

"DAVID: KING OF ISRAEL"

2 Samuel 5:1–3... Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "Behold, we are your bone and your flesh. 2 "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.' " 3 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.

Credible opposition to David's claim to be king over all Israel died with Abner and Ish-Bosheth. As a result, David became Israel's only rational alternative. This conclusion was strengthened by five factors . . .

- **David's impressive record as a military leader**
- **Prophetic revelations regarding David's destiny**
- **David was a Jew through and through**
- **Abner's endorsement of him (cf. 3:9–10, 17–18)**
- **David's respectful treatment of Saul, Jonathan, etc.¹**

It became increasingly apparent that God had called David to shepherd Israel and to rule over God's covenant people. These three characteristics should mark anyone who leads God's people.

- **A leader must have a heart for the people.**
- **A leader must demonstrate the capability to lead.**
- **A leader must have an evident call from God.**

Look at verse 3— They anointed David king over Israel. 1 Chronicles 12:23–40 describes the great assembly that gathered in Hebron to recognize David as king over all Israel. In this passage, an impressive army of approximately

¹ Robert D. Bergen, [1, 2 Samuel](#), vol. 7, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 318.

340,000 men gathered in Hebron. Here's a good synopsis of that festive occasion.

1 Chronicles 12:38–40... All these, being men of war who could draw up in battle formation, came to Hebron with a perfect heart to make David king over all Israel; and all the rest also of Israel were of one mind to make David king. **39** They were there with David three days, eating and drinking, for their kinsmen had prepared for them. **40** Moreover those who were near to them, *even* as far as Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali, brought food on donkeys, camels, mules and on oxen, great quantities of flour cakes, fig cakes and bunches of raisins, wine, oil, oxen and sheep. There was joy indeed in Israel.

The ceremony was carried out *"before the Lord"* suggesting that the ceremony was as religious in nature as it was political; in such a case, members of the Aaronic priesthood residing in Hebron would have played a significant role in the event.²

2 Samuel 5:4–5... David was thirty years old when he became king, *and he reigned forty years. 5 At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.*

Samuel anointed David when he was about 15, and he did not take the throne until he was 30. David spent at least 15 years in preparation to become king of Israel.

2 Samuel 5:6–8... *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." 7 Nevertheless, David captured the stronghold of Zion, that is the city of David. 8 David said on that day, "Whoever would strike the Jebusites, let him reach the lame and the blind, who are hated by*

² Robert D. Bergen, [1, 2 Samuel](#), vol. 7, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 318.

David's soul, through the water tunnel." Therefore they say, "The blind or the lame shall not come into the house."

Some 400 years after God commanded Israel to take the Promise Land, this city was still in Canaanite hands. Because of its location, Jerusalem was a real stronghold. This made the Jebusites overconfident and quick to talk trash to David and his troops.

Focus on verse 7— Despite the difficulty, David captured the stronghold of Zion, that is the city of David. This was the crown jewel of the Promise Land! David's conquest of the city was considered a military marvel. Since the *water shaft* is mentioned, some think that David sent his men through what is called "Warren's Shaft."

Charles Warren's 1867 excavation in Jerusalem, financed by the Palestine Exploration Fund, uncovered a vertical shaft beneath the City of David—a discovery that fundamentally shaped archaeological understanding of ancient Jerusalem's infrastructure. The Jebusites had engineered this tunnel system to access water during sieges, but the shaft's vulnerability ultimately proved exploitable, aligning with the biblical account of David's forces entering the city through a water passage (2 Samuel 5:6–8).

So, David and his men persisted through difficult circumstances to defeat an overconfident enemy. There is a spiritual principle worth noting here. When the believer surrenders to Jesus as Lord and King, powerful strongholds are crushed and conquered. Alan Redpath observed . . .

I want to say to you in the name of the Lord Jesus that there is no habit that has gone so deep but that the power of the blood of Jesus can go deeper, and there is no entrenchment of sin that has gone so far but the power of the risen Lord, by His Holy Spirit, can go further.

2 Samuel 5:9–10... So David lived in the stronghold and called it the city of David. And David built all around from the Millo and inward. 10 David became greater and greater, for the LORD God of hosts was with him.

Jerusalem became the capital city of David's kingdom. In God's plan there is almost always a hidden price of greatness. Often those who become great among God's people experience much pain and difficulty in God's training process. His experiences prepared him for the greatness he later enjoyed. Once again, I want you to remember that God wastes nothing in our lives. Don't miss this note—*the Lord God of hosts was with him!*

2 Samuel 5:11–12... Then Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David with cedar trees and carpenters and stonemasons; and they built a house for David. 12 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.

David's influence and importance grew by leaps and bounds. Hiram, king of Tyre, honored him with the finest craftsmen and wood to build him a palace. David was more than a man of war. He knew how to build important political alliances.

David knew three things that made his reign great. Every godly leader should know these three things as well. . .

- David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel.
- David knew that the kingdom was the Lord's.
- David knew God wanted to use him as a channel to bless His people.

2 Samuel 5:13–16... Meanwhile David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he came from Hebron; and more sons and daughters were born to David. 14 Now these are the names of those who were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, 15 Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, 16 Elishama, Eliada and Eliphelet.

One sign of the elevation of a king in the ancient Near Eastern world was the acquisition of a large harem. Though David's action in this respect cannot be defended and eventually brought him untold sorrow, he nonetheless

followed the prevailing custom.³ Let me be quick to say that this was not God's will (Deuteronomy 17:17). Most of the trouble that came into David's life came from his relationships with women and problems with their children.

2 Samuel 5:17–19... When the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to seek out David; and when David heard of it, he went down to the stronghold. 18 Now the Philistines came and spread themselves out in the valley of Rephaim. 19 Then David inquired of the LORD, saying, "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."

David's success brought new challenges from the *outside*. The Philistines "spread out in the Valley of Rephaim," a steep-walled canyon less than a mile southwest of David's new home.⁴ As God worked mightily in David's life, the devil also got to work and brought opposition against David. So, what did he do? The Bible says that he "inquired of the Lord." As a result, God honored David's dependence on Him and gave him the promise of victory.

2 Samuel 5:20–21... So David came to Baal-perazim and defeated them there; and he said, "The LORD has broken through my enemies before me like the breakthrough of waters." Therefore he named that place Baal-perazim. 21 They abandoned their idols there, so David and his men carried them away.

The Philistines brought their idols to the battle, thinking they would help defeat the Israelites. Because David inquired of God and obeyed God, they defeated the Philistines and carried away the Philistine idols.

³ Eugene H. Merrill, "[2 Samuel](#)," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 461.

⁴ Robert D. Bergen, [1, 2 Samuel](#), vol. 7, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 325.

2 Samuel 5:22–25... Now the Philistines came up once again and spread themselves out in the valley of Rephaim. **23** When David inquired of the LORD, He said, "You shall not go *directly* up; circle around behind them and come at them in front of the balsam trees. **24** "It shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then you shall act promptly, for then the LORD will have gone out before you to strike the army of the Philistines." **25** Then David did so, just as the LORD had commanded him, and struck down the Philistines from Geba as far as Gezer.

David inquired of the LORD—After the first victory over the Philistines, David waited on the LORD before the second battle. God directed David differently in this battle. Even though it was against the same enemy, not every battle is the same. In the first battle, the Israelites burst out against the Philistines like a roaring flood and swept them away (5:20). On the second occasion, the Israelites surprised the enemy from behind.⁵

It is easy for many in the same situation to say, "I've fought this battle before. I know how to win. This will be easy." David always triumphed when he sought the Lord's direction and then obeyed God. Look at the Lord's directions—*The LORD will go out before you to strike the camp of the Philistines*. God also gave David a sign. It was the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees. When he heard this sign, he and his men rushed forward to soundly defeat the Philistines!

When God goes before you, you have no need to fear—but you *do* have to follow.⁶

⁵ Tony Evans, [*The Tony Evans Bible Commentary*](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2019), 326.

⁶ Tony Evans, [*The Tony Evans Bible Commentary*](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2019), 326.