

Session 4 David made king

At last, after years of running from Saul and living dangerously amongst the Philistines, with Saul and his sons now dead the way had become clear for David to become king.

What kind of king was David going to be?

A man who

- knew the value of waiting and relying on God to bring about His purposes (1 Sam 22:1-5)
- had learned what it meant to be protected by God and experience His provision in times of real need (1 Sam 19:1-23; 25:1-39)
- cared about and rewarded those who'd aligned themselves with him (1 Sam 30:21-31)
- knew the value of deep friendships and the importance of loyalty (1 Sam 20:1-42)
- could resist advice and pressure from those close to him when he believed they were not advocating what God wanted (1 Sam 26:1-13)
- had learned that people close to him wouldn't necessarily support or protect him (1 Sam 23:1-13)
- was not afraid to kill the enemies of God/Israel, but knew not to take the life of anyone God had placed in authority over Israel, even when they disobeyed God and made David their enemy (1 Sam 17:1-53; 1 Sam 24:1-22; 2 Sam 1:19-27; 4:1-8)

What self-control and sense of right and wrong must it have taken for David to demonstrate such concern and respect for those who'd made him their enemy. Surely, it was a deep work of God in his life. A work that protected him from descending into bitterness, hatred or a desire for revenge.

Relevance for us: *If God could do such a remarkable work in David's life, He can do something similar in yours and mine – no matter what we may have experienced, however badly treated we may have been, and no matter what may lurk in the darkest corners of our heart and mind, He can bring about a transformation of mercy and love.*

God's work in David's life was to teach him to honour God above anyone and everything else.

Relevance for us: *Have you and I learned that too? Are we at least allowing God to redirect our hearts and minds towards that end?*

David had learned not to put himself in the place of God. He knew he was under God's authority and needed God's direction before committing himself to act, even when it seemed the obvious thing to do..

David king of Judah before he became king of Israel

Even with Saul dead David initially only became king of Judah rather than all Israel (2 Sam 2:1-9). It would be another 7½ years before he'd become king over all 12 tribes.

The choice of Hebron as his 'capital' city in Judah was significant. It was

- where Abraham & Sarah, Isaac & Rebekkah, and Jacob & Leah were all buried (Gen 49:31)
- granted by Joshua to Caleb after the Israelites entered the Promised Land (Jos 14:13-15)
- a Levitical city and city of refuge (Jos 21:11-13)
- strategically placed on a major route between Jerusalem and Beersheba

Abner, Saul's military commander, arrogantly thought he could play kingmaker on David's behalf. (2 Sam 3:9-11). God alone would bring that about. David had learned that lesson, Abner had not.

Joab, David's commander, murdered Abner in revenge for him killing Joab's brother, Asahel (2 Sam 3:22-27). But David made it very clear he strongly disapproved of Joab's actions (v28-39).

Relevance for us: *How do we react when our closest friends act in ways we disapprove of? Do we hide our disapproval out of fear of upsetting them or losing their friendship, or because we don't like the idea of them possibly doing the same to us? Or do we lovingly and with humility confront them with what we see as wrong and encourage them to put things right?*

King of Israel at last

At last, elders from all the tribes of Israel anointed David as their king (2 Sam 5:1-4). Over the next 6 chapters we get two different pictures of David the king. The first (in 2 Sam 5, 8, 9 & 10) focuses on David's military victories over the enemies of Israel. The second (in 2 Sam 6 & 7) focuses on David's concern for the house of God and God's concern for the house of David.

David the victorious king and extender of Israel's territory and influence

The Jebusites of Jerusalem thought their city impregnable. That didn't stop David (2 Sam 5:6-12).

You might think David's success was due to local intelligence about the city's water shaft (5:8). But that would be to miss the point of Gen 15:21. The Jebusites were among those whose sins (in Abraham's time) had not yet reached their full measure, but would eventually incur God's wrath. Their defiance in declaring the blind and lame could prevent David entering their city is a small illustration of that sin.

David also saw the past failure to take Jerusalem as a reminder the Israelites hadn't taken seriously God's command to take the whole promised land. David was still committed to obeying that command.

Relevance to us: *We too might ponder which direct commands of God we've neglected to obey – particularly those to do with the purity of what we look at, what we talk about, who we talk about and the way we talk about them, and what we allow our minds to dwell on. We'd do well to take a leaf out of David's book, repent of our disobedience and seek God's help in changing our habits.*

Despite appearances, 'the blind and lame will not enter the palace' (5:8) is not discrimination against the disabled. See David's treatment of Saul's grandson Mephibosheth (4:4 and 9:1-13). It's likely the proverb was never targeted at the actual blind and lame, but instead referred to those, like the Jebusites, who are defiant and arrogant towards God and His people – they are excluded from the king's/God's house.

After defeating the Jebusites, David went on to overcome the Philistines, noticeably after enquiring of the LORD whether he should attack (2 Sam 5:17-25) and being told God would strike the Philistine army. It was all to do with God's activity, not that of the Israelites.

Relevance for us: *When we're successful, do we see it as a result of us doing the right things? Or perhaps, if we're surprised by our own success, do we see it as a sheer fluke? Or do we see it as the work of God in our lives? Who really gets the glory?*

David would never have achieved what he did as king without the intervention and help of God in his life. How much more is that true in our own lives? Do we give God the credit for that?

David also defeated

- the Arameans (2 Sam 8:3-8 and 10:16-19)
- the Ammonites (2 Sam 10:1-14)
- the Moabites who became subject to him and brought him tribute (2 Sam 8:2)
- the Edomites (2 Sam 8:12-14)
- the Amalekites (2 Sam 8:12)

David's military victories were substantial, yet also a potential snare for him. In 2 Sam 24 (see also 1 Chr 21), David instigated a census of all Israel - to determine how many men of fighting age there were. Why? Maybe to be able to boast to the kings of other nations. Maybe to give him a sense of security.

Whatever the reason, such a census was displeasing in the eyes of God (1 Chr 21:7). David quickly regretted what he'd done, admitting he had sinned against God. David had not shown his trust was in God alone. He'd allowed a great strength to become a dangerous point of weakness.

Relevance for us: *The same can be true for us. We may often be aware of our greatest weaknesses as reasons for us needing to trust God more. But what about the areas we consider our greatest strengths? Where might pride or fear in those areas be a fatal chink in our armour? Are we alert to the dangers, and do we remind ourselves frequently that we are still dependent on God however confident or competent we may feel?*

David's victories were over all the nations surrounding Israel. The territory over which he apparently held influence covered the land from the Wadi of Egypt in the south to the River Euphrates in the north and from the Mediterranean Sea in the west to the lands of Gilead and Bashan across the Jordan in the east.

David the king who foreshadowed the Messiah

The enlarging of Israel's territory under David would have raised expectations that the Israelites were entering a stage in God's plan foretold in the stories in their Torah and the words of their prophets.

- Gen 15 & 17 God promised Abraham (and Isaac & Jacob) a land stretching from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates
- Num 34 the boundaries of the land had been laid out more specifically - now matched by the territory under David's control
- Deut 17 God spoke about the kind of king needed to rule over that inheritance
- Deut 18 God promised a prophet like Moses who'd tell the people everything God commanded

Over time this expectation of a prophet was combined with the promise of a Messiah who would rescue the Israelites from their enemies and rule over them with justice and righteousness.

Many in David's day would've been asking – is David that promised prophet-king?

At that time, if you'd read the words of **Psalm 18** written by David (also in 2 Sam 22), you might have asked that question too. Throughout the psalm David writes of:

- being rescued by God from death (4-19)
 - v17 – 'being drawn out of many waters' was later compared with the Jonah being rescued from the sea - itself used by Jesus as a picture of his own resurrection from the dead
- how that rescue was because God delighted in him because of his righteousness (19-24)
- how God gave him victory against his enemies and made him head of many nations (32-49)
 - v49 – 'praising God among the nations' was seen by Paul in Rom 15:9 as confirming the gospel of Jesus would go out to the Gentiles resulting in praise to God's name
- how God shows unfailing love to his anointed, to David and his descendants for ever (50)

Any thoughtful reader of the OT would have been constantly asking themselves, 'Is this or that person the One whom God had promised even as early as Gen 3 that would defeat the forces of evil?' Was it Abraham, Isaac, Jacob or Joseph? Was it Moses or Joshua? Was it Saul or David or Solomon?

After David, the prophets increasingly saw David as the key prototype for the one who was yet to come - see Jer 30:9 & Ezk 34:23. David's life foreshadowed someone even greater.

David the priest-king

Note 2 Sam 6, when David brought the ark into Jerusalem - the city built on the mountain on which Abraham had met with the mysterious priest-king Melchizedek (Gen 14). Also where Abraham went to sacrifice his son Isaac, only for God to provide a substitute sacrifice (Gen 22). As David brought in the ark/tabernacle he was dressed as a high priest and made sacrifice to God and blessed the people.

So, in David you get this powerful merging of the concepts and characteristics of both priest and king.

Unlike Saul, judged and rejected by God for acting like a priest when that was not his God-given role, David was commended by God and given a new promise regarding a future king from his one line.

Note Ps 110. Is David not this promised king? And yet, as Jesus himself pointed out, David talks about this king as 'my lord', implying this is someone to whom even David will bow in obedience.