
The Ascent of David

2 Samuel 5¹

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Summary: David ascends to the throne of Israel over the entire nation and unites the kingdom.

Introduction

J.I. Packer reminds me that, "The proper aim of preaching is to mediate meetings with God".³ When I finish preaching tonight, I will ask myself this question, "Have I just taught a passage on the history of Israel from 2 Samuel? Or have I preached a person?" Will we hear of the ascent of David to the throne over the nation Israel only? Or will we hear of this truth and discover and delight in Jesus Christ? This question is not to suggest that there is tension between the written Word and the living Word. Careful exposition of OT texts to understand historically what took place in 1000BC is vital to rightly handling the Bible. But biblical exposition is not a history lesson. As Luke said of Jesus, "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets he explained to them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures" (Lk.24:27).

Tonight, we want you to open your Bibles to 2 Samuel 5 where we will notice the ascent of David to the throne of Israel. We will pay attention to how David becomes King over all Israel and unites them as a kingdom. And as we patiently read and reflect on this chapter, perhaps God will grant us to discover and delight in Jesus in 2 Samuel 5. If so, then it could be that as we leave tonight we say to each other, "did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us. . ." (Lk.24:32).

Let's pray to this end and then have our Bibles open to 2 Samuel 5. <pray>

His Anointing as the King (v. 1-5)

2 Samuel is about the rise of David's kingship. This ascent to the throne of Israel was anything but tranquil. David will rise to the throne over Israel yet through much wars and burdens and frustrations and murders and treachery. As Pastor Russ points out, "1 Samuel closed with the death of Saul. This sets us up for the ascension of the anointed king David to the throne. This was not an easy transition. 2 Samuel opens with the seven year civil war that raged and devastated Israel. It took seven long years for David to achieve victory over Saul's son and presumed heir to the throne, Ish-Bosheth. Through this bloody period, David emerges as the rightful king and is finally installed on his throne." We are to see that neither death nor life, nor angels nor ruler, nor things present nor things to come, nor power, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will prevent Yahweh from installing his King on his throne over his people and for his people. This is a kingdom of peace and plenty. This is a kingdom of surety and satisfaction. This is the kingdom of the installed King of kings and Lord of lords. Tonight, may we discover and delight in Him.

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²The outline for chapter 5 came from Pastor Russ Kennedy. For a rich and life-shaping study see his series on 1&2 Samuel.

³J. I. Packer, *Truth & Power* (Wheaton: Harold Shaw, 1996), 158.

The story of David's ascent to the throne is seen in five clips or episodes. These episodes are collected together to give us a composite and accurate view of the kingdom. The first episode is found in v1-5 – his anointing as the king.

Picking up the story in ch.5,v.1 we read:

¹ Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "Behold, we are your bone and flesh." ² 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.' " ³ 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. ⁴ David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. ⁵ At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years.

The Recognition of God's Appointment (v. 1-2)

First notice the recognition of God's appointment. This chapter radiates with the message that the LORD's promise has proven sure in the face of intense opposition. A battle was won by David and now in v.1 we find all the tribes of Israel coming to David at Hebron to recognize him as God's appointed king.

The northern tribes, likely the elders representing the 10 tribes, came to Hebron to anoint David as king over Israel. They identified God's appointment of David as the true king based on a couple observations. We observe this by noticing that the elders understand David as their "bone and flesh". This idiom communicates a strong kinship notion. The thought likely echoes Deut.17:15 which says, "you may indeed set a king over you whom the Lord your God will choose. One from among your brothers . . . ". The elders see David as one among the brothers.

They also recognize God's appointed king by noticing that David led them even before he was king. When Saul was king, David was the one leading God's people. The elders make this observation and conclude that the one in front of them – David – is God's chosen king.

And finally, and undoubtedly the most persuasive reason for their confidence in David was the promise of the LORD as seen in v2. One cannot find this exact wording to his promise in the OT. Perhaps the promise stems from 3:9,10. We see the promise here as "And the LORD said to you, You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over Israel". The LORD's king installed on the throne will rule his people like a shepherd and like a prince. He will have a loving heart that is diligent to care for God's people. And he will possess wisdom and skill in leading them. A lover and a leader is God's appointed king over his people. The elders know that Yahweh does not break his promise. Therefore, they choose David as king of Israel.

As we work through this chapter, it becomes plain that Israel under the anointed King David will be treated by God with a powerful and prevailing watchfulness. His kingdom will unite under His king and will enjoy protection. Israel can say with the psalmist, "the Lord is my shepherd I shall not want".

The Crowning of God's Regent (v. 3)

David's anointing as the king is noticed by the elders' recognition of God's appointment and now in v3 we see this in the crowning of God's regent. Note the covenantal aspect of this event. David makes a covenant with the elders. He solemnly takes his vows, so to speak, before the

LORD over how he will protect and provide for them “in sickness and in health, in times of peace and in times of war”. It reminds us of our king Jesus who is called our husband who loves us and gave himself up for us. And when he raised the chalice at the Passover with his disciples and said, “this cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood” we can rest assured that his covenant over his bride cannot be broken.

The Duration of God's Providences (v. 4-5)

King David ruled over God’s people for forty years according to v4-5. He began his public reign over God’s people at the age of 30 – the age Levites were first appointed to their ministry (Num.4:3); and the age our Lord Jesus began his public ministry (Lk.3:23).

Behold, David’s anointing as king over Israel.

His Acquisition of the Capital (v. 6-10)

The second episode featuring the kingdom in the story of David’s ascent to the throne is found in v6-10. Here we see David’s acquisition of the capital as an indication that the God of hosts is with him. Picking up the storyline in v6 we read:

⁶ 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.” ⁷ Nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion, that is, the city of David. ⁸ 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.” Therefore it is said, “The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.” ⁹ And David lived in the stronghold and called it the city of David. And David built the city all around from the Millo inward. ¹⁰ And David became greater and greater, for the Lord, the God of hosts, was with him.

The Foolish Boast (v. 6)

Notice how he acquired Jerusalem. He defeated the Jebusites who possessed the city. Take a look at these Jebusites and their foolish boast in v6. They said to the anointed king, “you will not come in here, but the blind and the lame will ward you off”. Their disregard for David sounds out. They thought David was a joke. They believed they could live well apart from the king. They thought they were invincible to the king’s justice. Their boast sounds like the unbelieving world today in response to the Christ.

The Jebusites’ boast is just flat out stupid. If they could have sent off a text to David it would have read something like “sightless eyes and helpless legs⁴ are all it takes to defeat you O king of Israel” David (LOL).

Perhaps the Jebusites were not reading their Bibles. For example, in the promise of Abraham in Gen.15:18-21 we hear about this event.

On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, 19 the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, 20 the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, 21 the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites.”

The Jebusites were tenacious. They were not easy to remove from the land (compare Ex.3:8; 13:5; 23:23; 33:2; 34:11; Deut.7:1; Josh.3:10 with Josh.15:63 & Jgs. 1:21).

⁴Phrase taken from D. Ralph Davis.

But God's Word always prevails. His people could not overtake the fortress Zion until several hundred years after the prophecy. But according to 2 Sam.5:7 God says now. And it was so.

God's covenant will not ever be broken. It stays steadfast through the years. It endures much apparent setbacks. It travels through uncertainties. It takes his covenantal people on a wild ride. But when the fullness of time comes nothing and nobody will thwart the fulfillment of his covenant. As we see in v7, God's promises are certain!

The Conquering Challenge (v. 7-8)

And this is exactly what we see in the conquering challenge of v7-8. David succeeds. He made them eat their words. God fulfilled his promise to rid his enemies from his people's dwelling. David defeats the Jebusites.

The Mighty Dwelling (v. 9-10)

And now, in v.9-10, the mighty dwelling is called the city of David. David is becoming greater and greater due to the LORD's presence. Here, we witness the city of David rebuilt by King David. Jerusalem now is the obvious residence of the LORD. His anointed king crushes foes and cares for friends. God's people enjoy security in this mighty dwelling. And through this victory, the renown of the King spreads more and more throughout the land.

As the Psalmist says, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things. Blessed be his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory! Amen and Amen (Ps.72:18-19).

His Building of a Home (v. 11-12)

With David now anointed as king and having captured Jerusalem, we witness another episode in the story that gives us the proper view of the kingdom. In v.11-12, we watch as David's house is built for him and how this gives David full assurance of the Lord's achievement.

¹¹ And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, also carpenters and masons who built David a house. ¹² 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.

The Service of Hiram (v. 11)

In v.11 we notice David's home is built from the service of Hiram. The king of Tyre, Hiram, esteems the anointed King of Israel. Tyre located 25 mi. south of Sidon on the Phoenician coast gives to the building of the kingdom and honors the citizens of the kingdom. Perhaps we can hear a hint of Isaiah's prophecy in this event. "For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples' but the LORD will arise upon you and his glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light and kings to the brightness of your rising"(60:2-3). What we see in this verse is a clear sign of the LORD's work and how he establishes his people. This is confirmed as we notice v12.

The Assurance of the Lord (v. 12)

David had full assurance that the LORD had established him as king over Israel. He also knew that his rise to power was not for private pleasures. The Lord exalted him so that he would be a servant of Israel. His kingship is used for the kingdom. The ascent of David put him in a position to descend to a lowly place of servanthood for the sake of his people.

Last week we heard in Mark 10:35-45 what power and position are designed to accomplish. Jesus takes his power and position as king over his people and uses it to serve his people.

Taking authority and using it for servanthood is just like David in this passage and is just like Jesus . . . and is to be just like his followers.

Verse 12 shows the proper view of kingdom living. And this lifestyle is both stimulated and steered by the values and vision of the kingdom.

His Expanding of his Family (v. 13-16)

Up to this point, the narrator gives us 3 vantage points from which we can view the king and his kingdom. These clips are given not merely to inform the mind but also to transform the life. Are you beginning to see within the history and prophecy of the OT someone who transforms live? Are you starting to look through David to the greater David anointed as the Christ who holds sway over his people for the sake of his people?

In v.13-16, we come to another episode to David's ascent to the throne. Take a listen as I read v13-16.

¹³ And David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he came from Hebron, and more sons and daughters were born to David. ¹⁴ And 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.

Here we notice David's ascent to the throne by noticing the expanding of his family.

His Marriages (v. 13)

This episode is a mixed bag. It both reveals strength and it exposes weakness. Even though this chapter is written to record the rise of king David and the positive nature of it, we must also notice his weaknesses. We see this in v13.

More marriages and more women might seem pragmatic to making good alliances with foreign nations. More marriages and more women may seem more pleasurable to the flesh. But David here is in direct violation to the word the LORD gave for the covenant king. David knew Deut.17:17 that says, "And [the king] shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away . . .".

We see this violation starting with David. We see it rapidly increasing with his son Solomon. We see in history the fulfillment of this warning and how it tore the nation apart. I think there are two reasons why the narrator chose to feature this clip of the kingdom for our consideration. The first is to show signs of stupidity in David. He was mightily used of God. He unified the kingdom and brought prosperity to the people. But he was flawed. This tells us that we need the new David to come and rule over us in wisdom, obedience and perfection. The kingdom is only safe in the hands of the greater David. The Son of David we heard about last week; Jesus the Christ, David's descendent.

His Children (v. 14-16)

But there is another reason it seems to me that the narrator talks about David's family. And this reason is found in v.14-16. More sons and more daughters were a sign of blessing from the LORD. Childlessness in OT imagery was something of lifelessness; one of desolation and rejection (Gen.11:30; 25:21; 29:31). If a couple could not have children the name of the family is jeopardized. It symbolized death and cessation of family. Children on the other hand, stood

for a sense of future life; one of posterity. This meant that the family name then would live on. The name would not become extinct.

Sprawling families symbolically spoke of fertility, strength and vitality. Thought about from a biblical/theological way, this text may even echo Adam and Eve's great commission found in Genesis 1:28 when God said "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth . . .".

In this scene, the royal family is growing. The royal seed is preserved. One day Jesus Christ will come from this lineage. One day Christ will give his life for the church. One day, union with Christ will be used of God to express and expand the breathtaking image of the Triune God. One day, these newly birthed churches will populate the world. One day the glory and image of God in Christ will fill this earth as the waters cover the sea. The king and his kingdom are featured here as multiplying and spreading abroad. In this forth episode of the anointed king, we see a suitable assessment of the kingdom—a future family of God filling the land.

His Defeating of the Enemies (v. 17-25)

These four episodes giving us a composite sketch of the king and his kingdom bring us now to the fifth and final clip. We witness in v17-25, David defeating his enemies.

The Philistines—Israel's archenemy—have been a constant source of trouble through Saul's reign. David, when he was Saul's military commander, had a measure of success against them. But it was not until David was anointed king of Israel that he united the kingdom under one rule; himself. This consolidation of the kingdom will require a decisive victory over the Philistines. And that is exactly what we find in these verses. Take a listen as I read v17-25.

Their Defeat in a Frontal Assault (v. 17-21)

¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ Now the Philistines had come and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim. ¹⁹ 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." ²⁰ 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. ²¹ And the Philistines left their idols there, and David and his men carried them away.

The Enemy's Attack (v.17)

Found in v17, the last thing the Philistines wanted to see happen occurred. Israel now has one king over them. Therefore, the chief enemy of God's people came up to attack and presumably get rid of the king and subjugate his people under their rule.

The Humble Inquiry (v.18-19)

David knows that the rise of and protection over the kingdom comes not from him but from the LORD. So, in v18-19 we see what he does. He humbly goes to God in prayer asking for guidance.

This scene reveals the kingdom as protected not by David but by the LORD. The LORD works through his people; not apart from his people. And he does so here by his

leadership. As David hears the LORD's guidance, he obeys his counsel. V.20-21 give the results of God's power flowing through David's obedience.

The Great Victory (v.20-21)

V.20-21 show a great victory over the arch-enemies; the Philistines. This victory is described in graphic terms. "like a breaking flood" is the simile to help the readers feel the power of the LORD's great salvation for his people. Smashing and devastating his enemies, the LORD's vengeance tsunamis the enemies of the king. "Baal-perazim" means "lord of bursting out". This name memorializes the Lord's work and ways in bringing victory to his people.

But apparently, this devastating loss was not enough for the Philistines. They want more. V.22-25 sketch out the overwhelming defeat of God's foes.

Their Defeat in a Rear Assault (v. 22-25)

²² And the Philistines came up yet again and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim. ²³ 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. ²⁴ 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." ²⁵ And David did as the Lord commanded him, and struck down the Philistines from Geba to Gezer.

The Enemy's Attack (v.22)

We may think that after a deluge smashed the Philistines' army that they would get the message. But apparently not. Similar to the Jebusites, the Philistines are arrogant. Hard hearts (think Pharaoh) don't learn. In v22, we see the Philistines coming back for more. And more they receive.

The Humble Inquiry (v.23-24)

Again, David in v23-24, expresses humble trust in the Lord. He asks for guidance once again. This time the counsel is not to go against them straightaway. Rather, they are to go to the backside of the camp. Once David hears the Balsam trees rattling like on a windy day, they are then to go up from behind and smash them.

The energetic images the writer uses to express the attack are arresting. The phrases "The sound of marching" and "goes out before you to strike down" tell an awful tale. These images communicate the warrior God moving out to level down the Philistines. V.25 tells us of the results.

The Great Victory (v.25)

The verse simply says "and David did as the LORD commanded him, and struck down the Philistines from Geba to Gezer". Or to put it in the words of David from Ps.24:8, "Who is this King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle". Obliteration awaits all who oppose his anointed king.

Wow, what a chapter in God's Word.

Chapter 5, from verse 1 to verse 25, features the LORD as the One who upholds his promises and protects his kingdom through his installed king. His people never need to fear. He is more than able to lead his church in triumph. In the end, judgment falls on the foes of Christ and salvation rises upon the friends of Christ. God's power and glory highlighted in the kingdom are presented tonight in 2 Samuel 5. There is no doubt in his plan and purpose. Yahweh the Warrior wins. And the benefits to those in his kingdom who trust in his King are never ending and ever increasing. The sum and substance of the whole Bible is met in 2 Samuel 5 - Jesus Christ our Lord.

To conclude, briefly we will reflect on each of these episodes.

Reflect and Respond

- In verses 1-5 we witnessed The Anointing of the King
- In verses 6-10 we saw The Acquisition of the Capital
- In verses 11-12 we glimpsed The Building of his Home
- In verses 13-16 we looked at The Expanding of his Family
- In verses 17-25 we noticed The Defeating of his Enemy

Remember, tonight was not a history lesson. We were attending to not merely a place but a magnificent person.

What does it mean to have Jesus, the anointed One, as king over his people? How does being ruled by Jesus bring riches to you? How will this event in the Word tonight decrease your anxiety over the future? Strengthen your resolve to follow him? Increase your joy in acts of obedience?

In what ways does this reality change the way you view church? Values and vision for daily living? What blessings did you experience tonight that will help guide you in decision-making this week?

The answers to these questions are determined by what you believe to be true about the true king. The true king is the greater David - Jesus Christ. He walked an awful path to arrive at his glorious throne. He was delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they condemned him to death. He was delivered over to the Gentiles who mocked him, spit on him and beat him. Then they killed him. This was to pay full price for your life-long debt of sin.

He was triumphantly raised from the death to ascend into heaven and be seated on his throne. He reigns. He rules. His kingdom has come. The church is born. She is tormented by the evil one. She is opposed by the enemy. But the gates of hell shall not prevail. Under the King, she perseveres. She will be victorious; for she is joined to the Victor; the king of kings - Jesus Christ the Lord. And when he returns the full and forever kingdom will come.

May this view of the king and his kingdom be your view of the king and his kingdom. Believe the gospel and discover and delight in Jesus tonight.