

DAVID BECOMES KING OVER JUDAH IN HEBRON

Introduction

When David heard of Saul's fate, he didn't clap his hands and greedily plot his next move. In genuine grief, he mourned over the death of Saul as well as his beloved friend Jonathan (2 Samuel 1: 17-27). Then with a patient and sensitive spirit, he turned to the Lord for guidance.

Read 2 Samuel 2: 1-17

- How might David feel as he returned "home" from exile?

- Had you been from Judah (v.4) would you have voted for David as King? Why? And if you had been from Jabesh Gilead (not in Judah), how would you have felt?

- For how many years did Ish-Bosheth rule over Israel? Who made him king over Israel?

During this period, an ugly rift formed between the north and south that would appear again generations later. Hebrew fought against Hebrew, as the house of David and the house of Saul battled for supremacy. And David grew steadily stronger.

Read 2 Samuel 3: 1-5

The seven and a half years reign in Hebron also saw David continue his practice of polygamy, which although common among monarchs of the day, was forbidden by God. (Read Deut. 17: 14-17). Besides Michal (who later became his wife again), David already had 2 wives—Ahinoam and Abigail. But they weren't enough for him! He married four more women. Then, after he moved to Jerusalem he added Bathsheba to his harem as well as many others not named in scripture (2 Samuel 5: 13).

- What are the potential dangers of David's uncontrolled passion for women?
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King Over All Israel

Read 2 Samuel 5: 1-13

Although Ish-bosheth wore the crown in Israel, the General of Israel's army, Abner, held the power. He was the one who made Ish-bosheth king (2 Samuel 2: 8-9). So when Joab (David's army General) killed Abner, Ish-bosheth "lost courage", and all Israel was disturbed (4:1). It was only a matter of time before David's forces would conquer the weakened house of Israel.

That final battle never happened though, because Ish-botheth was assassinated by two of his own captains. With a flash of their sword, Saul's troubled dynasty ended forever. Soon after, the elders of Israel approached David at Hebron and anointed him as their king. At last the nation was united again (5: 1-3).

- What serious diplomatic dilemma did David face in setting up his capital. If he remained in Judah how would Israel (the larger North) feel and if he moved to Israel in the North, how would Judah feel?
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- In a brilliant political manoeuvre, David invaded the small city of Jebus—which was a stronghold located in the middle of the nation – a perfect neutral ground where both sides could join together as one since Jebus was neither Israel nor Judah. David took Jebus and fittingly renamed it Jerusalem, the city of peace (2 Samule 5: 6-9). Who were the Jebusites (Judge 1:21)?
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- Why is David so successful in conquering this formidable fortress of a city? Does the siting of Jerusalem as a city have any spiritual significance?
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- If you had absolute assurance that the “Lord was with you” how would your coming week be affected? What fears would dissipate?
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- David has had to travel a rocky road to the throne. Yet all his blistering days and shivering nights in the desert have taught him valuable lessons about his Lord that will sustain him during his years as king. What are a couple of lessons about God you have learned as you travelled with David?
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As rough as his early years of adversity were, his later years of prosperity will be even rougher. Having conquered his external foes, middle-aged David will face the Goliaths within—laziness, lust, hypocrisy, pride.

- As we prepare to study this stage of David's life, take a few moments to reflect on the different stages in your life. When have you felt closer to the Lord—during times of adversity or prosperity? Why was this so?
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Conclusion

Read the panoramic view of David's life through the lens of Psalm 78: 70-72.

“He chose David his servant and took him from the sheep pens; from tending the sheep he brought him to be the shepherd of his people Jacob, of Israel his inheritance. And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skilful hands he led them.”

The Psalmist's pen sweeps across the years revealing God's hand in bringing David from leading sheep to shepherding the nation. In each phase of David's life, God has been an ever-present influence—guiding his stone to its mark on Goliath's skull, frustrating Saul's murderous attacks, directing David's movements in the wilderness. In response to God's sovereign grace, David leads the people with integrity and skill.

Does that mean that David never sinned or erred in judgment? Certainly not. Indiscretion and failure shaped his life just as much as virtue and victory. As we focus on his years as king, we will get a closer look at what made him both an icon of integrity—a man after God's heart—and a man of flesh and blood who, like all of us, was prone to fall.