The City of David

Devotional Reading: Hebrews 12:18–29
Background Scripture: Joshua 15:63; Judges 1:21; 2 Samuel 5:1–6:23; 24:18–25; 1 Kings 15:5

2 Samuel 5:1–12

[1] All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "We are your own flesh and blood. [2] 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.' "

[3] When all the elders of Israel had come to King David at Hebron, the king made a covenant 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 forty years. [5] In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years.

[6] The king and his men marched to Jerusalem to attack the Jebusites, who lived there. The Jebusites said to David, "You will not get in here; even the blind and the lame can ward you off." They thought, "David cannot get in here." [7] Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of Zion—which is the City of David.

[8] On that day David had said, "Anyone who conquers the Jebusites will have to use the water shaft to reach those 'lame and blind' who are David's enemies." That is why they say, "The 'blind and lame' will not enter the palace."

[9] David then took up residence in the fortress and called it the City of David. He built up the area around it, from the terraces inward. [10] And he became more and more powerful, because the LORD God Almighty was with him.

[11] Now Hiram king of Tyre sent envoys to David, along with cedar logs and carpenters and stonemasons, and they built a palace for David. [12] Then David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel and had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel.

Key Text

David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel and had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel. **—2 Samuel 5:12**

Generations:

From Canaan to Jerusalem

Unit 3: From Judges to Kings

Lessons 9–13

Lesson Aims

After participating in this lesson, each learner will be able to:

1. List the roles in which David served Israel.
2. Explain the significance of the covenant David made with the elders of Israel.
3. Write a prayer of intercession for a shepherd or leader in their life.

Lesson Outline

Introduction
- A. Wearing Different Hats
- B. Lesson Context

I. Anointed King (2 Samuel 5:1–5)
- A. Tribes Assemble (vv. 1–2)
  Shepherd's Care
- B. Covenant Drawn (v. 3)
- C. David Reigns (vv. 4–5)
  Waiting with Purpose

II. Conquering King (2 Samuel 5:6–12)
- A. The Jebusites' Boast (v. 6)
- B. David's Victory (vv. 7–8)
- C. The City of David (vv. 9–10)
- D. An Exalted Kingdom (vv. 11–12)

Conclusion
- A. Victory Comes from God
- B. Prayer
- C. Thought to Remember

Introduction

A. Wearing Different Hats

An editor of this publication has a collection of seven hats that reflect his various jobs, ministries, and interests over the years. His Greek fisherman's hat represents the expectations of Mark 1:17. The hexagonal-shaped hat, known as a "tam," represents his years of academic studies. Three military hats signify the different positions he held in the Air Force. The Union "kepi" highlights his interest in studying significant historical events. Finally, a baseball cap with a built-in ponytail reveals an attempt at being a comedian.

Metaphorically speaking, we each wear different "hats," each representing the various roles we take on in life. Whether as a friend, neighbor, parent, grandparent, spouse, sibling, coworker, or volunteer, these roles or "hats" persist throughout the various stages of life. Some of these roles come of our own accord; others come by no choice of our own. Changes in these roles can lead us down paths that may be appreciated or regretted. This is no less true for Bible characters such as David.

B. Lesson Context

David's path to the throne took many long and tortuous turns as he transitioned from one role to another. He was anointed king by Samuel (1 Samuel 16:1–13), but it would be years before he actually took on that role. Instead, he was thrust into the role of musician for the reigning king, with concurrent roles as shepherd and warrior (16:14–23). The latter role became particularly prominent during his showdown with Goliath (17:48–53; 18:7).

David then became a successful military commander (1 Samuel 18:30). During that time, he accepted the additional role of son-in-law to the king (18:17–27). However, this position came with the unfortunate consequence of becoming the king's enemy (18:8–11). As a result, David found himself in the long-term role of fugitive (19:1–22:23; 23:7–26:25).

After the death of Saul and the ensuing civil war in Israel, David stepped into the role of king

over the tribe of Judah (2 Samuel 2:1–11). This role was about to change as the narrative in 2 Samuel 5 begins. A parallel passage of today's lesson text is 1 Chronicles 11:1–9.

David's long, meandering road to kingship might seem to be the product of life's chances and David's resilience. But David and all of Israel came to see God behind it all.

I. Anointed King

(2 Samuel 5:1–5)

A. Tribes Assemble (vv. 1–2)

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

We should not take this statement to imply that every Israelite in each of the twelve *tribes* comes before *David.* Rather, "all the elders of Israel" come as representatives of *all the tribes of Israel* (2 Samuel 5:3). A civil war among the Israelites had prevented David from assuming the throne over all twelve tribes immediately after Saul's demise (2:8–10). Now, representatives from each come to acknowledge David as their leader.

The significance of *Hebron*, located about twenty miles south of Jerusalem, dates back to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, all of whom were buried there (Genesis 49:31; 50:12–13). After Saul's death, the Lord sent David to reside in Hebron, where he was anointed as king by the tribe of Judah (2 Samuel 2:1–4).

1b. "We are your own flesh and blood.

The tribal representatives now begin to explain the basis of their submission to David's rule. This first claim is an acknowledgment of familial linkage; they are of the same *flesh and blood* as David. Notably, their acknowledgment comes only after a lengthy civil war that left the representatives with little choice but to fall in line with David's ascendancy (2 Samuel 2:8–4:12; see Lesson Context).

2. "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.' "

The representatives then acknowledge David's military leadership (see Lesson Context, above). Their final acknowledgment is the weightiest: *the Lord said* that David would be the one to *shepherd my people Israel*, drawing on shepherding as an image to symbolize leadership (Numbers 27:15–17; 2 Samuel 7:7; 1 Kings 22:17; etc.). To shepherd people includes the idea of "feeding," as the word is translated in Isaiah 44:20. David had originally been a literal shepherd for his family's flocks (1 Samuel 16:11). The Lord extends this role figuratively to expand the scope of David's care to the whole of Israel. The designation *ruler* concretizes this idea.

What Do You Think?

How does the example of Israel's recognition help us understand the importance of remembering God's work?

Digging Deeper

What past moments has God used to confirm his plan? How can recalling those help you trust him in the present?

Shepherd's Care

W. Phillip Keller (1920–1997) grew up in the farmlands of East Africa as the son of missionaries. As a young boy, he observed firsthand the devotion of local shepherds tending their flocks of sheep. Their diligence left a lasting impression on Keller, and as a young adult, he moved to Canada to study agriculture and animal husbandry. He intended to return to East Africa to support his family's mission work. But God had other plans. Years later, Keller, his wife, and kids developed a plot of land on Vancouver Island, British Columbia. There, Keller applied his training and experience to become both a shepherd and an expert in livestock management.

In this role, Keller began to develop observations regarding spiritual life. He noticed how sheep—helpless, timid, fearful, and prone to folly—depend entirely on their shepherd for survival. Drawing on these insights, Keller wrote the now-classic book, *A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23.*

When the Israelite leaders came to David, they were like sheep in need of a shepherd. As a former shepherd himself, David was uniquely positioned

to care for them and lead them as king. But to lead well, he would need to submit to the care of the Good Shepherd. Are you living with awareness of your need for the Good Shepherd (see Psalm 23)?

—VM

B. Covenant Drawn (v. 3)

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

Now the terminology shifts from generalizations to specifics. "All the tribes of Israel" of 2 Samuel 5:1a become *all the elders of Israel.* Likewise, "ruler" of 5:2 becomes "king" here. The elders, those with leadership roles representing the people, *come to King David.* This is the first time that all Israel calls David "king."

Covenants typically outline the responsibilities of all parties involved. The ruler is often expected to provide for common defense and to treat subjects justly. In return, subjects swear allegiance to the ruler. The exact stipulations of this *covenant* are unknown. The murdered Abner was the one who broached the idea of establishing this covenant so that David could rule all the tribes (2 Samuel 3:21). That this covenant is agreed to *before the Lord* indicates the sincerity of both parties. They understand that to renege would be to invite God's judgment.

The purpose of the covenant is clear: it is to anoint *David king over Israel.* David has been anointed twice before—first by Samuel (1 Samuel 16:12–13) and then by the tribe of Judah (2 Samuel 2:1–4). Although this is David's third anointing, it is the first time that all Israel acknowledges him as king.

How to Say It

Gihon	*Gye*-hahn
Hebron	*Hee*-brun or *Heb*-run
Jebusites	*Jeb*-yuh-sites
Joab	*Jo*-ab
Millo	*Mill*-o
Zeruiah	*Zer*-oo-*eye*-uh
Zechariah	*Zek*-uh-*rye*-uh

C. David Reigns (vv. 4–5)

4. David was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years.

Son, shepherd, musician, warrior, commander, husband, son-in-law, fugitive, king—those are enough roles for two lifetimes! Yet David had labored in all of them by age *thirty.* We do not know how much time passed between Samuel's anointing of David in Bethlehem and the anointing in Hebron; some commentators suggest at least a decade.

The number *forty* is often used symbolically in biblical narratives to signal completion; it is also the number of years the biblical authors use for the span of a generation (example: Numbers 32:13). There is no indication in the verse before us that David's reign of *forty years* is anything but literal (compare 1 Kings 2:11). Elsewhere in Scripture, other kings have forty-year reigns (1 Kings 11:42; 2 Chronicles 24:1; contrast 1 Samuel 13:1). But that does not preclude this number from also having symbolic significance. The mention of this number in the verse before us may be intended to communicate to the original audience the significance of Israel's period of a unified monarchy and to encourage the audience to look for God's involvement as the monarchy develops, strengthens, but ultimately falls apart during the reign of David's son.

What Do You Think?

In what ways have you seen God use a long or difficult season to prepare you for future service to him?

Digging Deeper

What steps can believers take to strengthen faith and develop perseverance during seasons of waiting?

Waiting with Purpose

I recall yearning to establish a ministry centered on the transformative power of forgiveness. Dreaming of this ministry, I envisioned writing a book and traveling across the country to speak in front of audiences, sharing the power of forgiveness.

Looking back on those aspirations, I am grateful that God did not grant me that ministry right away.

I was naïve and inexperienced, having a limited understanding of biblical principles of forgiveness. Now, nearly forty years later, I have experienced both giving and receiving forgiveness. Those experiences couldn't be rushed; they came only with time.

Scripture provides numerous accounts of individuals who inexplicably wait for long periods. Sarah waited for a child. Jacob waited for a wife. Moses waited for deliverance. And David waited to become king. He may have just been a teenager when the prophet Samuel anointed him king over Israel. Can you imagine a sixteen-year-old with a *license to reign*? If David hoped to get the keys to the throne that day, he was severely disappointed. Knowing that the next decade would involve not only waiting for the throne but also enduring suffering, he might have wondered if one of his brothers would have made a better choice.

The young shepherd boy had to wait and wait before being crowned. During this time, God used the delays to help David deepen his trust in him. Are you waiting? What is God growing in you during this time? —VM

5. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years.

That David reigns *over Judah* for *seven years and six months* suggests that Israel's civil war lasts at least that long (compare 2 Samuel 2:8–4:12). When we think of David's kingship, we may automatically associate him with his reign over all Israel in Jerusalem. But nearly a fifth of his kingship is over only Judah in Hebron! The reason is simple: up to this point, Jerusalem is not yet under Israelite control. But that situation is about to change.

What Do You Think?

Throughout this quarter, how have you noticed God's faithfulness displayed among the generations of Israelites?

Digging Deeper

How has God's faithfulness been evident among the generations of your family and your church community?

II. Conquering King

(2 Samuel 5:6–12)

A. The Jebusites' Boast (v. 6)

6. The king and his men marched to Jerusalem to attack the Jebusites, who lived there. The Jebusites said to David, "You will not get in here; even the blind and the lame can ward you off." They thought, "David cannot get in here."

This verse begins the narration of an impressive list of achievements that occur under David's leadership and by God's power. David's first order of business is to continue the divine mandate to dispossess the inhabitants of the land (compare Deuteronomy 11:22–25; Joshua 1:1–6). A complete list of enemy groups to expel is found in Deuteronomy 7:1; Joshua 3:10; 24:11.

Due to its inherent desirability, the city of *Jerusalem* is David's strategic starting point for fulfilling the conquest. In the ancient world, sites for cities were chosen with three primary factors in mind: (1) defensibility, (2) access to water, and (3) proximity to trade routes. Being located on a hill, near the Gihon Spring, and along prominent east-west and north-south roads, Jerusalem checks all three boxes.

The city is located just inside the territory of Benjamin and near the border with the tribe of Judah (Joshua 18:11, 16). Both tribes had previously tried and failed to dislodge *the Jebusites* from Jerusalem (15:63; Judges 1:21). These two failed attempts may explain the Jebusites' "trash talk" occasioned by this third attempt to remove them once and for all. The taunt makes fun of the supposed weakness of David's army. The Jebusites believed that even their weakest members, including *the blind and the lame*, could thwart Israel's strongest combatants. Furthermore, they were confident in their city's defenses, believing that *David cannot get in here.*

B. David's Victory (vv. 7–8)

7. Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of Zion—which is the City of David.

Despite the Jebusites' favorable position and justified confidence, *David captured the fortress.* The narrator announces David's significant

victory with minimal fanfare and without a detailed description of the battle.

This verse is the first appearance of the word *Zion* in the Old Testament. The origin of the name remains uncertain; it might have been the Jebusites' name for the fortress, the hill on which it stood, or the city as a whole. In Hebrew literature, "Zion" eventually becomes interchangeable with "Jerusalem" (Psalm 147:12; etc.). David establishes the city as the administrative and political capital of his kingdom, transforming the Jerusalem of the Jebusites into *the City of David.*

8. On that day David had said, "Anyone who conquers the Jebusites will have to use the water shaft to reach those 'lame and blind' who are David's enemies." That is why they say, "The 'blind and lame' will not enter the palace."

The narrator describes David's battle strategy, which involves exploiting a weak point of the Jebusites' otherwise favorable position. Because Jerusalem is situated on a hill, the city lacks immediate access to a river for water. In ancient times, the city's main source of water was the nearby Gihon Spring. It is located in the valley on the city's east side and features a *shaft* (channel) for access to its water. This channel represents a weak point in the ancient city's defenses, and the Israelite attackers exploit it to invade the city. The Jebusites apparently do not consider this as they taunt David's army.

David's harsh words in response are simply him turning the Jebusites' taunts against them. They had taunted his army by suggesting they were unable to defeat their weakest members, so David countered by calling their entire community weak. It is important to note that David also shows kindness to those suffering from physical ailments at other times (see 2 Samuel 9).

The parallel account in 1 Chronicles 11:6 mentions that the person who led this attack is "Joab son of Zeruiah" (compare 2 Samuel 8:16).

C. The City of David (vv. 9–10)

9. David then took up residence in the fortress and called it the City of David. He built up the area around it, from the terraces inward.

Jerusalem becomes the place where *David* takes up his royal residence. The word *terraces* refers to stepped stones. These stones may serve as a defensive structure. Throughout the centuries, they are mentioned as part of various building and rebuilding projects in Jerusalem (1 Kings 9:15, 24; 11:27; 2 Chronicles 32:5).

10. And he became more and more powerful, because the LORD God Almighty was with him.

Before becoming king, David was already growing "stronger and stronger" (2 Samuel 3:1). And, in the verse before us, David continues that trajectory as he grows greater still (compare 8:1–14). The Hebrew wording of the majestic divine title, *the LORD God Almighty,* occurs throughout the Old Testament. Rarely is it used as it is in the verse before us: an affirmation of the Lord's empowerment of a specific person (compare Amos 5:14).

D. An Exalted Kingdom (vv. 11–12)

11. Now Hiram king of Tyre sent envoys to David, along with cedar logs and carpenters and stonemasons, and they built a palace for David.

Tyre, a port city in Lebanon on the Mediterranean Sea, is approximately one hundred miles north of Jerusalem. The generosity of King *Hiram* is a response to David's growing power and military strength. The *cedar* trees from Lebanon are renowned in the ancient world for their beauty and durability (1 Kings 4:33; 5:6; Ezekiel 27:5; Hosea 14:5). Hiram maintains a friendly relationship with David throughout David's kingship and into the reign of Solomon, David's son (see 1 Kings 5).

What Do You Think?

How does God's decision to use a foreign king to bless David broaden our understanding of how God works?

Digging Deeper

How will you cultivate humility and trust in God's sovereignty to be open to receiving help from unexpected sources?

12. Then David knew that the LORD had

established him as king over Israel and had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel.

Those who are in power can sometimes be tempted to see themselves as "self-made" (see the example of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4:28–32). However, that *David knew* his success to be due to the Lord's strength and favor is a credit to his spiritual awareness. Rather than claim credit for his rise from shepherd to king, David acknowledges the Lord as the source of his victories and prosperity (compare 2 Samuel 7:8–9; Psalm 18:1–2).

We often imagine David as a larger-than-life figure—a leader who slays giants and triumphs over numerous enemies (see 1 Samuel 17; 2 Samuel 8:1–14). But before these victories, David was on the run, hiding in caves, witnessing the death of friends, and seeking refuge in enemy nations (1 Samuel 18–31). Even as the Lord's anointed one, he could not make himself king. It required the Lord's power, in the Lord's timing, for David's kingship to become a reality.

What Do You Think?

How does David's realization that "the LORD had established him as king" model humility and a correct perspective on success?

Digging Deeper

In what ways do you express gratitude to God for your accomplishments, successes, or blessings?

Conclusion

A. Victory Comes from God

We're drawn to the stories of "self-made" people—rags to riches, zeroes to heroes. Commonly cited examples include Abraham Lincoln, Steve Jobs, and Beyoncé Carter-Knowles. They inspire us, reminding us that we are capable of more than we think we are. But what about "God-made" people?

Today, King David would certainly make *Forbes* magazine's "30 Under 30" list. He is a shepherd-turned-warrior-turned-king whose success is unmatched and seemingly unstoppable. All of it sounds impressive. But none of it comes from David.

The only explanation for David's unlikely, spectacular success is God. What's inspiring about David's story is not that he was a *self*-made man but a *God*-made man. What David could do, maybe we can't. But what God did for David, he can still do for us.

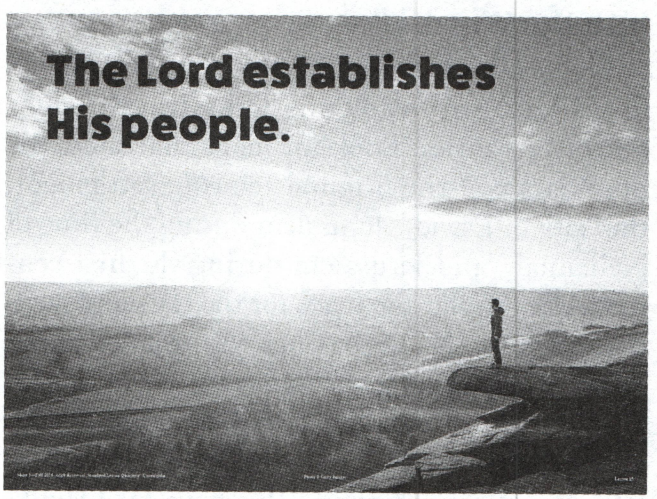
In our day, we can be encouraged that God continues to work out his purposes through individuals. The Lord remains committed to his people and will one day establish his kingdom in fullness. When we encounter success, it is easy to take the credit. We might begin to think that it was our own persistence or skill that made all the difference. In such times, we can remind ourselves that David's success was won because the Lord was with him. We can also remember Zechariah 4:6: "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty."

B. Prayer

Heavenly Father, help us to trust that you are faithfully at work in our lives, in both good and difficult times. Thank you for the assurance of our ultimate victory that is ours by grace through Christ Jesus. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

C. Thought to Remember

God establishes us in his timing.



Visual for Lesson 13. *Display this visual and ask for examples from this quarter of how God establishes his people.*

Involvement Learning

Enhance your lesson with NIV Bible Student *(from your curriculum supplier) and the reproducible activity page (at www.standardlesson.com or in the back of the* NIV Standard Lesson Commentary Deluxe Edition*).*

Into the Lesson

Draw a timeline on the board. At the left end of the line, write the phrase *Samuel anoints David.* At the right end, write *David becomes king.*

Invite learners to work in small groups to fill in the timeline with key events from David's life and Israel's history. Encourage participants to review notes in a study Bible, or online commentary resources and skim 1 Samuel 16–2 Samuel 4 for assistance. (*Possible responses*: David made music; David killed Goliath; David fought Philistines; David grew in popularity; Saul sought David; David married Michal; David sheltered with his enemies; etc.)

Once the timeline is complete, invite volunteers to identify some of the roles in which David served. Ask, "What do these tell us about David's life?"

Alternative. Distribute copies of the "Wearing Many Hats" exercise from the activity page, which you can download. Have learners work in pairs to complete as indicated.

Lead into Bible study by saying, "David served God and Israel through various roles. This week, we'll see how he steps into one specific role through the request of the elders and by the power of God."

Into the Word

Before class time, complete an Internet search for various maps depicting Jerusalem throughout the centuries. Look for maps that show the boundaries of the original Jebusite settlement, the "city of David," Jerusalem during the time of Nehemiah, and Jerusalem during the first century AD. Display the maps for the class and facilitate a whole-class discussion with the following questions: 1–What is a significant feature regarding the terrain around the city? *(The terrain is hilly, and the city is located on an elevated position.)* 2–What implications would this have for David's capture of the city? *(David would have to approach the city from a downhill position—a significant disadvantage.)* 3–Where are the primary sources of water for the city? *(The Gihon Spring and the Pool of Siloam, located just outside the walls of the city.)* 4–What implications would this fact have for David's capture of the city? *(It explains why David said that the water shafts would need to be used to conquer the city.)* 5–What is significant about the usage of the word *Zion* in verse 7? *(This is the first time the word* Zion *is used to name this location.)*

Next, divide the class into two groups: **Anointed King Group** (vv. 1–5) and **Conquering King Group** (vv. 6–12). Instruct each group to read their sections and draft three to five discussion questions for the whole class. After calling time, have each group present their questions in whole-class discussion. Use the commentary to correct misconceptions that may arise.

Into the Word

Write the following words on the board: *Lead, Feed, Dwell, Build.* Introduce the activity by saying, "These four verbs refer to the actions that would be required of David as he stepped into the role of king. To complete each of these actions, David needed to be attentive to the needs of the people and the directives of the Lord."

Distribute an index card and pen to each participant. Invite them to work in pairs to write a prayer of intercession for a leader in their church, community, or nation, incorporating these four verbs into their prayers. After calling time, reconvene the class and invite volunteers to pray their prayers aloud. Encourage participants to place their index cards in a visible location where they can see them throughout the upcoming week and remember to pray for leaders.

Option. Distribute copies of the "Praying the Psalms" exercise from the activity page. Encourage learners to complete the activity as a take-home assignment, referring to it during prayer times throughout the upcoming week.