

GOD WITH US
Part 3: A King in place of THE KING.
1st and 2nd Samuel

Message 11 – David King of Israel
2Samuel 5-10

Introduction

Often in life, God makes us *wait* for things that He wants to give us. During such times, He seeks to build our trust in Him, as well as to teach us valuable lessons while we wait. David had to wait nearly two decades to become king over *all* of Israel. In the last section (2Samuel chs.1-4) we saw how David was made king over just the tribe of Judah in the south of Israel. This lasted for 7-1/2 years. Finally, the rest of Israel decided it was time to make David king over the whole nation. The moment he had been waiting and preparing for had finally come.

David made king over all Israel: 5:1-16

“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. David was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years” (5:3,4).

The elders knew all along that David was to be the king. In their words: *“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; you will be a ruler over Israel’” (5:2).*

Psalm 78 reminds us that David was *God’s chosen king*:

“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 skillful hands he led them” (Psalm 78:70-72).

Moses had previously instructed Israel: *“Be sure to appoint over you the king the Lord your God chooses” (Deut.17:15).* Saul was ‘the peoples king’ that God had given them to satisfy their craving to have a king *“like all the other nations.”* David, on the other hand, was “God’s king,” the *“man after His own heart.”*

One of David's first moves was to choose the city of Jerusalem as the capital for his new kingdom. He had to expel the Jebusites who held the city as their stronghold. Once they were removed, he began to build Jerusalem ("the city of David") to suit his purposes (5:6-10). All the while, his sphere of influence was expanding.

"David became greater and greater, for the Lord God of hosts was with him" (5:10).

With gifts of cedar wood from Hiram, king of Tyre, they built a royal palace for David to live in. All of this rapid expansion came as a result of God's unique favor upon David.

"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" (5:12).

Sadly, he continued to sin by multiplying wives (5:13-16).

David defeats the Philistines: 5:17-25

One of the major signs of God's favor upon David was his military success. In particular, the Philistines, who had been thorns in Israel's side for the past 50+ years, were finally subdued. Cities that had been taken by the Philistines were returned to Israel. David's fame began when he defeated Goliath, the Philistine giant. Now his fame continued as he defeated the entire Philistine nation. His battle strategies came as he "*inquired of the Lord*" (5:19,23).

David fought 2 successive battles against the Philistines. Both times he asked God for specific guidance, and both times God gave very different strategies. Don't presume to know what God wants you to do just because it seems obvious or familiar to a former situation. Ask God . . . and seek advice and prayer from others on ALL your big decisions.

The Ark is brought to Jerusalem: 6:1-23

David's heart for God comes out in many ways; but here we see it in his desire to bring the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem. He gathered 30,000 leaders of Israel for this massive transport ceremony. The only problem was: he failed to follow God's specific instructions when it came to moving the sacred Ark. Thus:

"When they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out toward the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen nearly upset it. And the anger of the Lord burned against Uzzah, and

God struck him down there for his irreverence; and he died there by the ark of God” (6:6,7).

David ran through an intense range of emotions when this happened: He was angry (v.8), afraid (v.9), and unwilling (v.10) to continue the movement of the Ark. He did not ask the Lord at this time *why* this happened. Instead, he parked the Ark there at the house of Obed-edom, where it remained for 3 months.

Either through personal study, or through the word of a priest or prophet, David realized that they had violated God’s specific instructions as to *how* the Ark was to be transported (on the shoulders of the Levitical priests). When they tried to move the Ark again, he said to the priests:

“Because you did not carry it at the first, the Lord our God made an outburst on us, for we did not seek Him according to the ordinance” (1Chronicles 15:13).

The “outburst” referred to above was the holiness of God breaking forth against sin. This had happened before in Israel’s history when people tried to approach God in ways that violated His stipulations (see 1Samuel 6:19 or Leviticus 10:1-3). God is a PERSON. He has revealed to us both the nature of His being, and the ways we are to approach Him. We cannot make up our own ideas about God and then form our own handbook for how to interact with God. It is He, not we, who sets the terms for our relationship with Him. When we “do our own thing” with God, it is a bit like doing our own thing with fire – we can get burned. On the other hand, when we come to know God for who He really is, and when we seek to approach God in the ways that He has made available to us, then we are met with an outburst of His love and mercy, not His holiness and judgment.

As the Ark came into Jerusalem, David celebrated with his whole heart. He passionately worshipped God, unafraid to display his *emotions* in the moment.

“David was dancing before the Lord with all his might, and David was wearing a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel were bringing up the ark of the Lord with shouting and the sound of the trumpet” (6:14,15).

Michal, David’s first wife, looked out the window and saw David dancing. She had no appreciation for his unabashed display of love toward God.

When David returned to bless his household, Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David and said, “How the king of Israel distinguished himself today! He uncovered himself today in the eyes of his servants’ maids as one of the foolish ones shamelessly uncovers himself” (6:20).

David, however, told her that he was *not* worshipping for anyone’s eyes but God.

So David said to Michal, “It was before the Lord, Who chose me above your father and above all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel; therefore I will celebrate before the Lord” (6:21).

All of life is to be an act of “worship” (ascribing worth) to God. Do you get intimidated to openly express your love for God? If so, take some time to ask: Why? Ask God to remove your fear of what other people think so that you can “worship” freely and without inhibition. On the flip side – I must be careful that I do not judge another person who is sincerely worshipping God in a way that might be awkward for me. Don’t become a Michal who looks with disdain on the sincere worship of others!

It is instructive to notice how David showed kindness and blessed other people throughout this period of his life. For example, when the Ark arrived in Jerusalem, he blessed the people with a gift:

“After he had finished sacrificing the burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord Almighty. Then he gave a loaf of bread, a cake of dates and a cake of raisins to each person in the whole crowd of Israelites, both men and women. And all the people went to their homes” (6:18,19).

He also was kind to Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan (ch.9), and he extended kindness to Hanun, king of Ammon (ch.10).

A genuine heart of gratitude toward God should result in a desire to bless others. “And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also” (1John 4:21). David clearly demonstrated that the two greatest commandments always go together: 1) You shall love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. 2) You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

God’s promise to build David’s house: 7:1-29

Along with bringing the Ark into Jerusalem, David’s desire for

God was shown by his heart to replace the temporary tent he had erected for the Ark with a permanent temple for God.

“See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells within tent curtains.” Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that is in your mind, for the Lord is with you” (7:2,3).

That same night, Nathan the prophet received a revelation from God, indicating that it was *not God’s plan* for David to build Him a house; but in response to David’s desire to honor God, God would honor David and build a “house” for him.

“The Lord also declares to you that the Lord will make a house for you. When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever” (7:11-16).

This important passage is known as the **Davidic Covenant**. It has 2 major provisions. 1) An immediate son of David would be raised up to build the Temple that was on David’s heart. This was fulfilled in Solomon, the son of David and next king of Israel. 2) Generations of “sons of David” would occupy Israel’s throne permanently (forever). He was promised an everlasting dynasty. Even if his sons disobeyed God, they would be disciplined; but his dynasty would never be cut off (as Saul’s was).

David’s prayer of thanksgiving is beautiful (7:18-29). He was stunned and overwhelmed that God would choose one like himself to bless with such incredible promises. David expressed two key themes in his prayer:

1) His own unworthiness of such a blessing.

Then King David went in and sat before the Lord, and he said: “Who am I, Sovereign Lord, and what is my family, that You have brought me this far? And as if this were not enough in Your sight, Sovereign Lord, You have also spoken about the future of the house of Your servant – and this decree, Sovereign Lord, is

for a mere human! What more can David say to You? For You know Your servant, Sovereign Lord” (7:18-20).

2) The greatness of His God.

“How great You are, Sovereign Lord! There is no one like You, and there is no God but You, as we have heard with our own ears ... (You) perform great and awesome wonders by driving out nations and their gods from before Your people, whom You redeemed from Egypt ... Do as You promised, so that Your name will be great forever ... Sovereign Lord, You are God ... Sovereign Lord, You have spoken, and with Your blessing the house of Your servant will be blessed forever” (7:22,23,26,28,29).

It is clear that David had much more than a “formal” or “functional” relationship with God. He was in a “love affair” with His God. The exchange of love between David and God was evident not only in the way he desired God’s presence in his life; but also in the way he served and worshipped God. Known as “the sweet psalmist of Israel,” David wrote roughly half of Israel’s songbook (Psalms)! His true desire for God can be summarized in his own words from Psalm 27 . . .

“One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I shall seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to meditate in His temple” (Psalm 27:4).

“God’s exceeding desire to be loved comes from loving exceedingly” (Chrysostom, 4th Century A.D.). God made each of us for a love affair with Him, not for some dutiful subservience to a set of rules. How do we cultivate that sort of relationship with God? Like any relationship, it takes time. It is a matter of daily seeking Him; becoming more and more acquainted with His ways and His character; learning to hear His voice and respond to His promptings; learning to “walk in step with His Spirit” in the circumstances of life (Galatians 5:25); walking with Him in the “good works He has prepared for us beforehand to walk in” (Eph.2:10). It involves our entire being: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength” (Deuteronomy 6:5; Mark 12:30). For an excellent study on Passion for God, see A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*. I have included a few quotes from Tozer at the end of these notes.

The Major Covenants of the Bible

The *Davidic Covenant* was the 3rd major covenant that God had made with humanity, as recorded in the O.T. history. As we understand the covenant structure of the Bible, we can better see how God's plan to save the world was unfolding, stage by stage:

The Abrahamic Covenant: I will make you a great nation; a blessing to all other nations (Genesis 12:1-3).

The Mosaic Covenant: I will make you a holy nation; a kingdom of priests to represent Me to the world (Exodus 19:5,6).

The Davidic Covenant: I will give you an ultimate “son of David” who will rule over a forever kingdom (2Samuel 7:11-16).

Later, through Jeremiah, God would add a 4th and final covenant to His plan – **The New Covenant** (Jeremiah 31:31-34) – where He promised to give people new spirits, writing His laws on human hearts instead of on tablets of stone (a promise of the “new birth”).

All throughout history, devout Jews have looked for this promised “son of David” who was also called “the Messiah” (literally, “anointed one”). The messianic hope was that God would send this special person who would help the Jews achieve supremacy in the world and establish a kingdom that would endure forever.

Note: The royal line of David *seems* to disappear toward the end of the Old Testament. Israel went into Babylonian captivity (586 B.C.) and had no Davidic kings after that. However, the record of David's *royal line* was carefully preserved even when there was no “king” in office. For example, when Israel returned to their land after the Babylonian captivity, Zerubbabel was the “governor” (Haggai 1:1). He was, in fact, a descendant of David and *would have been a king* had the Jews had been allowed a king by their oppressors. Even so, God *viewed* Zerubbabel as the *conveyor* of the Davidic promise (see Haggai 2:20-23). Notice how Zerubbabel appears in the genealogies of Jesus (Matt. 1:12,13 and Luke 3:27).

Ultimately, the Davidic Covenant was fulfilled when Jesus arrived. This is why Matthew introduces Jesus with these words:

“The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham . . .” (Matthew 1:1).

During His public ministry, Jesus was repeatedly hailed as the son of David (eg. Matt.9:27; 12:23; 15:22; etc.). Most notably, when

He entered Jerusalem at the beginning of His final week, they sang: *“Hosanna to the Son of David”* (“Save us now, Son of David” Matt. 21:9). He claimed to be the long-awaited Jewish Messiah, and He gave evidences to support His claim through His words and deeds, especially His resurrection from the dead (Romans 1:3,4).

David’s kingdom expanded: 8:1-18

This chapter outlines Israel’s triumphs over her adversaries. David, through God-inspired leadership, brought Israel to national unity. Israel was now recognized as a powerful nation-state at the beginning of the 10th century B.C.

“So David reigned over all Israel; and David administered justice and righteousness for all his people” (8:15).

The promise to Abraham was now coming to fulfillment: *“I will make you a GREAT nation, and your name shall be GREAT” (Genesis 12:2; also 15:18-21).*

David knew that it was *“the Lord giving him victory wherever he went” (8:6,14).* He dedicated the spoils of war back to the Lord.

David is an amazing example of humbly acknowledging that his opportunities, victories, and all he acquired was ultimately God’s . . . and that it was God Who had enabled him to succeed. In the same way, I must dedicate my life, my home, my resources, my family, my possessions, talents and opportunities . . . to the Lord. Apart from His providence and blessings, I would have nothing. Of course, my relationship with Him is His greatest blessing to me!

David’s kindness to Jonathan’s son: 9:1-13

David was forever grateful to Jonathan for his friendship and support during the years of trial with Saul (Jonathan’s father). Even though Jonathan had died in battle, David sought to honor Jonathan’s family, remaining loyal to the covenant they had made with one another many years before. Jonathan had said:

“You shall not cut off your lovingkindness from my house forever, not even when the Lord cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.” So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, “May the Lord require it at the hands of David’s enemies.” Jonathan made David vow again because of his love for him, because he loved him as he loved his own life” (1Samuel 20:15-17, also v.42).

David found one remaining son of Jonathan, Mephibosheth, who was just 5 years old when his father Jonathan had died in battle. As his nurse fled with the little boy, she dropped him and he was badly injured in both legs (see 2Samuel 4:4), remaining crippled for the rest of his life. David invited the disabled Mephibosheth (now married with a son of his own, 9:12) to dine at his table as a son of the king. He also restored to him all the land that had previously belonged to his grandfather, Saul.

“It is better to not make a vow, than to vow and not fulfill it” (Ecclesiastes 5:5). Vows are promises that we make to other people. When making a vow, we should consider what it will take to fulfill it. There are unknowns in the future, and we will be tempted to break our vows. Yet, when our feelings are telling us to break a vow, we can draw on God’s strength to remain faithful to our word. What vows/promises have you made to people? Take time to reflect on how you are doing in fulfilling your vows. We are most like our faithful God when we are faithful to our vows.

David defeats Ammon and Syria: 10:1-19

David sought to show kindness to Hanun the Ammonite king, since Hanun’s father, Nahash, had previously shown kindness to David. Hanun suspected David of sending in spies, and responded by humiliating his goodwill ambassadors:

“Hanun took David’s servants and shaved off half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle as far as their hips, and sent them away” (10:4).

David did not retaliate; yet, the Ammonites and Arameans feared that he would, so they formed a coalition to fight against David. Joab and his brother Abishai led David’s army and successfully defeated this coalition. The result was, again, that David’s kingdom expanded even further as these formerly hostile nations submitted to his rule.

“When all the kings . . . saw that they were defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel and served them” (10:19).

Summary: These first 10 chapters of 2Samuel describe a “golden period” of David’s life when he was exemplifying life lessons such as: faith, courage, kindness, patience, worship, generosity, prayer and humility. To put it simply – David was walking closely with his God and, as a result, he was experiencing incredible blessing from God upon not only his own life, but also flowing outward to

the entire nation he was called to lead. Be sure that you spend time pondering this section of David's life, learning all of these positive lessons on how to do life with God. Sadly, it will all come to an abrupt end at the beginning of chapter 11, when David lets down his guard and his self-serving passions take over.

Extra thoughts on cultivating our Passion for God

A. W. Tozer's classic work, *The Pursuit of God*, may be the single best book ever written on the subject of passion for God. I encourage you to get it and study it in your own devotional reading time. Following are a few quotes to whet your appetite:

"God is a Person, and in the deep of His mighty nature He thinks, wills, enjoys, feels, loves, desires and suffers as any other person may. In making Himself known to us He stays by the familiar pattern of personality. He communicates with us through the avenues of our minds, our wills and our emotions. The continuous and unembarrassed interchange of love and thought between God and the soul of the redeemed man is the throbbing heart of New Testament religion." (And, may I add, Old Testament religion.)

"I want deliberately to encourage this mighty longing after God. The lack of it has brought us to our present low estate. The stiff and wooden quality about our religious lives is a result of our lack of holy desire. Complacency is a deadly foe of all spiritual growth. Acute desire must be present or there will be no manifestation of Christ to His people. He waits to be wanted. Too bad that with many of us He waits so long, so very long, in vain."

"The tragic results of this spirit are all about us. Shallow lives, hollow religious philosophies, the preponderance of the element of fun in gospel meetings, the glorification of men, trust in religious externalities, quasi-religious fellowships, salesmanship methods, the mistaking of dynamic personality for the power of the Spirit: these and such as these are the symptoms of an evil disease, a deep and serious malady of the soul."

"What God will do for the plain man or woman who seeks His face I believe I do know and can tell others. Let any man turn to God in earnest, let him begin to exercise himself unto godliness, let him seek to develop his power of spiritual receptivity by trust and obedience and humility, and the results will exceed anything he may have hoped in his leaner and weaker days."