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## **WAITING PATIENTLY ON THE LORD.**

– 1 SAMUEL 2:1-10; 5:1-10. – *SEPTEMBER 13.* –

**"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" – Psa. 133:1.**

"YE have need of patience," writes the Apostle. "In your patience possess ye your souls," instructs our Lord. "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing," the Apostle explains. Very evidently patience, therefore, includes other graces of character – implies their possession to a certain extent. Amongst the Lord's people patience surely must be preceded by faith, and the degree of patience very generally measures the amount of the faith. The Christian who finds himself impatient and restless evidently is lacking in faith toward the Lord; for otherwise he would be able to rest in the Lord's gracious promises, and wait for their fulfilment. After using reasonable diligence and energy he should be content to leave the results and the times and seasons with the Lord.

Our lesson deals with David's attainment to the kingdom to which he was anointed, while a shepherd boy, by the Prophet Samuel. His patient trust in the Lord, and waiting for his time and way to give him the [R3245 : page 362] kingdom, are worthy of note, and constitute the most striking feature of this lesson. As a youth he exercised patience until the Lord's providence brought him the opportunity of meeting Goliath, and being advanced to the position of a captain in the army and made King Saul's son-in-law. Then came the check in his career, when for seven years he was treated as an outlaw by the king, and more or less so regarded by his fellow-countrymen. We have seen his patience under these trying circumstances, and noted his unwillingness to hasten the Lord's arrangements, in which he fully trusted, his unwillingness to raise his hand against the king, or to sanction his death at the hands of another. This lesson shows us that even after the death of Saul David still

waited patiently on the Lord to give him, in his own way, the honors and powers promised.

For some time before Saul's death David and his six hundred followers had been living in the country of the Philistines, and been treated by them as allies; and when the Philistines went to war with Israel – to fight against King Saul, who had been the enemy of David and his companions – it would have appeared strange had the latter refused to join in the war. In the Lord's providence they were very graciously spared from either fighting against their brethren or seeming unappreciative of their hosts, the Philistines, by the decision of the latter that they would prefer not to have David and his company go with them. After the defeat of **[R3246 : page 362]** Saul and his army the Philistines took possession of a considerable portion of the land of Israel, and it became a question for David as to what should be his proper course – how would the Lord give to him the throne of Israel, as promised? That David's heart was loyal to the Lord, as the needle to the pole, is evidenced by the fact that he did not conclude for himself what his course should be, but made inquiry of the Lord. This was probably done through the medium of the High Priest, Abiathar. He got the Lord's answer and followed it to the letter, locating, with his companions and their families, at Hebron and the adjacent towns. David was of the tribe of Judah, and thus settling in a central city of that tribe, where he and his family were well known, he was safe amongst friends; – besides, the Philistines were his friends. It was not long before the people of his own tribe chose him for their king, and anointed him accordingly – thus falling into line with the Lord's choice and anointing, already expressed years before.

This was seemingly a good start toward the fulfilment of the Lord's promise of the kingdom, but again the matter was deferred for another seven years, during which time David patiently saw Ishbosheth, Saul's surviving son, anointed to be king over one province after another of Israel, and, with his general, Abner, gaining victory after victory over the Philistines, – seemingly establishing

himself firmly in the power of the kingdom which David had certainly supposed was to come to him at the death of Saul. The experiences of these seven years surely were as strong tests of David's faith and patience as any in his career. To a man of his courageous temperament and energy the disposition must have been to assert the dominance of Judah over the other tribes, and to have declared them to be in rebellion, and to have attempted their conquest in the name of the Lord, with the assertion that he was the Lord's choice, anointed by Samuel, etc.

David's course during this time shows forth distinctly the true character of the man. He trusted that the Lord, who had been with him as a boy, and had delivered him from the lion and the bear, and had used him as Israel's champion in the battle with Goliath, and had guided him thus far, would continue to guide and direct, if he would continue to be submissive, and to act only along the lines of the Lord's direction. The wisdom of this course is manifest from the narrative. David showed, not only in his dealings with the men of Jabesh Gilead, but on other occasions, that he entertained no animosity toward those who were Saul's friends, and the friends of his family. A man of smaller heart would have done very differently, but would not have been "a man after God's own heart." David's course was defensive. The tribe of Judah he knew was acting in accord with the divine program, and hence, when Ishbosheth and his army attempted to coerce the people of Judah and compel them to recognize Ishbosheth, David and his supporters resisted this intrusion, though we have no evidence that David attempted to extend his authority over the other tribes – except as they might voluntarily choose to accept him as their king. This they finally did, at the end of seven and half years, and a grand coronation made him king over all Israel. His patient waiting for the Lord's time and the Lord's way evidently was very much better than any other course he could have pursued. The Lord's wisdom is always superior; though in the midst of their trials, his people, being unable to see the end from the beginning, may have too much

confidence in their own schemes and methods and too little faith in the Lord.

The Lord's people of today should take well to heart this lesson of faith, obedience and patient waiting on the Lord. We, too, are waiting for a Kingdom, and for the peace and blessing which the Lord has promised shall come therewith. We, too, see Philistines in the way, and rival brethren, who, though really the Lord's, do not see so clearly as we the Lord's program for the establishment of his Kingdom. It is for us to wait patiently on the Lord, while he uses the wrath of man to praise him, and to make straight the way of the **[R3246 : page 363]** Lord, and to usher in eventually his Kingdom under more favorable conditions than would be possible if we were to attempt to act for ourselves, or in any manner or sense to hasten his arrangements.

The Golden Text is an excellent one, and applied to this lesson we see it illustrated in David's course. Although he was a man of war, courageous and aggressive toward the enemies of the Lord and of Israel, David was most emphatically a man of peace toward his brethren of all the tribes; – careful to treat them as brethren, and to do all in his power to maintain unity and brotherly love and friendship. Although misunderstood and persecuted by them for a time, he finally was appreciated and proclaimed king of all Israel, with the result that all the brethren, thus united by his wise counsel and conduct, did dwell together in unity, and Israel had peace and prosperity, whereas by a different course on David's part a fierce and long-lasting civil war might readily have been enkindled.

We are reminded, too, of the fact that it was the Lord's own brethren who persecuted him, but that, as the Apostle explains, "in ignorance they did it." We rejoice to know that when the Lord shall have fully established his Kingdom, all who are the Lord's people, all desirous of being on the side of righteousness, will hail him gladly as their King; and that the unity and peace and blessing of that glorious

Millennial age will far exceed anything that our minds can grasp or our tongues express. Like our Lord, let us seek to be peacemakers, and to dwell together with all the brethren in the unity of the Spirit, in the bonds of peace. Let our activities, our combativeness, etc., be engaged against the great enemy and all the works of sin, – including those in our members, our own fallen flesh. We, and all the brethren, will thus find sufficient engagement for every combative element of our nature, in ways well pleasing to the Lord, and employment for every lovable and helpful quality we possess, in building one another up, and doing good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially to the household of faith.

