

Prayers

To God

Ask the Lord to come and bless His people with power from on high. The more we pray, the more we focus on what God delights to do with His people.

For myself

Pray in thanksgiving for all you enjoy today, and think carefully about how you use the gift of your life. Offer your thoughts and prayers to Your Lord and God and listen to His voice.

For others

Weekly theme: Water

I praise You, Lord God, for You are the Living Water flowing through my life! You have been flowing throughout my life, taking me places where I would never have gone except for the 'current' of Your guidance! You have poured yourself into my soul to enable me to do what appears impossible, yet the flow of Your Water has carried me on! Your Living Water has supplied me with all the sustenance of life I need, and I am truly, supremely, awesomely and eternally grateful. THANK YOU. **AMEN**

Meditation

Our souls are thirsty when they miss out on the water of life;
Our minds become clogged when the Spirit of God is ignored;
Our lives have little direction without knowing that God loves us;
Our emotions overcome us unless we allow the Saviour in;
Our hearts have no direction unless driven by the will of God;
Our bodies are temples to self unless secured to Christ's Body;
Our eyes wander aimlessly without discipline from the Word;
Our feet walk worldly ways without obedience to revelation;
Our time is spent in selfishness lest yielded to Christ's will.

And we carry on, day by day, and as yet, the world doesn't stop;
But the more we yield to our God who is Father, Son and Spirit,
The more we find our purpose in life and in our eternal destiny.

Bible Passage

2 Samuel 5:1-5

¹ All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said,

¹Look, we are your own flesh and blood. ²In the past, when Saul was our ruler, you were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns, and the LORD said to you,

“You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become Israel's king.”

³ When all the elders of Israel had come to King David at Hebron, the king made a covenant agreement with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel.

⁴ David was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned for forty years. ⁵ He reigned over Judah for seven years and six months in Hebron, and he reigned over all Israel and Judah for thirty-three years in Jerusalem.

Review

This passage records David's anointing as king of Israel at Hebron. Yet he had been anointed king years ago by the prophet Samuel (1 Sam 16:13), in a prophetic anointing after which he was filled with the '*Spirit of the Lord*' (1 Sam 16:14). He was still a young boy, and his anointing set him on an extraordinary path in which he had to learn to live by faith and follow God's Spirit, often living in great danger while the disgraced King Saul reigned (1 Sam 11-31). Even when king Saul was killed in battle (1 Sam 31, 2 Sam 1), David had much to do to before he could become reign over all Israel and fulfil the call of the anointing he received from Samuel.

David experienced a meteoric rise to fame after his famous defeat of the Philistine Goliath (1 Sam 17). He came into favour and was married into the royal family of King Saul (1 Sam 18:27), but the old king resented David's success and he was exiled (1 Sam 19,20), forced to live 'on the run' with a band of followers before Saul eventually died in battle. But David was not trusted by everyone, certainly not by Saul's tribe of Benjamin! He was anointed for leadership over his own tribe of Judah, (2 Samuel 2:4), but this was bitter sweet for the man who believed that God wanted him to unite all Israel. He spent years fighting to do just this (2 Samuel 3,4).

Then, after the tribes of Israel were worn down by battle, the leaders of the northern tribes came to where David ruled Judah in Hebron. Now, at last, they realised what so many had believed for so long (5:2). David was the rightful leader of all Israel, from Judah in the south to the most northern tribes of Zebulun and Issachar. David was finally anointed King over all Israel by acclamation of the people (5:3-5).

Going Deeper

The king should have been Ishbosheth - according to most of Israel

In starting this brief sequence of studies you may have read this passage without knowing much about the previous chapters of 2 Samuel, chapters 1 to 4. You will find there some stories of devious intrigue and adventure, as extraordinary as any in the Bible! Israelite fought Israelite with venom and personal rivalry as the tribes of the north, dominated by Ephraim and the war-like Benjamin, tribe of the old King Saul, sought to eliminate the threat of David. They were intent on putting a son of Saul on the throne of Israel, a man named Ishbosheth (see 2 Sam 2:8f.) From their point of view, the great King Saul had died in battle with most of his sons, and only Ishbosheth was left.

Unfortunately, after Saul's defeat by the Philistines (1 Sam 31, 2 Sam 1), the Philistines placed most of Israel in poverty, and those who supported Ishbosheth were sadly disappointed at his abilities to command an army capable of confronting the Philistine threat. Then, when Abner, the faithful leader of Israel's armies was slaughtered by David's army commander Joab, there was no-one left to whom they could look for help. In a gory incident, two of Ishbosheth's army captains took matters into their own hands and killed Ishbosheth, bringing his head to David (2 Sam 4:6f.). David was furious at the unnecessary loss of life (2 Sam 4:9-12), but the die was now cast. The northern tribes were ready to accept that the only man left who could rescue them from the Philistine threat was their old hero who had once killed Goliath, the enigmatic David.

The tribes send representatives to David at Hebron

We must remember that at this point of time, Jerusalem was not the capital of any part of Israel, so David, anointed years previously by Samuel (1 Sam 16:13), and also anointed king over Judah more recently (2 Sam 2:4f.), reigned as king over the one tribe of Judah, from Hebron (5:1). The first words in our reading today seem simple, '*the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron ...*' (5:1), but everything we have now studied lies behind this abject submission on the part of Israel.

As an aside, any reader of the Bible should be aware that after the time of King Solomon, the son of David, the tribes of Israel split again, and split in exactly the same way, with Judah remaining loyal to David, and most of the rest siding with the larger tribes of the north, primarily Ephraim. The story of the tribe of Benjamin is a little different, partly because of its proximity to Jerusalem, the eventual capital of both Judah and Israel.

The leader's speech

One reason why the northern tribal leaders now came to accept David as their king was because David had always remained magnanimous towards Saul and his court, even though he had been hounded by the man. He always kept the door open for negotiation, and after years of patience, David's desire, and clearly God's desire, came to pass.

The northern tribes came to David confident that he was the only one who could command the respect of all Israel to be their king. The leader's speech to David made this all clear (5:2,3). They needed an experienced army commander to lead them again, and liberate them from the servitude imposed on them by the Philistines. They acknowledged David's past glories (5:2), and knowing that Samuel had anointed David some time ago, they were now prepared to put that anointing into effect by asking David to '*become Israel's King*' (5:2).

The covenant agreement

David was declared King at Hebron over all Israel (5:3), and he was anointed again by the tribal leaders who came to see him (5:3). The interesting feature of the verse is that it refers to a 'covenant' to seal the pact by which David became king of all Israel. Of course, as David would soon discover, the true covenant was not an earthly one but a heavenly one, and in the coming studies we will discover how God makes this known to David, and in the course of doing this sets out some of the amazing Messianic promises found in the Old Testament (see 2 Samuel 7).

The Hebrew word for a 'covenant' means a formal agreement between two parties, calling God as a witness. Here, the unity of the tribes of Israel was the subject of this covenant, and we gain the impression that the one great covenant between God and His people had been broken because of the liberality of the Israelite people during the days of the judges, when '*everyone did as he saw fit*' (Judges 21:25). Now the tribes were re-unified, and it was a great and triumphant day for David.

The formal record of a great event

As so often in scripture, these powerful and important facts of history are recorded with a minimum of fuss. Verses 4 and 5 are a formal record of the kingship of David, just over seven years as king over Judah alone in Hebron, and then thirty three years in Jerusalem. The fact that up to this point we have not heard anything about Jerusalem means that the story of the capture of David's great city is just about to come! David had won a great victory as king of all Israel and he now needed a capital city to reflect his authority.

The whole story is presented not so much as a triumph for David, but a triumph for God, and for David's trust in God over many, many years. We are also told that David became King over Judah when he was thirty, and after the great re-unification Covenant, he continued to reign over all Israel for a further thirty three years, making a total of forty years (5:4).

Discipleship

Application

The faith of David to wait on the authority of God

Two things are impressive about the long story concluded in this passage today, the faith of David, and the authority of God over the destiny of His people. Both were necessary for the re-unification Covenant which signalled a time of extraordinary success and growth in Israel.

Throughout, David kept himself completely at a distance from anything that would implicate him in the tragedies of the northern tribes under Saul, or the intrigues that surrounded the turmoil and war just prior to the reunification. It must have seemed strange to his own people, because David had ample opportunity to take advantage of the situation for his own benefit, but he did not. He knew that if he did this, then his authority as King would be that of an overlord not as a King who ruled by acclamation and consent. David was prepared to wait for this moment so that his authority would be accepted by the people as coming from God and not from himself. God was in control of the destiny of His people; it all needed to take time, and David was willing to wait on God despite the temptations to do otherwise.

Waiting for God

The years of trouble and strife must have seemed long to those who were waiting for liberation from their Philistine overlords; but their time of waiting was worth it to have a King such as David who truly knew the will of God. It is likewise important for us to realise that God has not left us when we feel vulnerable and exposed; his plans for our salvation and liberation may take time to be fulfilled, and we would do best to wait for Him. Leaders such as David do not come along often even in the life of the church; but they are worth waiting for; patiently.

Ideas for what to do

- What makes you impatient for what you feel God has to do? How can you leave these things before Him and be ready to wait for His solutions?
- Pray for all those who are leaders of God's people, and who must do their best to be responsible both to God and also to the people whom they represent.

Questions (for use in groups)

1. Are you aware of the three different anointings that David received before he became King of all Israel? Talk over the significance of all three.
2. Check over what you know of the story of David up to this point in time. How much of this is familiar within the church, and how much is relatively unknown?
3. Is it right for this Old Testament story to tell us to wait on God, when 'in Christ' we are now in full receipt of God's promises? Why should we wait now?

Final Prayer

Eternal and every loving God, You have been the help and refuge of Your people for generations. May we live in Your presence, love all that is good and true, and serve you in every part of our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **AMEN**