

Men's Sunday Night
A Study in the Life of David
A Man After God's Own Heart
Lesson 5 – 2 Samuel 1-5

These chapters describe the events leading up to David's coronation as king of Israel. A lesser saint would have rejoiced that his enemy was slain, but David was a man after God's own heart and felt keenly the tragedy of Saul's sin. Of course, David's dear friend Jonathan was also dead; the sin of a disobedient father had brought judgment upon innocent people. Note that an Amalekite brought the news and claimed to be the one who finally took Saul's life. Had Saul obeyed the Lord in 1 Samuel 15 and slain all of the Amalekites, this would not have happened. The sin we fail to slay is the one that slays us.

Joab, Abishai, and Asahel were all sons of David's half-sister Zeruah. Thus, they were David's nephews as well as valued men in his army. David first reigned over Judah, his own tribe, with his headquarters at Hebron. However, Abner, the commander of Saul's army, had made Saul's son Ishbosheth the king over the other tribes. He relocated the capital over the Jordan River in Mahanaim to protect himself and the new king from David's men.

This was the turning point: when Ishbosheth died, the way was wide open for David to rule over the entire nation. However, it must be noted that David did not approve of the method the sons of Rimmon used, and he had the murderers slain because of their crime. David knew that God was able to elevate him to the throne; he would not do evil that good might come from it. These three murders are evidence that David's road to the throne was a bloody one. God had made it very clear that David alone was to rule Israel. Perhaps Christians today are like the Jews of that day: we permit our King to reign over only a part of our lives, and the result is conflict and sorrow.

David had reigned seven years in Hebron over the tribe of Judah; now he was to reign over the entire nation for thirty-three years, making a total of forty years. This was David's third anointing. Samuel had anointed him at home in Bethlehem, and the men of Judah had anointed him at Hebron. The king now needed a capital city, and he chose Jerusalem. This stronghold had not been captured previously and the Jebusites were arrogant and defied David to attack. 1 Chronicles 11:5-8 tells us that Joab was the man God used to open the city. No sooner was David established in his own city than the old enemy, the Philistines, returned. How true this is in our personal lives: Satan waits for the "peace after the storm" to attack us again. David knew that the Lord's will was the only way to victory, so he immediately consulted Him.

Certainly, it was God's will that David reign over the entire nation, just as it is His will that Christ be Lord over all of our lives. Any part that is left outside His will is going to rebel and cause trouble. We are "*bone of His bone, and flesh of His flesh,*" and we ought to invite Him to reign over us. Only then will we have complete peace and victory. David's road to the throne covered many years and many trials, but throughout that journey he put God first and never sought vengeance or retaliation against Saul. God saw to it that David was protected and promoted according to His time and plan. He will do the same for us if we will but trust Him.

Read 2 Samuel 1:1-27 and answer the following questions:

1. According to the messenger, what was his own role in Saul's demise? How did David and his men react to the messenger's story?

2. What reaction did the messenger expect when he came to David with the news of Saul's death?

3. What figures of speech did David use to describe Saul and Jonathan's valor in battle? (1:22) What advantage was there in David's memorializing only Saul's good qualities?

Read 2 Samuel 2:1-32 and answer the following questions:

4. What two specific questions did David ask of the Lord following Saul's death?

5. What message did David send to the men of Jabesh Gilead? What message did David want the men of Jabesh Gilead to hear from him directly? (2:5-7)

6. Why did Joab decide to call off his pursuit of Abner and his men? Even when the answer seems obvious, why should we seek God's guidance? (2:27-28)

Read 2 Samuel 3:1-39 and answer the following questions:

7. What gradually happened in the war between the rival kings David and Ishbosheth? (3:1)

8. What did Abner urge the elders of Israel to do? What was the most persuasive argument for the people of Israel to declare David their king?

9. How did David react to the news of Abner's death? How did the people of Judah who followed David react to Abner's death? Why were the people watching to see if David's grief over Abner was sincere?

Read 2 Samuel 4:1-12 and answer the following questions:

10. How did Recab and Baanah manage to murder Ishbosheth without being detected? What did Recab and Baanah expect when they went directly to David with the head of Saul's son? (4:5-8)

11. Why is Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, introduced in this chapter?

12. What can we learn about the characteristics of a godly leader from David's response of Ishbosheth? How can the principles of righteous leadership as displayed by David be applied in today's world?

Read 2 Samuel 5:1-25 and answer the following questions:

13. How did the attitudes of the people of Israel toward David change throughout the course of his life, and what were the factors that led to these changes?

14. What are the important elements of David's character that allowed him to unite the tribes of Israel? How can these traits be applied to our lives today?

15. Why do you think David's victories over the Philistines were so crucial to his reign? How do victories over enemies or obstacles serve to confirm our faith? In our lives, we often face "Philistines" problems or adversaries that seem overwhelming. What practical steps can we take to seek God's guidance in such situations?