



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Lessons from the Life of David: Sermon #18

2 Samuel 5

“David: King of Israel”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Returning to 2 Samuel chapter 5 and reading the entire chapter.

“Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and spoke, saying, “Indeed we are your own bone and your flesh. Also, in time past, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and brought them in; and the Lord said to you, ‘You shall shepherd my people Israel, and be ruler over Israel.’” Therefore all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the Lord. And they anointed David king over Israel. [And you may remember, of course, that he’s already been anointed king of Judah.] David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah. And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spoke to David, saying, ‘You shall not come in here; but the blind and the lame will repel you,’ thinking, “David cannot come in here.” Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion (that is, the City of David).”

And if you remember your pictures of the city of Jerusalem, just to the south on the edge of what we know as the city of Jerusalem is Zion. Mount Zion is to the west. But Zion is that part, contiguous to the city of Jerusalem where David had his kingdom. And so that is what he is speaking about when he mentions the stronghold of Zion that is the City of David.

“Now David said on that day, ‘Whoever climbs up by way of the water shaft and defeats the Jebusites (the lame and the blind, who are hated by David’s soul), he shall be chief and captain.’ Therefore they say, ‘The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.’”

Incidentally, Chronicles tells us that the one who did, was Joab. And he was rewarded as a result of it. Zion stood upon a hill as a stronghold and the Jebusites were there. So, it was very difficult to reach and so easy to defend that that’s why they said, “The blind and the lame can defend against David.” The 9th verse.

“Then David dwelt in the stronghold, and called it the City of David. And David built all around from the Millo [Perhaps a word that means ‘landfill’.] and inward. So David went on and became great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him. Then Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters and masons. And they built David a house. So David knew that the Lord had established him as king over Israel, and that He had exalted His kingdom for the sake of His people Israel. And David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he had come from Hebron. Also more sons and daughters were born to David. Now these are the names of those who were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.”

I know you’ve always wondered about how those words should be pronounced and now you’ve heard the official pronunciation and you remember the rule, always pronounce them as if you know, whether you do or not, [Laughter] and you usually persuade those who are listening. Verse 17.

“Now when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David. And David heard of it and went down to the stronghold. [And, evidently, this is the cave Adullam.] The Philistines also went and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim. So David inquired of the Lord, saying, ‘Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will you deliver them into my hand?’ And the Lord said to David, ‘Go up, for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into your hand.’ So David went to Baal Perazim, and David defeated them there; and he said, ‘The Lord has broken through my enemies before me, like a breakthrough of water.’ Therefore he called the name of that place Baal Perazim.”

That word Baal means in certain contexts, lord, master, and was particularly the term for heathen gods, but it also mean just lord. And so this probably means something like, ‘they called the place the master of breakthroughs’ a reference to what the Lord did.

“And they left their images there, and David and his men carried them away. [Chronicles tells us that they burned them later.] Then the Philistines went up once again and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim. Therefore David inquired of the Lord, and He said, ‘You shall not go up; circle around behind them, and come upon them in front of the mulberry trees. [That term mulberry, is generally thought now by scholars to mean balsam. But it’s rather incidental. So, we’ll just call it the mulberry trees.] And it shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, then you shall advance quickly. For then the Lord will go out before you to strike the camp of

the Philistines.’ And David did so, as the Lord commanded him; and he drove back the Philistines from Geba as far as Gezer.”

May the Lord bless this reading of his word and let’s bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for this day that Thou hast given to us as we look out and see the weather, we realize that the things that Thou dost give to us are the things that we need, even when we may be puzzled by the kinds of weather that we must experience. But we recognize that Thou art the Lord of Heaven and Earth, that Thou art the giver of all that is good and merciful to the inhabitants of this earth, and we thank Thee and praise Thee for this day that Thou hast given to us.

We thank Thee for the life that Thou hast preserved within us and we pray, Lord, that our own thoughts may turn more and more, throughout this day and throughout the days of this week, to the worship and praise of our great God in Heaven. And we give Thee thanks for the greatness of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. We thank Thee for the Greater Son of David who came and who has confirmed the New Covenant in his blood and now waits until the accomplishment of all of the promises that have to do with divine redemption. And we are so grateful Lord on this, the Lord’s Day, that by Thy grace, Thy love has been set upon us and we belong to him. We worship Thee. We give Thee thanks.

We ask Thy blessing upon the whole of the Church of Jesus Christ today; wherever it meets and upon each individual member of that great body. We pray that Thou wilt encourage and strengthen and build us all up in our faith and bring us to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of Christ that is the goal of divine redemption.

We pray for Believers Chapel, we ask Thy blessing upon each member. And, the friends and visitors who come to the chapel, we pray for each one of them and for their

families. And, Lord, we remember those who have requested our prayers. We thank Thee for them; we thank Thee for their faith and, as is evidenced in the desire that the saints pray for them, we ask Thy blessing upon them and for some who are very ill, we bring them to Thee and ask that Thou wilt show mercy to them and glorify Thy name in their lives. Bless the ministry of the Chapel, its elders and deacons, the outreach and the tape ministry. Supply the needs that exist. And may the name of our Lord and Savior be exalted in this place. And now we ask Thy blessing upon us as we sing, as we listen to the word of God.

For Jesus' Sake. Amen.

[Message] The subject for today is, as you can tell from the bulletin, “David: King of Israel.” Reading through this chapter, I think, that you might think that there’s nothing really particularly unusual about it. David is crowned king in Hebron and crowned king of all Israel, having already been crowned king of Judah. But when you think of it in the light of the whole of the Scriptures, it becomes very, very significant. In fact, two of world history’s most significant events, both politically and spiritually or religiously, are found here, and, first of all, David’s royal anointing, because as you read through the Bible, the figure of David lies behind the whole of Christianity. If you’ll remember, that when the Lord, Jesus Christ is born, and I’m passing over all of those references to the Davidic covenant, which we’ll study in a week or so, in the Old Testament, to the message that Gabriel delivered when he announced the birth of the Lord, Jesus Christ, in Luke chapter 1, Gabriel made these comments. “He will be great, he will be called the son of the highest, and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father, David. And he will reign over the house of Jacob forever and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”

And so, the climax of the announcement of the birth of our Lord, is that he will be given the throne of his father, David. Now, when you come to the end of the Bible, in the Book of Revelation, in the very last chapter we have reference to David and to our

Lord's fulfillment of the relationship that they had, for he calls himself, or he is called in Scripture, “I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright and the morning star.” And so, the figure of David lies behind the whole of Christianity and, in fact, it would be a marvelous study for you sometime just to take your Concordance, and look up the term David, and then trace through David, the person and the covenant and the significance of it, through the Bible. And I'm sure, you would have one way of looking at the story of the word of God. And so his royal anointing, in which he comes to the throne of Israel, is of great importance for world history itself.

And the second thing that makes this chapter so important is Jerusalem's choice as his capital. It was made David's military and national capital. His own palace was built by Hiram on Zion, which is right next to Jerusalem, is now part of Jerusalem, and the stronghold of Zion is the place where he and other kings lived and carried out the ministry that was given to them as rulers. And so, Jerusalem's choice as capital is so great that all through the word of God, things are said with reference to that city, and in fact, all of the events of the Bible gather round, ultimately, the city of Jerusalem. So, it became for Israel the only accepted spiritual center for Israel and here is the beginning of the golden age of Israel's history, the rule of David and Solomon.

Now, you may know that it is an accepted fact that no sacrifice should ever be offered except in Jerusalem. So this is a very significant chapter, historically, David's royal anointing, Jerusalem's choice as capital. One of the historians has made this comment with reference to Jerusalem. “Jerusalem was destined to become the seat of the Hebrew government and the scene of the most extraordinary events and more strange and awful vicissitudes than any other city of the universe, not excepting Rome.” Of course, the greatest of the vicissitudes is the suffering and death of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, which was accomplished in the city of Jerusalem. And then, of course, like David, when we turn to the conclusion of the Bible, in Revelation chapter 21, John the Apostle sees the

New Jerusalem coming down from Heaven, the heavenly Jerusalem, underlining again the importance of both David and Jerusalem for the story that is found in the word of God.

Now, those who understand Scripture, in their hymn composing lay great stress upon it. And you sing hymns that have to do with both Zion and Jerusalem. Here in Believers Chapel, we sometimes sing the hymn written by John Newton. “Glorious things of thee are spoken, Zion city of our God, He whose word cannot be broken, formed thee for his own abode. On the Rock of Ages founded, what can shake thy sure repose? With salvation’s wall surrounded, thou mayest smile at all thy foes. Savior, if of Zion’s city I, through grace, a member am, let the world deride or pity, I will glory in Thy name. Fading is the worldling’s pleasure, all his boasted pomp and show, solid joys and lasting treasures, none but Zion’s children know.”

Now, you also probably know, if you look at the hymnology of the Christian Church, it reflects often the theology of the Christian Church, and in many of the hymns, Zion is taken to be the church of the Lord, Jesus Christ. But many of the other hymns, set forth Zion as it really is, a specific place, and the stronghold of Jerusalem. And Newton, in his particular hymn, has made reference to that. So when we come to 2 Samuel chapter 5, we are looking at a chapter that is exceedingly important from the standpoint of the whole program of the word of God.

But now, David is crowned as king. What a testimony to the virtue of patience. His most cherished hopes are realized, after years of patient waiting. It’s no wonder that David has written so many psalms in which he expresses the fact that we ought to wait on the Lord God. In Psalm 37, for example, I don’t think we’ve referred to this particular one, in the 37th Psalm, we read, “Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.” The 9th verse, “For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the Lord, They shall inherit the earth.” And again, in the 34th verse, “Wait on the Lord, and

keep His way, And He shall exalt you to inherit the land; when the wicked are cut off, you shall see it.”

So after all of the years that have passed since Samuel spoke to him and told him, as a very young man, that God intended to make him king, David finally comes to the goal to which Samuel had directed his eye and it's now reached. It really is a climactic event for David and yet, it's the beginning of his glorious reign. I guess that when we look at David we cannot help but note the comparison between David and our Lord and one can see it in this instance as well; for after a lengthy period of time of patience, the Lord Jesus shall, ultimately, have His eternal throne as a result of the accomplishments that he has brought to pass in his First Coming.

Well now, let's look for a few moments through the chapter, and the author begins with an account of the making of the covenant with Israel. You'll remember, if you've been following along in the story of David's life, that Abner, who was Saul's general, had really prepared the way for David's rule over the whole of the Twelve Tribes. In chapter 3 we read in verse 17.

“Now Abner had communicated with the elders of Israel, saying, “In time past you were seeking for David to be king over you. Now then, do it! For the Lord has spoken of David, saying, ‘By the hand of My servant David, I will save My people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and the hand of all their enemies.’” And Abner also spoke in the hearing of Benjamin. Then Abner also went to speak in the hearing of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel and the whole house of Benjamin.”

So having been crowned king of Judah and then when Abner was, as he thought, accused of something that was wrong and turned against Ishbosheth, as a result of the words of Abner and the influence of Abner, things were prepared for David to, ultimately, become ruler over the whole of the Twelve Tribes. And so, we read here now in chapter

5, “Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and spoke, saying.” Now, it’s interesting the grounds that they give for making David king over all of the Twelve Tribes. There are actually three of them. Notice them!

First of all, they spoke, saying, verse 1, “Indeed we are your bone and your flesh.” So the ties of kingship were, first of all, mentioned as the qualifications of David for the rule. Now, Moses had said some things about the king of Israel, a long time ago. And it might have seemed strange because they had no king and, as we know, it was not really God’s will, ideally, for Israel to ever have a king except the Lord himself. But, at any rate, they longed to have a king, just like the nations, and God did finally give them Saul.

And Moses had some instructions about the king and we read, for example, in Deuteronomy chapter 17 in verse 15.

“You shall surely set a king over you whom the Lord your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother.”

That’s so interesting because, of course, this was to be, ideally, the Lord Jesus Christ and the Lord Jesus Christ alone. But because of Israel’s desire to have a king just like the others. You know, it’s so difficult for Christians to be what they really are, different. It’s so difficult for them to realize that a different kind of life courses through the veins and the spirits of believers. It’s very difficult for us to realize that we are not of this world. We are separate. And so, in the case of Israel, they were told in the beginning that they were to have one of them, and one of them only, as a king. God intended, ideally, only our Lord Jesus Christ. But Israel was not willing to trust the Lord God alone as their king and so a succession of kings comes. And David is one of the line but they all point forward to the Lord Jesus Christ. So first of all then, they point out that

David is one of them. The ties of kingship, “Indeed, we are your bone and your flesh.” And so David qualified in that respect.

And then, secondly, they point to his proven leadership, they say, “Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and brought them in,” and so, consequently, they appeal to the fact that he stood out as a leader. And you could go back and read the passages in 1 Samuel chapter 18, specifically, three or four references there, verse 5, verse 13, verse 16, and verse 30. And they all make that point that when David was serving Saul, the soul of the nation was knit to him because of the accomplishments of him in his leading role. So, consequently, his proven leadership.

And we can put it down into the principles of this, that his calling is evidenced in his conduct as of the Lord. “By their fruits you shall know them.” Or “The test of the salt lies in the presence of its peculiar savor,” as it has been put. We say, “The proof of the pudding is in the eating.” And in David’s case, not only was he one of them, but he also had been proven to be a leader with excellent qualities.

And then, finally, at the end of verse 2, the third of the reasons, we read, “And the Lord said to you, ‘You shall shepherd My people Israel, and be ruler over Israel.’” So, ultimately, it was the divine approval. They had resisted him, the eleven tribes, under Ishbosheth, under Saul, but now they’ve become reconciled to him, acknowledged that God’s choice all along has been David.

And so, as a result of it, they came and came to him at Hebron. And David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the Lord. And they anointed David king over Israel. And he was anointed, of course, as a shepherd king. He was to shepherd them and to be a shepherd king.

One of the great themes of the word of God is that very fact; the Lord Jesus is our shepherd. David makes a great deal of it. Jacob, of course, spoke about the God who shepherded him all the days of his life. Micah speaks about one who shall stand and shepherd his people Israel. And so the kind of king that Israel is to have is not the kind

of king such as a Saddam Hussein or a Joseph Stalin an autocratic dictator but a shepherd king; one who rules but one who rules with the care and the concern that a shepherd manifests for his flock. And so he is the shepherd king and Samuel doesn't tell us this but 1 Chronicles chapter 12 tells us that when they came to Hebron and anointed him king, and when it had taken place, then they had a feast for several days.

In fact, I'll just turn over and read that section. It's 1 Chronicles chapter 12 and right at the end of the chapter.

“And they were there with David three days, eating and drinking, for their brethren had prepared for them. Moreover those who were near to them, from as far away as Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali, were bringing food on donkeys and camels, on mules and oxen, provisions of flour and cakes of figs and cakes of raisins, wine and oil and oxen and sheep abundantly, for there was joy in Israel.”

And so they celebrated it with three days of feasting. Then there is a brief chronological note in verses 4 and 5 that we will pass over. But we note now that after David has been anointed king, his thoughts turn toward Jerusalem.

Now, Jerusalem had a Jebusite fortified citadel right in its midst, so to speak. And so, as David looked out over the scene and reflected upon the fact, he realized that the Jebusites, a Canaanite people, should not be allowed to live within Israel, and particularly right in the city. That seemed to be to him the ideal capital city. So in a remarkable exhibition of faith, of political and military foresight, David and his men go to Jerusalem to take the citadel of the Jebusites. We read, “And the king and his men,” and evidently, that's the six hundred men, “who were his army for so long, and they went against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spoke to David, saying, ‘You shall not come in here; but the blind and the lame will repel you,’ thinking all along that it's impossible for David to overcome this citadel.”

Now, I think of course that it was remarkable foresight that David thought of Jerusalem. If you look back at the history of that part of the country, you can remember that it must have had for him a great deal of nostalgia. Abraham had offered up Isaac at Mount Moriah, right nearby. The great men of the Old Testament had often passed by, those that preceded David, had often passed by that hill and they looked at it. And now David, in thinking about his kingdom, looks at it as the ideal place to have his kingdom. But, when he arrives, the Jebusites hold it. And they are so confident that they will keep that stronghold that they say to him, look, if we only have cripples, you cannot take it. The cripples can keep this city. It's such a stronghold. They thought themselves impregnable, obviously. And so a garrison of cripples they felt could defend the city against David and his men.

Now, one of the reasons, of course, that David wanted this was the simple reason that the presence of alien Jebusites in the land was something that disturbed him very much, because God had said all along that Israel is to be a separate people. Just like the church of Jesus Christ, Israel is to be a separate people. And to have Jebusites right in the midst of the land and among them was something that he could not take. The presence of alien peoples in the midst of the peoples of God, defiant of David and worshippers of blind and lame idols, it was something that he felt he ought to get rid of.

Someone has put it this way, “For such an alien element to occupy a strong hold in the very heart of the country, was a most galling thought to one intensely patriotic and brave, and could not but have suggested to him the defective courage and faith of his ancestors in Israel, who allowed such a thing to be possible. It was no mere love of fighting, no desire to create a diversion on his accession to power that induced him to challenge his best men to seize the position. It was statesmanship, regard for the purity of the national life, and the honor of him who originally gave the land to Israel for an inheritance. The people of God must be separate from the heathen.” And so for fundamentally spiritual reasons but spiritual reasons that had military significance for him,

he determined that the powers of darkness represented by the Jebusites would not have a foothold in his land. And so he came and he offered a challenge to his men and the challenge is represented in verse 8, “Who ever climbs up by way of the water shaft and defeats the Jebusites” he shall be chief and captain.

Now, there was a spring, the spring of Gihon, which was to the south and east of that mountain or that citadel, and it was there that the Jebusites and others who lived up on the stronghold got their water. And there was a shaft that went from the top down, within, to the spring. And so David conceived the idea, the way to get in to the stronghold is by the water shaft. And it was, of course, a brilliant piece of military maneuvering and Joab and some of the men managed to go up the shaft and into the city and overcame the Jebusites on the top of it. So by so doing, he conquered the stronghold, masterminded by David but conquered by his men, and then the city, as a result of that, because of the fact that David was really the mastermind behind it, came to be called the City of David. David did some construction around it, evidently, to strengthen it further. And the writer of the chapter adds the important point in verse 10, “So David went on and became great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him.”

Now, you may have puzzled about the expression, “The blind and the lame” and especially that clause “Who are hated by David’s soul, who are hated by David’s soul.” You might think that was personal animosity, but I don’t think that is what the author intends for us to understand by it. What he intends for us to understand by it is the same thing that we are to understand when the Lord Jesus says, “If a man does not hate father and mother, brother and sister, he cannot be my disciple.” He means, in other words, hate in the sense of despising anything that is contrary to the purpose of God. And these individuals were hated by David, not personally, but because they represented the intrusion of the kingdom of Satan within the kingdom of the Lord God. And so, the city was taken.

You know, there is something very interesting about this to me. Now, I happen to be a student, and have been for many years, of the Epistle of the Hebrews. And, if you'll remember, the author of the Epistle of the Hebrews makes a great deal over the fact that the Lord Jesus is a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. Now, Melchizedek appears in the Bible in Genesis 14 and then one verse in Psalm 110, written by David, “Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” And we have often wondered why the Lord Jesus is called a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. What's the connection? Well, if you'll remember, Melchizedek when he met Abram is called King of Salem. Now, Salem is the old name for Jerusalem. So Melchizedek had a priesthood, of God Most High, on Salem, or in Salem, inclusive, evidently, of the stronghold of Zion.

So when David conquered Jerusalem, the priesthood that belonged to Melchizedek, evidently, was regarded as now belonging to him. And so, in the case of David, we have one who is both king and the inheritor of the priesthood of the Most High God.

Now, the Lord Jesus, we know, is a king and a priest, High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, but also one who has the throne of David. And so, evidently, the figure of the king/priest is the result, ultimately, at least in David's thinking, of the taking of the old kingdom of Salem, where the high priesthood of Melchizedek existed. So isn't it interesting, that this little event has such significance for the ministry of the Lord Jesus and the 7th, particularly, of the 7th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews?

Well, from verse 9 on, we read of the consolidation of David's kingdom, a local consolidation, and he constructs the citadel in a way to further protect his palace. And then, Hiram, King of Tyre, they did have economics in those days, business, and Hiram at Tyre had a large business and one of his businesses was in woodwork. And he wanted to have good relationships with this rising and budding kingdom, and so he provided for David messengers with the promise of cedar trees and carpenters and masons and they

built David a palace, a house. Now, as a result of that, we read an interesting thing in verse 12, “So David knew that the Lord had established him as king over Israel.”

You know, you would never know that David had some of the feelings that you and I have. That is, at times, we want some confirmation. And David seems to have no problems. But every now and then, you can see evidence of the fact that David is just like you and just like me. He follows what he thinks is the will of God but from time to time the confirmations are given to encourage him further. I like to read that because it reminds me how I, too, feel much the same thing when I feel I’m doing the Lord’s will but then there comes a confirmation from the Lord that it really is the Lord’s will.

And so we read Hiram’s response to David’s kingdom and all that had happened, brought him further knowledge that the Lord had established him as king over Israel, and that “He had exalted His kingdom for the sake” not of David, you’ll note but “for the sake of His people Israel.”

Now, the remainder of the chapter records decisive defeats of the Philistines and it’s very interesting, I think I’ll just mention what takes place, he was now forced again to deal with the Philistines. They heard the news that David had been anointed king over the Twelve Tribes and they recognize here an enemy. And, furthermore, that he now was in Jerusalem, and consequently, disturbed by the anointing, disturbed by the capture of Jebus, which was the old name for Jerusalem when the Jebusites were there, the capture of Jerusalem, the enemies of the people of the Lord attack.

And so the account is given of them. And when the Philistines came up, David went down to the stronghold and there gathered his men together and, no doubt, thought about what they were going to do. And so, he inquired of the Lord and the Lord said, “Go up against the Philistines, he would doubtless deliver them into their hands.” And the result was that David went to Baal Perazim and David defeated them there. And David said, “The Lord has broken through my enemies before me, like the breakthrough of water.” In other words, the victory is so decisive it’s as if the Lord burst through ahead

of him. He's the Lord of the Breakthrough. And the result was that the gods of the Philistines, who had been carried there by their men, had been left on the field and David and his men gathered them up. You know, it's a terrible thing to have a god that you have to carry around, isn't it? [Laughter] It really is. How much better is it to have a God who carries us around. And Isaiah, in one of his great chapters in his prophesy makes that point. “The heathen have to carry their gods around. They have to put them on wagons with beasts of burden, who have a hard time carrying them about. But our God carries us.”

And so they won. But that's not enough because the Philistines decide they are going to attack again. And so they come up again in the Valley of Rephaim. And this time, when David inquired of the Lord, the Lord said, “Now, we'll not do it the same way this time.” No doubt the Philistines were prepared for the frontal attack this time. And so, the Lord said, “Now, we'll just have a little surprise attack from the rear. And David, you gather around and get in the rear of them. That will also cut off their escape, so if they manage to try to escape, they'll have to go a circuitous route. And when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees,” the Rabbis like to speak of this as the angels in the top of the trees. Probably related to the fact that in Psalm 104, the angels are called winds and spirits, remember. In fact, spirit is a term used of angels in the word of God. But, “When you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, then you shall advance quickly. For the Lord will go out before you to strike the camp of the Philistines.” And so they gathered around in the rear and concealed themselves until finally, the sound came and the wind of the spirit of God, flowing through the trees, made the rustling sound, sound like marching men. And David said, “Quick, attack. And they attacked the sleeping Philistines,” at least, they were sleeping in the sense of totally unprepared and God drove the Philistines back through David from Geba as far as Gezer. There is a place for waiting and there is a place for acting. And this was the time to act.

Well, let me conclude with just a few comments. You can see, as you read this chapter and ponder it that under girding and controlling David's life is the sovereign electing grace of God. I'd like to look at all of the verses. I won't. I'll just mention them. Verse 3, verse 7 and 8, verse 10, verse 12, verse 20, verse 24, they all underline the fact that the secret of David's success is the blessing of the sovereign God who is caring for him and who is with him. Oh, the blessing of having His blessing! Isn't it magnificent! When we realize that God as the sovereign God is with us through Jesus Christ, what a blessing that is to know that fact, the gods of the heathen are not like our God.

I think I mentioned, a couple of weeks ago, I was over in the Harvey house eating breakfast. And there was a table nearby with six or eight people. They, evidently, were down for the weekend. And a young boy came in, a teenager, and he had on a T-shirt. And I looked over and saw it. It says, “Their rock is not like our Rock.” Their rock is not like our Rock. And I recognized it, immediately, as being a text from Deuteronomy chapter 32 in verse 31, “For their rock is not like our rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.” And I imagine there were quite a few Philistines, after those two battles, who said the problem with us is we have the wrong god. Our gods are different from their gods. Our rocks are weaker than their rock, their Jehovah.

How marvelous it is to have the confidence that God's sovereign electing grace sustains us in all the experiences of our lives. But, you'll notice too, sudden trying reversals may come to God's saints. Just as David has been anointed king and just as he has taken Jerusalem, and everything seems marvelous and wonderful, the Philistines attack. It's not surprising that when we think we have everything nice and easy, that things turn out otherwise. And the reason that these things happen, no doubt, is to wean us from confidence in men, to confidence in things, to confidence in ourselves, to hinder us from building too permanent a nest down here upon this earth. But we can rest in the determination that God is going to fulfill his promise.

The Lord Jesus is baptized as the Son of God and the voice from Heaven comes. “This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.” And then, the Spirit drives him into the wilderness to be tested for forty days.

Joseph has his dream and his brethren bow down before him, and it looks as if Joseph is going to have a marvelous future. And what happens? His brethren hate him and send him into captivity. As a matter of fact, hope he might die.

So, the motto of King Alfred is very fitting. “If today thou be conqueror or err of the fight, tomorrow.” If today thou be conquered, prepare for the fight of tomorrow. So, it’s not surprising then that the reversals come.

And, finally, you’ll notice David, again, constantly seeking divine guidance. He used his mind; God has given us a mind. We are to use our mind. But he submitted his mind to the sovereign control of the Lord God. So, using his own mind, he inquired of the Lord.

And I can imagine that some of the people around David, when David would say to the ephod please. Call Abiathar. Abiathar still had the ephod. And the ephod was something that David could speak to and gain a message from the Lord God.

I imagine that when things became a little difficult, they would say among themselves, “The King’s going to call for the ephod.” And so, he inquired of the Lord, used his own mind but submitted it to the Lord.

So the methods of God vary. He sometimes wins battles by the frontal attack. Sometimes by the attack from the rear, but the constant touch with the Lord God was the secret of David’s success. And I suggest to you, that that’s the only way in which you and I will be able to accomplish the Christian life, to the blessing of us and the pleasure of the Lord God.

When the Lord Jesus is ready to choose his apostles, he prays all night as he selects the twelve men. When the Lord Jesus leaves the apostles to cross the sea, he goes up into the mountain. And as they are dealing with the wind and the waves, he’s on the

mountain praying. In Gethsemane, as he faces his greatest trial, he's on his knees praying, constantly. As a matter of fact, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews adds something not found in the Gospels. He prayed with strong crying and tears.

Now, we had a marvelous little section in the bulletin, two, three weeks ago on prayer. And it came from Mr. Spurgeon. He said, “No doubt, by praying we learn to pray. And the more we pray, the oftener we can pray and the better we can pray.” And then Mr. Spurgeon went on to give some illustrations of the men of the word of God who prayed. And he made the point, which I think is very significant and that's this, that you don't become a prayer warrior unless you learn to persevere in prayer. And that when we have individuals praying like Abraham and Jacob, all night at Peniel and the Lord's praying all night, and Elijah praying to shut up heaven, those men did not live lives in which they rarely prayed but on some occasion prayed, but rather, their lives were characterized by constant prayer and growth in perseverance in prayer.

And I suggest to you, as Christians, that that's the only way in which you and I will truly live a life that is pleasing to the Lord God. But, as we look it over, there's a remarkable sagacious statesmanlike leader, King David, spiritual to the degree that he wrote the magnificent psalms that he wrote. Yet, in times of stress, this sagacious statesmanlike strong heroic man inquires of the Lord God. May we do the same. There is no way that you and I, less gifted than King David, can succeed if we do not make it a habit of our lives, to inquire of the Lord God.

Let's close our meeting in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the word of God and we are thankful for the blessings of life that are ours, through Jesus Christ. And, Lord, we pray that by Thy grace, Thou wilt enable us to truly pray effectively. Give us perseverance in prayer. Help us to understand our weakness and our need. And may, as a result, we be useful to Thee in the work Thou art doing. And go with us now.

“David: King of Israel” by S. Lewis Johnson
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We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.