

II Samuel – Part 2

Servant King – II Samuel 5-8

For the past 7 1/2 years, David had reigned in Hebron over just one tribe, Judah; Ishbosheth had reigned over the remaining eleven, with Abner the one in control. A civil war between Abner, the general of Saul's army, and Joab, David's general, was long and dragged out. In the process, Saul's house grew weaker while David's grew stronger. (II Sam. 3:1). When Abner saw that Ishbosheth was too weak to lead, he decided to jump ship and join David.

Abner had just made a peace agreement and laid out his plan for promoting unity under David when Joab killed him, avenging the death of his brother. The turning point in leadership came when two of Ishbosheth's captains, Baanah and Rechab, decided to take matters into their own hands. They snuck into the palace while Ishbosheth was taking his afternoon nap and killed him, cutting off his head and taking it with them when they made their escape. They thought they would gain brownie points with David when they showed him what they had done, but instead, David had them put to death for slaying a "righteous person in his own house upon his bed" (II Sam. 4:11).

Much in these chapters could offend us today; others would use them for reasons to deny the Bible or accept Christ. But the same Scripture that records these incidents is also the one that gives us the standards by which they will be judged. Just because the Holy Spirit recorded them does not imply God ordered or approved them, only that they are true history. God is telling us that, as sinful as we are, we may still have a relationship with the Lord if we trust in Him. God uses whomever He chooses to work His will. (Rom. 8:28).

I. A King for All Israel

With Abner and Ishbosheth both dead, there remained no one to whom the eleven tribes could rally around. David seemed the likely choice; he had been ruling wisely over Judah. All the tribes of Israel came to Hebron to crown him king. God calls attention to David, the kinship, and unity of the tribes of Israel, when using the word "Behold" in II Samuel 5:1. "Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh" indicates that they recognized David's leadership and their **shared heritage**. It was unfitting for them to be separate nations. This marked a significant moment of unity of the tribes under David's leadership and the fulfillment of God's promise to him.

David had "led out and brought in Israel." Even in Saul's reign, David had been their military leader. They knew him and had confidence in his **pro prowess and sound judgment**. "And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands" (I Sam. 18:7).

The third reason that is given for David being made king over Israel is that **the Lord had said**, "Thou [David] shalt be a captain of Israel." They acknowledged that he was already ordained of God. Notice the words that describe David in these verses. He led Israel, bringing them in and out, fed them, and was captain or shepherd over them. In the ancient East, "shepherd" was a title of honor applied to divinities and rulers alike.

II. A Capital for All Israel

Following the third anointing of David as king, now over all Israel, there are four narratives (II Sam. 5:6-7:29) that are especially crucial to the leading and unifying of Israel. Realizing that as long as he remained in the territory of Judah, his own tribe, the northern tribes would hesitate to give him their full allegiance, David began the bold task of making Jerusalem his capital. (5:6-16). Under Joshua, Israel had been unsuccessful in taking it out of the Jebusites' hands (Judg. 1:8, 21). Doing so now would win him national support. Having a capital that belonged to no tribe and was centrally located between northern and southern Israel would eliminate tribal jealousy.

The Jebusites laughed and mocked the Israelites' lofty thoughts. They thought their city's position and defenses were so strong that no attack against them could succeed; no one had taken Jebus before! It was a walled city with excellent defenses, set on the rockbound tip of a ridge, surrounded by three valleys. The Jebusites boasted that they could man the fortifications with blind and lame men and still be safe.

Jerusalem (Jebus, Zion, City of David) was indeed strong and seemed impregnable, but it wasn't. It had a protected water supply, a gutter or water shaft that went down to a spring on the east side of the ridge where the city was built, that provided a great water supply... but it was unprotected. (II Sam. 5:8). David challenged his men, "Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites...shall be chief and captain." After hearing David's suggestion to gain entrance through the water shaft, Joab took the challenge and conquered the city in a surprise attack. As a reward for his victory, he was appointed army commander of all Israel, not just Judah. (I Chr. 11:6).

With the capture of this stronghold, David eliminated a Jebusite fortress that, in effect, had cut his kingdom in two; making Jerusalem his capital was one of the most important achievements of David's kingship. He took up residence in the fort and renamed it the City of David. He built a Millo, a defensive fortress, around the city. His greatness continued to grow because the LORD, not just a small God, but the LORD God of Hosts was with him.

Hiram, king of Tyre, sent messengers to David, along with cedar building materials, carpenters, and masons, and built David a house. David is getting a close-up view of God's sovereignty as he becomes established as the king over Israel. He sees how God has exalted his kingdom for His people Israel's sake. (II Sam. 5:9-12). David's family also continued to grow as he took more wives and concubines. At least eleven more sons and daughters were born to him in Jerusalem.

III. Freedom for All Israel

A new unity began to appear in Israel, but all was not peaceful. In this second narrative, (5:17-25), the Philistines see David's rise as king over all Israel as a threat to their power. It was one thing to give David a little slack when he was only king of Judah, but now he is too powerful to be trusted. All the Philistines came to seek David, to divide the country again, and weaken his effectiveness.

When David heard of the Philistines' advance and occupation in the valley of Rephaim, he sought counsel from God to see if the Lord would give him victory if he went against them. God gave the go-ahead, and David lost no time in responding. He launched a surprise attack, drove them back, and defeated them. They left their idols behind in

their haste; David and his men burned them. (I Chr. 14:12). Their idols had been useless against Almighty God.

But the Philistines weren't done. They came up again and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. Again, David inquired of God what strategy he should use. God told him not to go up against them, but to go behind them. Wait for the rustling in the tops of the mulberry trees, then attack, because the Lord would go before them. David did as God told him to do and smote them with a great victory, driving them from Israel's territory and across the border into Philistia.

Because David acknowledged and obeyed God's authority, they were victorious. Unlike Saul's defeat when he fought under his own strength, David drove the Philistines from Israel's territory and pushed them on across the border into their own territory, about eighteen miles. Never again would the Philistines gain power over Israel as they had before.

IV. *God's Presence for All Israel*

Part of Israel's weakness during Saul's reign was the king's lack of interest in the nation's religious life. David was determined to correct this state of affairs. He began by bringing the Ark, the symbol of God's presence, to its rightful place at the center of Israel's religious life. Plagues had tormented the Philistines when they had captured the Ark in battle. They returned it to Israel at Beth-shemesh to escape God's judgment. Unfortunately, they disobeyed God's commands and looked into the Ark. Many had died because of it, so, in fear, they sent it to Kirjath-Jearim for safekeeping. (I Sam. 6).

For about twenty years of Samuel's life and all of Saul's reign, the Ark had remained in the house of Abinadab in Kirjath-Jearim/Baale in Gibeah, where he and his sons had guarded it all these years. (I Sam. 7:1-2). In this third narrative, David gathered 30,000 chosen men of Israel to accompany him to bring the Ark to Jerusalem, about eight miles away. He hoped to make Jerusalem the religious center, in addition to being the royal city and administrative capital of Israel. (II Sam. 6).

Unfortunately, there were some problems with the transfer right from the beginning. First, David forgot to read the Law and learn the proper procedure for transporting the sacred objects of God. He thought he was giving proper respect by bringing a new cart to carry it on. The Philistines had transported the Ark this way, and it had worked well for them...but it wasn't God's way. Who knew God expected it to be carried on poles on the shoulders of the priests, specifically the Kohathites?!! (Num. 1:49-53; 4:15-20; 7:9). The articles must be covered. The Kohathites could not touch or see the objects; the penalty for disobedience was death.

Since the Ark was placed in Abinadab's home and his family took care of it, we can only assume that they were Levites. Now, when the Ark of God was brought out of their house, Uzzah and Ahio, his sons, drove the new cart, with Ahio going before it with David. Israel played all sorts of musical instruments as it was being moved. However, when they came to Nachon's threshing floor, the oxen stumbled. God had not acted when the Ark was moved to the cart, even though He could have. But when Uzzah thought the Ark was in danger of being overturned and impulsively put out his hand to steady it... as if God needed his help to keep it from falling!... and

immediately, God's anger was kindled. He smote Uzzah there by the Ark of God because of his direct failure to respect that God's Ark didn't need man's help.

Uzzah's sudden end was a harsh but necessary reminder that Israel's God was holy, and the things that pertained to him must not be profaned. This contrast between God's holiness and man's sinfulness is the basic theme of the whole Law. God constantly reminds us that He must only be worshipped as He decrees. As king, David was responsible for studying and practicing God's Word (Deut. 17:16-20), the priests were responsible for the things of God, and Uzzah himself, whose family had cared for the Ark, should have known God's instructions concerning it.

"And David was afraid of the Lord that day" (II Sam. 6:9). In a certain way, he may have even resented the tragic judgment. He expected God to bless his efforts. David had good intentions, but good intentions are not the same as obedience. As sovereign and creator, God has a right to expect us to stand in awe of His majesty and submit to His Law and His expectations as He dictates. David may even have thought God was angry with him for moving the ark and feared to take it any further.

Notice that God gives punishment appropriate to the offense and knowledge of the offender. The Philistines had suffered from diseases, but they were relieved after they cried out and returned the Ark to Israel. (I Sam. 5:8-12). They were not killed outright because the Law had not been given to them. The men from Beth-shemesh who died were priests (Josh. 21:16) and should have known the rules that surrounded the Ark. Uzzah, who was also a Levite, knew the Law. To us, the judgment on Uzzah may have seemed too great for the offense, but God had only done what His Law required for judgment.

With the death of Uzzah, the celebration ceased. David refused to take the Ark any further until he had consulted with the Lord. He took the Ark to the home of Obed-edom the Gittite, a Kohathite Levite, who lived in the neighborhood. For the next three months, God blessed the house of Obed-edom. As David studied the Law, he realized that God's anger was not because of moving the ark, but because of not respecting God's way of doing so.

The next time David attempted to move the Ark to Jerusalem, he was careful to do things God's way. It was carried on the shoulders of four priests with poles as God had specified. After only six paces, they stopped to offer sacrifices of thanks to God. David was so excited to finally bring God's presence into Jerusalem that he had changed out of his kingly garments into a fine linen ephod or apron, typically worn by priests when performing their official duties. David's wearing of the ephod depicted his priestly character as head of the priestly nation of Israel. It symbolized humility and dedication to God, reflecting his deep passion for worship and his desire to honor the Lord as he danced with all his might. He was so totally ecstatic...but Michal, Saul's daughter and his wife, looked out the window and despised him in her heart.

The Ark was brought into the place David had prepared for it, not into his own home to make people uncomfortable with coming to worship, not in a building because he wanted to build a great Temple for it, nor in the Tabernacle since it still resided in Gibeon (I Chr. 16:39). David had not attempted to move the Tabernacle to Jerusalem. It may have been too fragile to move without causing major damage. The Ark was placed within curtains, under a canopy, in imitation of Moses's tabernacle. It was a special place for God.

After they celebrated the presence of God with burnt offerings and peace offerings. David blessed the people, giving each man and woman a cake of bread, a good-sized piece of meat, and a flagon of wine before sending them home. Afterwards, David went home to bless his household. Michal met him at the door with scorn in her eyes and in her voice. She accused him of shamelessly uncovering himself before his handmaids. David rebuked her, denying any wrong actions. He said he had done it to praise the Lord, who had appointed him king instead of the house of Saul. Instead of a blessing, Michal doomed herself to remain childless the rest of her life.

V. A Temple and a Covenant for All Israel

In the fourth narrative found in II Samuel 7, we have King David's interactions with God. How different than his interaction with Michal! "And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the LORD had given him rest round about from all his enemies..." We don't know how long he had been in Jerusalem, but it must have taken some time to contract for the wood, deliver it, and build his home.

David's house represented the epitome of Phoenician art and know-how. What a difference from the simplicity of his childhood, sleeping on the hillsides with his sheep, or hiding in caves as he fled from Saul! He wandered through the halls and planned for his next activity. (He never learned to relax when he had some downtime!) As he reached the roof and looked out over the city, his eyes must have gone straight to the tent holding the Ark that he had erected on the crest of Mt. Zion.

Overwhelmed with all the evidence of God's favor to him, he began to assess where God stood in his life. He realized that while he sat in this beautiful house, the Ark of God remained behind curtains. He must have been shamed that the Ark of God's presence had no place of grandeur fit for One who had done so much for him... and that shouldn't be! God hadn't asked for something different, but David wanted to give God more than He asked of him.

Obviously, David was acting upon his own thoughts and circumstances. Not only did it sound good, humanly speaking, and his desire to provide a beautiful dwelling place for God was admirable, but he was acting on his own will instead of waiting for God to make His desires known. Even more than this, God desired to serve his people in His own way. When they wandered in the wilderness, He dwelt in a tent among them. The conquest was not over, and it wasn't appropriate to build a permanent temple until the nation was fully at peace. David's job was to complete the job God had given him to do. While David desired to build God a house, God desired to give David a better "house," an eternal dynasty, settled on his throne.

God didn't give David the reason why He didn't want him to build Him a physical house until I Chronicles 22. God wanted David to trust His wisdom, not his own. He made a covenant with David, promising to make his name great, a name that would be remembered, a place for His people Israel, and rest from his enemies, all before his death. But even after his death, God gave him promises that would ultimately be fulfilled in Christ. He promised to give him descendants (his house) and establish his kingdom (his sphere of rule) through them. His son would build a house for God, and God would establish His throne (authority) forever. God would be his Father, and he would be His son. His mercy would not depart from him as He had done from Saul.

Notice the progression of clarity given regarding the promised Messiah that is found in each successive covenant. The covenant with Adam foretold of the One, the “seed of the woman,” who would be born out of the general population (Gen. 3:15). To Abraham, God promised that He would come from his seed, the nation of Israel. (Gen. 22:18). Through the blessings given by Jacob/Israel to his children, we find “the sceptre will not depart from Judah” (Gen. 49:10). Now, God promised that the Messiah would come “out of the bowels” of David, through his line. (II Sam. 7:12-16).

After hearing all of God’s promises of this unconditional covenant, David went to God, sat before Him, prayed, and showered Him with an outpouring of praise and gratitude for all He had done and all He would do. He didn’t take these promises as something he deserved but was humbled as God’s servant; ten times, David called himself “God’s servant.” “Who am I, Lord?”

Although David wasn’t permitted to build a temple for God, he didn’t just sit around and twiddle his thumbs! He began to amass all the materials for his son to build it. David wanted to have a part in something great for his God, even if it had to be indirectly. David restated to God all the promises He had just given to him. By doing so, David showed God his faith, that he believed what He had said. “For thou art great, O LORD God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee...” (II Sam. 7:22).

Conclusion:

How is your heart today? Is it filled to overflowing like David’s was? Is it your desire to do more than God asks of you, or do you just get by with the minimum, the minimum service, prayer time, Bible study, ministry? David was so full of love for God that he wanted to bring a way to help others love God as he did, to be able to worship in a place that gave the utmost glory to God. Do you?

When David closed his time of prayer with God, verse 27 says, “Thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto Thee.” He prayed this prayer before God. He didn’t just say words; he prayed from the heart. It wasn’t a prayer that he read out of a prewritten script, or a singsong rhyme, or one that was repetitive, an almost memorized prayer, but one he prayed from a heart that was overflowing with love toward God. Do you pray passively or do you come boldly, as David did, before the throne of grace and repeat God’s promises back to Him? God wants us to tell Him that we remember what He has promised us and that we believe it.

“Seeing then that we have a Great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:14-16).

Establishing the Kingdom (II Samuel Part 3)

1) Read II Samuel 8-11. Don't forget to highlight and think about the word "behold" every time you see it. How do you see David's character differently in these chapters than what was seen in the first part of the book?

2) In II Samuel 8, the author gives us a short summary of David's conquests. Mark on the map you were given, numbering each of the 5 major locations that are highlighted. What occurred in each?

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

3) How did David fulfill part of God's promises to him during this time? (ch. 8)

4) Highlight in a different color the two phrases (8:6 and 8:14) "And the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went." Why did God choose to do this? What truth can we take from this to apply to ourselves?

5) List the positions and people who fulfilled them in II Sam. 8:16-18. How do you see this action as part of David's character?

6) What new characteristic is seen in II Sam. 9? What promise is he fulfilling? (I Sam. 20:22). What provisions were instituted by David?

7) How did Hanun misinterpret David's kindness? What was the result for David's servants? What was the result for the Ammonites?

8) What caused a turning point in David's life? What were some of the consequences?

Conclusion:

By both human and godly standards, I think it is fair to see that we can call David's life a success. It is doubtful that any of us would want to be called a failure. But what was the secret to David's success? Was he successful because he was a really smart guy? Was he successful because of his skill as a warrior, or because he was organized, or knew how to take care of sheep and men? Did he become successful because his leaders were loyal to him? Did his army of 30,000 make him successful?

Many times, we look at circumstances and think they have made us successful. A business was started at "just the right time." The good deal just "fell into our lap." Our good friend gave us a "time-saving tip," and we were able to accomplish things much more quickly. Or any number of things that may have aided our success...but could just as easily caused us to fail.

God tells us, though, that the secret to David's successes and achievements can be summarized as, "The LORD preserved [saved; delivered; gave victory to] David whithersoever he went." (II Sam. 8:6, 14). In turn, David proved himself to the Lord and everyone else that he did his part by "executing judgment and justice unto all his people" (II Sam. 8:15).

With obedience comes blessing. David loved the Lord and obeyed His commands to the best of his ability, and God blessed him for it. He looked to God for direction. He gave generously of his income from the spoils of war. He treated his people well, not bragging about himself, but walking in humility and faithfulness to God. These are things that we can practice in our own lives if we want to be blessed. Is this the pattern of your life?

And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: and all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God." (Deut. 28:1-2).