive battle between Absalom's army and David's forces was fought in the forest of Ephraim on the east side of the Jordan River (18:6). NOTE: 2 Sam. 18:8 tells us that "the forest devoured more people that day than the sword." Some interpreters believe that David fled to that rugged area because he knew that his battle-hardened troops could survive the hazards of that dense forest (snakes, wild animals, poisonous plants) better than Absalom's inexperienced conscripts.

TEACHING PROCEDURES

1. *Suggest that the most serious hazard faced by David was not Absalom's rebel army, but his own intensive grief over the death of his son. (Read 2 Sam. 18:33 and 19:1-4.) Point out that David's display of grief had undermined the morale of his faithful followers, as Joab points out in 2 Sam. 19:5-6. Particularly, call attention to the biting words in verse 6, "you love those who hate you and hate those who love you." COMMENT: Typically, a military victory was an occasion for celebration. But David's grief over the death of their defeated enemy had denied them this privilege (reread 19:2).*

2. *Interpret 2 Sam. 19:5*: It is doubtful whether Absalom would have killed all the people mentioned in this verse, even if he had been completely victorious; but it was not uncommon for rebel leaders to kill the entire royal family of the deposed. However, Joab's point is that the men loyal to David had risked their lives to save him and those close to him, but they were now feeling ashamed rather than proud.

3. *Point out that Joab was bold enough not only to tell the king what he had done wrong; but, then, he went on to tell David what he must do to rectify his mistake.* (Read 2 Samuel 19:7). Recall that "all the evil that has come upon you" would include the death of his child by Bathsheba (2 Sam. 12:15-23), the rape of his daughter Tamar by Amnon (13:1-21), the murder of Amnon by Absalom's men (13:23-38) and the rebellion and death of Absalom (2 Sam. 15:13-18:33).

4. *Observe that Joab must have been very convincing, for the king immediately acted upon his advice (2 Sam. 19:8)*: Explain what is meant by, "Then the king arose, and took his seat in the gate" (19:8a). Gates to fortified cities often consisted of two gates, one at the outside of the wall and another on the inside. In the area between the gates, there were often one or two rooms for guards.

5. *Comment on 2 Sam. 19:8b*, "Meanwhile all the Israelites had fled to their own hometowns": (1) The Israelites had never truly been a unified nation. From the time of the exodus until the period of the Judges they had been a collection of nomadic tribes, wanderers without an established homeland. (2) During the period of the judges, they were a loose confederation of tribes held together by their common ancestry, rather than a central government. (3) During the 40-year reign of Saul, they were ostensibly a nation, under the rule of a common monarch, but were constantly fragmented by warring factions (especially David's rebellion against Saul). (4) Upon the death of Saul, Israel was divided into two kingdoms; northern Israel, ruled for two years by Saul's son, Ishbosheth, and Judah in the south, where David was king. (5) David was briefly enthroned in Jerusalem as ruler of all Israel, before Absalom's rebellion threatened to fragment the nation once again. This is what prompted the Israelites to retreat again to their home territories.

#### CLOSING THE LESSON

Comments: David's prowess as a great warrior has already been established. But his handling of the aftermath of the rebellion against him also shows us his skill as a statesman. For instance, rather than engaging in a bloody reprisal toward the elders of Judah who had followed Absalom, he invited them to unite with him to rebuild the nation, reminding them of their common ancestry with him (19:12). And he even appointed Amasa, one of Absalom's military leaders, to be a ranking commander in his own army (19:12). Such diplomatic leadership welded Israel into a strong monarchy for decades to come.