

# David | The Once and Future King

## *The Battle for Jerusalem*

Second Samuel 5

10.31.21

*<sup>2</sup> Samuel <sup>5</sup> Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "Behold, we are your bone and your flesh. <sup>2</sup> "Previously, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and in. And the LORD said to you, 'You will shepherd My people Israel, and you will be a ruler over Israel.'" <sup>3</sup> So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them before the LORD at Hebron; then they anointed David king over Israel. <sup>4</sup> David was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years. <sup>5</sup> At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.*

*<sup>6</sup> Now the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, and they said to David, "You shall not come in here, but the blind and lame will turn you away"; thinking, "David cannot enter here." <sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, David captured the stronghold of Zion, that is the city of David. <sup>8</sup> David said on that day, "Whoever would strike the Jebusites, let him reach the lame and the blind, who are hated by David's soul, through the water tunnel." Therefore they say, "The blind or the lame shall not come into the house." <sup>9</sup> So David lived in the stronghold and called it the city of David. And David built all around from the Millo and inward. <sup>10</sup> David became greater and greater, for the LORD God of hosts was with him.*

*<sup>11</sup> Then Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David with cedar trees and carpenters and stonemasons; and they built a house for David. <sup>12</sup> And David realized that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, and that He had exalted his kingdom for the sake of His people Israel.*

*<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he came from Hebron; and more sons and daughters were born to David. <sup>14</sup> Now these are the names of those who were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, <sup>15</sup> Ibhaz, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, <sup>16</sup> Elishama, Eliada and Eliphelet.*

*<sup>19</sup> Then David inquired of the LORD...*

*<sup>23</sup> David inquired of the LORD...*

**On January 25<sup>th</sup>, 1987, a commercial aired starring New York Giants quarterback, Phil Simms. He had just led his team to victory in Super Bowl XXI (21).** In the commercial, the quarterback was asked, "Now that you've won the Super Bowl, Phil Simms, what are you going to do?" Simms, replied, "I'm going to Disney World" for which he was paid \$75,000.

That campaign has continued featuring untold numbers of athletes. The saying has become equal for the need of rest and escape after a long, up-hill climb culminating in triumph.

After David finally took the throne after a decade on the run in the desert, when “the strife was o’er, the battle won”, David did not go to Disneyworld; he went to Jerusalem. He did not take a well-deserved rest. Instead he waged a series of battles and he secured a capital for the newly unified nation.

This is the unveiling of God’s artistry. David’s been waiting on God but God has been at work – at work on David. No moment or event was wasted. All things worked together to prepare David to reign, to conform David to God’s own heart. And now the David sculpture is revealed – God’s workmanship!

The question I have for us today is not where will you go after the Super Bowl or after your latest hard-earned achievement but ARE YOU MATURING? Is your story with God progressing and are you moving toward that elusive point that we could call “maturity”? Our society is uncertain about this word; we’re ambivalent as to whether maturity is a good thing... “Modern Maturity” (sounds like a euphemism for old people) and YET, here is David, 30 years old and he is... in the best ways, a mature man.

So let’s consider, spiritual progress and maturity:

- 1) **Rise and Reign**
- 2) **Greater and Greater and Greater**
- 3) **Younger and Older**

Up to now, David has been rising but from here on, he is reigning. Saul is dead. And the war with Saul’s house is over – it was messy and there were some boneheads (as Phil showed us) but now David is anointed the THIRD time by heads from all the twelve tribes and they acknowledge David’s mandate from God: “the LORD said to you, ‘You will shepherd My people Israel, and you will be a ruler over Israel.’” (5.2)

Notice, David’s background is still a part of who he IS, a shepherd (but now of people) and not a king but a ruler (LXX Micah 5.2-4; Matt 2.6). it’s organic – from US (we’re your bone and flesh!)

His first headquarters is Hebron but now he has to think of the Northern Tribes and Jerusalem (Jebus) was more central. AND it was in the territory of Benjamin, the tribe of Saul, so that would be a concession to Saul’s people... AND it appears to be the home of the very first priest we meet in the entire Bible, Melchizedek, King of Salem (like Jeru-SALEM).

We’re not really told why...but David has to have this place. It was an impregnable, mountain fortress that even Joshua had not captured. It’s the home of the Jebusites... Wanna hear a ghost-story?

There’s an ancient rabbinical tradition found in two medieval Orthodox Jewish scholars named Rashi and Gersonides. They tell that the unconquered Jebusites built two giant moving statues

on their wall to mock the Jews. One statue was of blind Isaac and the other was of lame Jacob (as if to say, “your whole nation was impaired from the founding!”).

When people came against the Jebusites, they used water to move the statues and making loud hissing sounds so the attackers thought they were demons.

And David says (v. 8) “whoever would defeat the Jebusites, let him reach the lame and the blind who are hated by David’s soul, through the water tunnel” – that IF there’s anything to this ancient Jewish tradition, David is saying, “I know how these idols or monsters work to scare people – so let’s take them OUT and once we expose the fake, the Jebusites will run away...”

I got those references from Eugene Peterson but I did check them out and researched the targums or commentaries by Rashi and Gersonides... Is it true? Who knows? It could’ve been trash-talk. It definitely wasn’t that David didn’t like disabled people; David will befriend a disabled man (CH 8-9)... but we just don’t really know about all these details.

What we do know is that David didn’t go to Disney World. He was rising and now he’s reigning. He’s been in God’s school of wilderness training. He’s been able to say (as we saw last week): “The LORD is the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You support my situation. The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; my heritage is beautiful to me. I will bless the LORD who has counseled me; indeed, my mind instructs me in the night.” (Psa 16.5-7)

David had been the sheep of God’s hand, alone with God in the middle of the night, in isolation, puzzled and confused, at wits end, betrayed, afraid, dismayed but at the end of each day (even when he had to act like a mad-man and a double-agent) – at the end of the day, David’s heart was stayed upon Jehovah – “Stayed upon Jehovah, hearts are fully blest; Finding, as He promised, perfect peace and rest.” (“Like a River Glorious”, Frances R. Havergal, 1876)

See this is why I love Eugene Peterson and his whole take on the David Story. He says David isn’t so much about how we SHOULD live but how we DO live.

David is a piece of divine artwork. God does this with every life He claims for Himself. He goes to work on us. It’s often painful. It’s often joyful. Sometimes in the midst of the pain, He gives us songs in the night (as another Psalmist wrote, 42.8).

And all this creative energy... God at work in the person who waits for Him...it’s never for nothing. We have to see: God is chipping away at the block of marble in order to set the angel free. Unless we see that, all our struggles and pains as well as our success and celebrations...they don’t really mean anything. David’s life shows how God the Artist matures us. David’s life calls US to live in that awareness...and in so doing, we are liberated from shadow-lives that are without purpose and meaning: Again from last week’s Psalm: I said to the LORD, "You are my Lord; I have no good besides You." (16.2)

I think about the friend who once protested – “Well, I believe God loves me just as I am...and if He wants to change me, that shows that He doesn't really love me as I am.”

Well, that's a very human picture of God (e.g. the wife who's always trying to change her husband and he resents her for it...or kids with their parents etc.) but if you want a better human example: what if I fell into a cesspool or a sewage treatment tank?

Wouldn't I want rescue and wouldn't I want change? Would it really be loving for you to shout down to me, “I love you...I love you just as you are!”

The sad truth is, we don't see all the ways that we are not like God and not conformed to His beautiful heart and because we're fallen people in a fallen world...we've kinda gotten used to treading water in the ...uh...in the lack of love and the absence of holiness.

See, the key verse here is v. 11, “David became greater and greater for the LORD God of hosts was with him.” It's not that God wants to make David odd or esoteric or mystical or strict or censorious or old-fashioned or robotic or fake... It's that God wants to make David and all His people...greater and greater.

God is bringing us higher up and further in to become the human beings that He's designed us to be... not less human but more human...not less your true self but MORE your true self. And the way this is seen in David and in everyone regardless of culture or age or intelligence or income or gender (all the differences) is that David, and WE, “inquire of the LORD” (last two verses).

We've been seeing it each week in one form or another. The Hebrew word for INQUIRE is “shaal” and simply means to ask. It occurs about 40 times in the David Story. David matures as He pours out his heart before God and asks. He depends on God.

It's really another way of saying that David is living by faith. He's trusting in God and His promises. He's seeing all these vivid ways that life is just utterly overwhelming and in himself, David doesn't have what it takes BUT IN GOD AND HIS PROMISES is all David needs.

“You are my Lord; I have no good besides You.” (16.2) “For You light my lamp; the LORD my God illumines my darkness. For by You I can run upon a troop; and by my God I can leap over a wall.” (18.28-29)

Jerusalem will go on to become the enchanted center of the world – the AXIS MUNDI, the City of the Great King. Some 800 references to Jerusalem in the Bible! It will become the vortex of all God's saving work and God will call all nations to her light, the City set on a Hill. There's a wonderful foreshadowing here of the non-Jewish nations who seem to recognize that David is

special and that this City deserves tribute. Hiram, king of Tyre, sends the cedars of Lebanon...and he'll do it again to help construct the Temple under Solomon.

David becomes greater and greater...but TO Jerusalem will come One greater still!

Eventually, David's descendant, Jesus Christ, Son of David, will come again to Jerusalem. He will heal the lame and the blind in the City and He will conquer the City by dying for her sins. Jesus will plead, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!" (Mat 23.37-38)

And Jesus will rise from the dead and bring with Him a New Jerusalem – a new home for all the nations. David was a shepherd to Jerusalem and to Israel; Jesus Christ will shepherd all nations and bring them all to the Jerusalem from above.

That's the story of the Bible.

If you've been swept up into that story, you're a truly blessed person. God is writing a story and has included you IN IT; He's bringing it all to pass.

The Bible is a story... it's a progression, not just a loose collection of devotional gems or a spiritual textbook but the true interpretation of history.

Jerusalem is at the center of the story and is a type or symbol for the end toward which everything is moving – the dwelling of God among humanity.

David's story too has a progression. God has a beautiful destiny for David. God has been maturing David and always liberating him from the false, the ugly and the evil – setting free the true David.

I wonder if this is how you look at your own life and your own story. Do you see the development of your character? As you age and mature (not always synonymous!), are you somehow putting away childish things (1 Cor 13.11) but also becoming more child-like and delightfully dependent on God, His promises, His plan, His provision and His daily presence?

Maybe we're afraid to mature spiritually because we think it'll make us stodgy and safe and set in your ways and closed... LOOK, that's NOT what maturity looks like...that's not maturity, it's a RUT (and you know what they say about a rut: it's just a grave with the ends knocked out!)

Real, spiritual maturity SEES that though the outer person is wasting away (aches and pains and embarrassing doctor visits) yet the real you, the inner person is being renewed day by day...

There's a real reason to sort of laugh at yourself and say, "I thought I had it all figured out and everything in tidy little categories... but I was so much older then – I'm younger than that now!"

David is not a hot-head (like the immature boneheads Phil told us about a few weeks ago). Nor is he sentimental and set in his ways... And he's making mistakes (multiplying wives and sons!) but he needs a Savior and that is only becoming more and more clear to him as he continues to inquire of the Lord.

Is that YOUR story? Again, it's not so much something you SHOULD do but something YOU ARE doing... if you are a believer in David's descendent, Jesus Christ. For believers in Jesus Christ, it's a matter of noticing it, observing and celebrating how God is writing our story and is alluring us to this daily, childlike maturity toward the end (that's really the beginning) the destiny He has decreed for all who trust Him.