

GOD ESTABLISHES THE KINGDOM OF DAVID

2 Samuel 1:1-7:29

Key Verse: 7:16

"Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever."

The tragic death of King Saul and God's exaltation of David as king of Israel remind us of James 4:6, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." "The proud" represents fallen man. On the other hand, a humble man is a spiritual man; without being a spiritual man no one can understand the secrets of spiritual things. Saul was handsome and a head taller than others. But he was unspiritual; he did not know what he was doing or what was making him stumble.

Today's story is of how God made David king of Israel. It is heart-moving to observe David's speech and deeds while God was establishing him as king of Israel--at first, king of Judah at Hebron (1:1-3:5), then king of the united kingdom of Israel. (3:6-5:25) Most heroes of the world would first destroy their adversaries or political opponents when they rose to power. But David did not do such a thing. Do you know what he did? He did his best to please God whatever he did. May God give us wisdom to understand a man after God's own heart.

I. David becomes king over Judah (1:1-3:5)

First, David laments for the death of King Saul and his son Jonathan. (1:1-27) David was living in exile because Saul sought his life. But David fought bravely and defeated the Amalekites, an old foe of the nation of Israel, and returned to Ziklag and stayed there two days. David did what he could do in the time of adversity. On the third day a young Amalekite arrived from Saul's camp with news of Saul's death. When David asked him to tell him a complete story of the deaths of Saul and Jonathan, he said, "I happened to be on Mount Gilboa, and there was Saul, leaning on his spear, with the chariots and riders almost upon him. He asked me, 'Who are you?' 'An Amalekite,' I answered. Then he said to me, 'Stand over me and kill me! I am in the throes of death, but I'm still alive.' So I stood over him and killed him, because I knew that after he had fallen he could not survive. And I took the crown that was on his head and the band on his arm and have brought them here to my lord." (6-10)

The young Amalekite was an opportunist. He thought that David would be pleased by news of Saul's death. Also, he was expecting a warrior's reward. He did not know that David looked upon Saul, not as his personal enemy, but as the Lord's anointed. The young man lied to David, as if he had killed King Saul. David had him executed for lifting his hand against the Lord's anointed. Out of his fear of God, David did not gloat over the demise of the man who had distressed him and sought his life.

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David's sorrow for Saul and Jonathan was so sincere that he wrote a song of lament for them. David praised Saul as a mighty warrior. He also praised Jonathan. 1:26,27 read, "I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women. How the mighty have fallen! The weapons of war have perished!" David did not remember anything bad about Saul; he only remembered the strong and noble things Saul had done. His lament for his beloved friend Jonathan was heart-breaking. In dealing with the death of Saul, David revealed the mind of God. In this way, David pleased God and became a good example to the people of Judah.

Second, David becomes king over Judah at Hebron. (2:1-3:5) Even after Saul's death, David was living in exile. David could have had himself crowned king of Israel. But he did not use his human ability to make himself king. Instead, David prayed to God earnestly to lead him out of exile.

Look at verse 1. "In the course of time, David inquired of the Lord. 'Shall I go up to one of the towns of Judah?' he asked. The Lord said, 'Go up.' David asked, 'Where shall I go?' 'To Hebron,' the Lord answered." In verse 1b God answered, "To Hebron." So David went to Hebron with his family. As soon as David came back from exile, the men of Judah came to Hebron, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. God did not bring him to the capital city of Israel, but to a small town, Hebron,

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and made him king over the house of Judah. From God's perspective, David needed more training and time to unify the nation of Israel.

His first act after being anointed king of Judah was to send a letter to the men who had loved Saul so much that they had risked their lives to bury him properly. David praised their valiant act. In this way, he asked their support in unifying the nation. David did not want the nation divided into political factions. He wanted the nation united between the people of Judah and the people of Israel.

But it was not easy to unite the nation. People in high positions had too much to lose or gain. At that time, Joab was David's commander-in-chief, while Abner had been Saul's commander-in-chief. Abner had big political aspirations. So he made Saul's son Ish-Bosheth king. Once, when Joab and Abner met in Gibeon, there was a bloody battle between their men. Abner killed Joab's brother Asahel in battle, and the rivalry between Joab and Abner became more than political. Many men were victimized because of their power struggle.

II. David becomes king over all Israel (3:6-5:25)

First, Abner defects to David. (3:6-21) The war between the house of Saul and the house of David lasted a long time. David grew stronger, while the house of Saul grew weaker. Abner was the commander-in-chief of the army

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of Israel. He had strengthened his position in the house of Saul until he became lawless: he slept with a woman named Rizpah, who had been a concubine of King Saul. When Ish-Bosheth, the successor of King Saul, rebuked him for sleeping with his father's concubine, Abner was very angry because of what Ish-Bosheth said. Throughout history, whenever there has been a tragic event, a woman has always been behind it. Many historians said, "If Cleopatra's nose had been a little flatter, world history might have been different." We cannot say that Abner defected to the enemy, King David, because of a woman. But we cannot deny that this woman had fused Abner's loyalty to the house of Saul. Beneath the political crisis was God's intention to unify the nation of Israel. All Israel, including Abner, knew that God had promised to make David king over Israel. Abner had supported Saul's son because of his own political ambition, but he realized that Ish-Bosheth would be led to self-destruction. So he decided to defect to David.

When Abner went to David, David accepted him warmly. David was so magnanimous that he accepted the enemy general without fear. With the intention of uniting the nation, David asked of Abner that David's wife, Saul's daughter, be returned to him. Abner agreed, and it was done. Abner used his considerable influence to bring the elders of Israel, including even the Benjaminites (Saul's tribe), into David's camp. David welcomed and forgave his former enemy. He wanted peace among all his people. He did not want civil war. David was a shepherd who could put aside personal pre-

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judices for the sake of God's people. (3:12-21)

Second, Joab murders Abner. (3:22-39) Abner had killed Joab's brother Asahel in battle. (2:23) Since then, Joab, commander-in-chief of David's army, held a grudge against him. When Joab heard that Abner had come to David and gone back peacefully, he pursued Abner and tricked him into returning to David's camp. Joab took him aside, as though to speak with him privately. There Joab stabbed him in the stomach, and he died. Joab was a soldier in character. He knew how to fight and win. But his intellect did not extend to the peace and unity of the nation.

When David heard of this event, he burned with wrath and anger against Joab. But he did not punish him. He humbly prayed and asked God to deal with the guilty man. David was a man of prayer at the time of emotional turmoil. Realizing that the shedding of innocent blood was a sin against God, David wrote a song of lament for Abner and sang it. He and his people wept with penitent hearts. The people realized that not David but Joab had killed Abner. Thus the tenuous unity was not destroyed. Even though he was a king, David did not do what he wanted to do or live by his feelings. He lived to fulfill God's will for him in his generation.

Third, two opportunists, Recab and Baanah. (4:1-8) They were leaders of raiding bands. After Abner's death, it was obvious that David would be established as king over united Israel. These two men decided to win

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David's favor by murdering Ish-Bosheth, son of Saul. They went into the inner part of the house as if to get some wheat, and they stabbed Ish-Bosheth. After they had stabbed and killed him, they cut off his head. Taking it with them, they traveled all night and brought the head of Ish-Bosheth son of Saul to David. They proclaimed that the Lord had avenged David.

How did David respond to Recab and his brother Baanah? David said to them, "As surely as the Lord lives, who has delivered me out of all trouble..." (4:9b-12) David did not seek personal revenge, for he knew that the Lord would avenge him. Also, he honored Ish-Bosheth as king because David had the fear of God in his heart.

Fourth, David becomes king of the united kingdom of Israel. (5:1-5) It took seven-and-a-half years to unite the people of Northern Israel and Judah. It was not easy to win the trust of those who had supported Saul. When the fear of reprisal gradually dissolved, all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "We are your own flesh and blood. In the past, while Saul was king over us, 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 their ruler.'" (1b-2) When all the elders of Israel had come to King David at Hebron, the king made a compact with them at Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David king over Israel. (3) David was thirty years old when he became king. (4)

Fifth, David conquers Jerusalem. (6-16) After the conquest of the promised land, the Israelites had never been able to take the impregnable fortress of the city of the Jebusites, Jerusalem. But David conquered Jerusalem because he fought by the power of God. Thus he proved himself to be a mighty warrior to his people. In ancient times, it was tradition that a king prove himself as a mighty warrior stronger than other kings. After conquering it, David established Jerusalem as his capital city. Verse 10 says, "And he became more and more powerful, because the Lord God Almighty was with him." David was successful because God was with him when he depended on God.

Sixth, David, a man of prayer. (5:17-25) When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, they went up in full force to search for him. David, who had unified Israel and conquered Jerusalem, could have attacked the Philistines, although they were the leading power in the Near East at that time. But David did not depend on his own abilities and achievements. He humbly depended on God in prayer.

Look at verse 19. "So David inquired of the Lord, 'Shall I go and attack the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?' The Lord answered him, 'Go, for I will surely hand the Philistines over to you.'" So David went to Baal Perazim, and there he defeated them. This was his first major confrontation after becoming king of the united kingdom. But God was with him when he

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prayed. God broke out against David's enemies as water breaks out. So people called the battlefield "Baal Perazim," which means, "the Lord who breaks out."

The second time the Philistines came to fight, what did David do? Did he fight against them immediately? No! David prayed to God earnestly for help. (23) When he prayed, God was with him and taught him the strategy of victory. The author comments in verse 25, "So David did as the Lord commanded him, and he struck down the Philistines all the way from Gibeon to Gezer." David was a king. But he wasn't proud. He depended on God even when it seemed unnecessary to do so. David was a man of prayer before he was a king.

III. David brings the ark of God to Jerusalem (6:1-7:29)

First, David's attempt to bring the ark of God fails. (6:1-11) After David became king over united Israel, what did he do first? His heart's desire was to bring the ark of God to Jerusalem. David longed for God. David longed for God's presence. David longed for the testimony of God. So he decided to bring the ark of God to Jerusalem. To the people of Israel, the ark of the Lord was thought to be God's presence with them, and the word of God's promise was in it.

David was so overjoyed at the thought of bringing the ark of God to

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Jerusalem that he failed to wait for God's guidance. David's intention to bring the ark of God was admirable. But he did not pray before making his decision, and this was not pleasing to God. He put the ark on a new oxen cart driven by Uzzah. The procession was joyful. But he was serving God in his own way. And the result was tragic. When the oxen stumbled, Uzzah took hold of the ark to steady it. He should not have taken hold of it, but he touched it in ignorance. God immediately struck him, and he died.

David was angry, for Uzzah had acted in ignorance. In fact he was angry with himself for trying to bring the ark without prayer and without consulting the law of Moses. (Ex 25:12-16) Through this event, David learned that he should pray at a time of joy, as well as at a time of affliction. Through this event, the fear of God was restored in David's heart. So he let the ark remain in the house of Obed-Edom.

Second, David successfully brings the ark of God to Jerusalem. (12-19) David heard that God had blessed the house of Obed-Edom because of the ark. So he again decided to bring the ark to Jerusalem. This time he did it prayerfully in the way prescribed by God's word. (1 Ch 15:13,15) Then God allowed him to bring it safely to Jerusalem.

To David, this day was a cause for more rejoicing than the day God had made him king. He did not act like a proud king, but like a joyful child before his father. David, wearing a linen ephod, danced before the Lord

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with all his might, while he and the entire house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouts and the sound of trumpets. (14,15) David was so joyful that he danced with all his strength when God allowed the ark of God to dwell in the center of the nation. But his wife, Michal, Saul's daughter, despised him in her heart, for he danced like an ordinary man. Because of her legalistic view of David, Michal had no children to the day of her death. (6:23)

Third, God's promise to David. (7:1-29) 2 Samuel 7 is one of the most significant chapters in the Bible, for it contains God's promise to David which is associated with the birth of the Messiah. David had obtained what he wanted at heart: the unification of Israel, the kingship, and having the ark of God in the center of the nation. But unlike the people of the world, David did not want to enjoy his success. He only longed for God evermore, and God was pleased. (1-3)

God saw David's faith and spoke through the prophet Nathan. God had shared the pilgrim life of his people. He chose David to be shepherd of his people. David wanted to build a house for God, but God would establish David's house, and his kingdom would endure forever. This promise planted hope in God's people throughout the years of suffering. It became the seed of Messianic hope, and Jesus came to fulfill it. (4-17) Read 7:16. "Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever."

As soon as Nathan had finished his report, David went in and sat before the Lord and prayed. His prayer was mainly thanksgiving for God's marvelous grace. He thanked God for his grace to him and to his family. He thanked God for his promise to him and to his family. (18,19) He thanked God for what God had done according to his word and will. (20,21) David thanked God for delivering his people from slavery in Egypt and establishing their nation. (22-25) Finally David asked for God's mercy, that he would keep forever his promise concerning David and his house, so that God's name would be great forever. David was a man who knew the grace of God.

In this passage we learn that David was a man of God who served God's will to establish the united kingdom of Israel. For this, he gave his life. God saw his holy desire to serve God and made him king of the united kingdom of Israel, and promised him that his kingdom would be forever, saying, "Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever."