

## 2 Samuel 5: Biblical Reading and Reflections

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[ 0 : 00 ]     2 Samuel chapter 5 Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, Behold, we are your bone and flesh. In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was you who led out and brought in Israel.

And the Lord said to you, You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over Israel. So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and king David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David king over Israel.

David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years.

And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who said to David, You will not come in here, but the blind and the lame will ward you off, thinking, David cannot come in here.

Nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion, that is, the city of David. And David said on that day, Whoever would strike the Jebusites, let him get up the water shaft to attack the lame and the blind, who are hated by David's soul.

[ 1 : 09 ]     Therefore it is said, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house. And David lived in the stronghold, and called it the city of David. And David built the city all around from the millow inward.

And David became greater and greater, for the Lord, the God of hosts, was with him. And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, also carpenters and masons, who built David a house.

And David knew that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel. And David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he came from Hebron, and more sons and daughters were born to David.

And these are the names of those who were born to him in Jerusalem. Shamua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, Iphar, Elishua, Nepheg, Jephiah, Elishamah, Eliadah, and Eliphelet.

When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David. But David heard of it and went down to the stronghold. Now the Philistines had come and spread out in the valley of Rephaim.

[ 2 : 15 ]     And David inquired of the Lord, Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will you give them into my hand? And the Lord said to David, Go up, for I will certainly give the Philistines into your hand.

And David came to Baal-perazim, and David defeated them there. And he said, The Lord has broken through my enemies before me like a breaking flood, therefore the name of that place is called Baal-perazim.

And the Philistines left their idols there, and David and his men carried them away. And the Philistines came up yet again and spread out in the valley of Rephaim. And when David inquired of the Lord, he said, You shall not go up.

Go around to their rear, and come against them opposite the balsam trees. And when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then rouse yourself. For then the Lord has gone out before you to strike down the army of the Philistines.

And David did as the Lord commanded him, and struck down the Philistines from Geba to Gezer. In 1 Samuel chapter 5, David finally becomes king of Israel.

[ 3 : 15 ] The people address him as their bone and flesh. They're declaring that David is their brother. There's a similar claim made in Judges chapter 9 verse 2, as Abimelech addresses the leaders of Shechem.

The people recognize that David has been an effective military leader of Israel during the reign of Saul. Also that God has made a promise to him, which had clearly become wider knowledge among the people.

In Deuteronomy chapter 17 verses 14 to 15, Israel was given instructions concerning their king. David is the king who is chosen by God, and also someone who they recognize to be their brother.

He is to be the shepherd of the people. The patriarchs were shepherds. The Israelites were shepherds, which is why they lived in the land of Goshen, away from the Egyptians. And Moses was a shepherd.

He delivered Israel with a shepherd's staff. The nation are described as a flock. Joshua, when he's set up as the leader of the people in Numbers chapter 27 verses 16 to 17, is described as performing the role of a shepherd over sheep.

[ 4 : 38 ] Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation, who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the Lord may not be his sheep that have no shepherd.

We can see very similar language there that is used of David in this chapter. Shepherds are rulers and leaders of the flock. This can be seen in passages such as Ezekiel chapter 34.

However, shepherds are supposed to serve the flocks that they are ministering to, not to lord over them. The shepherd is not so much in scripture the young man tending sheep in bucolic pasture land, but a guardian in dangerous terrain, protecting the flock from bandits, wild beasts and other dangers of the wilderness.

The shepherd also provides for them in inhospitable environments. The elders of Israel come to the king. We need to remember that David is already king at this point, but he is only the king of Judah.

But now a leader of Judah is finally becoming king over all of Israel. This is a fulfilment of Genesis chapter 49 verses 8 to 10 and the blessing of Judah by his father Jacob.

[ 5 : 46 ] Judah, your brother shall praise you. Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies. Your father's son shall bow down before you. Judah is a lion's cub. From the prey, my son, you have gone up.

He stooped down, he crouched as a lion, and as a lioness who dares rouse him. The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

David becomes king at the age of 30. 30 was the age at which priests and Levites seem to have entered into the main service of the tabernacle or temple, something that we see in Numbers chapter 4.

In Genesis chapter 41 verse 46, Joseph enters into the service of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, at the age of 30. Jesus starts his ministry with the baptism of John at around the age of 30, in Luke chapter 3 verse 23.

In scripture, age is often seen to matter. People may exhibit great talent and skill for their age, but there is something about growth in wisdom that simply takes time, and even the wisest and most advanced youth for his age needs to pass through various seasons of life before he is ready to occupy particular offices or to perform specific roles.

[ 7 : 02 ] Elders in the church, for instance, should be older, probably ideally in their 50s or above. Why might this be the case? In passing through various seasons of life, for instance, seasons of sowing and reaping, you grow into a deeper understanding, even of truths that you already know on some level.

There are seasons of life that are seasons of transitions, periods of life where we are reaping what we have sown in previous years, and discovering the true character of our previous choices.

On account of the seasonal character of human life, people will often experience crises at specific junctures. Even the smartest youth is callow by comparison with the person who has truly weathered amid life crisis, and successfully navigated the straits that will lead into a new stage and season of their lives.

David, before he was ever fit to rule as king, had to learn faithfulness as a son and as a suffering prince. The period of his life spent on the run and in the wilderness and in exile was a crucial part of his preparation for the rule that he has now entered into.

Jerusalem had first been captured back in Judges chapter 1 verse 8, and the men of Judah fought against Jerusalem and captured it and struck it with the edge of the sword and set the city on fire.

[ 8 : 17 ] But later in that chapter, in verse 21, we read, But the people of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem, so the Jebusites have lived with the people of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.

Jerusalem has a number of different hills, and the Jebusites presumably control the chief stronghold there, the high city. However, it seems likely that the Jews were living in the other parts of the city at this time.

The Jebusites believed that their stronghold was so secure that even the blind and the lame among them would be able to hold David's forces at bay and defend it. David uses the expression blind and lame to refer to the Jebusites, as the Jebusites have identified themselves with the blind and the lame.

The lame and the blind don't come into the house, and that is presumably a reference to the Jebusites. It isn't about the exclusion of those who are actually physically blind and lame. Mephibosheth, for instance, is lame, but he will still come into the house.

Rather, it is an ironic reference to the Jebusites themselves. The likely significance of the water shaft is that David's men cut off the water supply to the city. In particular, from what we read in 1 Chronicles 11, verses 5-7, Joab seems to have been the one who led this assault.

[ 9 : 33 ] The inhabitants of Jebus said to David, Nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion, that is, the city of David. David said, The New Testament narrative alludes back to this, I believe, in Matthew chapter 21, verses 10-14.

As David's greatest son enters the city of Jerusalem and heals the lame and the blind in the temple. And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, Who is this?

And the crowd said, This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee. And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple. And he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons.

He said to them, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you make it a den of robbers. And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them.

Miller was a fortress that guarded one of the ascents to the city. The city has a central stronghold and a surrounding area. David makes Jerusalem his capital. The first time that we encounter the city of Jerusalem in scripture is in Genesis chapter 14, where we meet Melchizedek, who is the king of Salem.

[ 10 : 55 ] David deals wisely with surrounding peoples. He defeats the Jebusites and the Philistines, but he forms an alliance with Hiram king of Tyre. Hiram's assistance to David and to Solomon his son is a sign of the riches of the Gentiles coming in to God's people.

James Jordan suggests that we have a victory house-building pattern here, a pattern that we see on several occasions in scripture, and a pattern that explains in part why events in this chapter are recorded out of chronological sequence.

David wins a victory over the Jebusites, and then his palace and his household are established. Another victory house-building pattern follows this, as David wins victories over the Philistines, and works towards the establishment of the temple.

At this point, David is taking even more wives. As we've seen before, taking wives was probably in large part a ploy to forge strategic alliances with leading families and surrounding peoples.

The inclusion of Solomon here, for instance, should also alert us to the fact that these verses are covering a lot more time than merely the initial years of David's reign. The Philistines come up to attack when they hear that David has become king.

[ 12 : 04 ] This occurs presumably before David captures Jerusalem, just when David has become king. He goes down to the stronghold, rather than up to Jerusalem. The Philistines are spread over the Valley of Rephaim, which is associated with giants.

Perhaps to this point, David has still been considered a sort of vassal by the Philistines, but the prospect of a united Israel is a threatening one to them, and they go out to battle against David and Israel.

David inquires of the Lord, and following the Lord's instructions, wins a great victory over them. The capture of the Philistines' idols is an important detail. The Philistines had earlier captured the Ark of the Covenant, back in chapter 4 of 1 Samuel.

They had also declared the good news of Saul's defeat in the houses of their idols seven years previously. Now the Philistine idols are captured, and they are humiliated. There is a sort of repetition of the original attack at the end of the chapter, as the Philistines again come up, and again spread out over the Valley of Rephaim.

This time, after enquiring of the Lord again, David defeats them as he follows a divine sign. The sound of marching in the top of the balsam trees, perhaps a sign of God's marching ahead of Israel.

[ 13 : 17 ] David attacks the Philistines from the rear, and he wins a decisive victory over them at this point. The Philistines, we must remember, had crippled Israel since Israel's loss at the Battle of Gilboa.

This victory, in the victory house-building pattern, will be followed by David's attempt to build a house for the Lord. A question to consider.

Why do you think that David made Jerusalem his capital?