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## DAVID ATTAINING KINGSHIP

**- 2 SAMUEL 2:1-7; 5:1-5. - SEPT. 13 -**

**Golden Text: – "David went on and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him." – 2 Sam. 5:10.**

DAVID was in his 30th year at the time of King Saul's death. During the ten preceding years he had led a varied life. Banished from Saul's court through envy, hunted by the king as a wild beast, David's experiences were far from what have been considered ideal. Chased as a brigand and looked upon with distrust on the part of the majority of the people, who would know little about him except that while once high in the king's favor and having been the king's general, he was now in disfavor, it would be difficult for some to consider him otherwise than with mere envy. Others again, failing to consider that God appointed the rulers of Israel, might think David a usurper, seeking to profit himself at his master's expense. As a matter of fact we find that even in the demoralized condition of things which followed the death of Saul and his three sons in the disastrous battle of our last lesson, still the eleven tribes promptly rallied to the support of Saul's fourth son, Ishbosheth, [R4235 : page 266] and never seemed to think a moment of David.

David, as the captain of his band of six hundred men, had been making his home at Ziklag, southwest of Judah. When David heard of the death of Saul, instead of determining what he should do according to his own judgment, he inquired of the Lord. It seems remarkable to us that a young man, driven from home, an exile, hunted as a bandit, and cut off from all the refining influences of life, should retain his reverence for the Lord to such a degree. Alas! how many Christians with every condition favorable, with Bibles in their hands and Bible-study

helps, etc., manifest a much less loyal disposition! How frequently the Lord and his will are forgotten, while self decides and directs. Indeed it may be considered an evidence of a quite thorough submission to the Lord and development in grace to find a Christian earnestly seeking to know the will of the Lord in all the important undertakings of his life. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

Although the school in which David was trained may be considered a rude one, nevertheless he evidently learned many lessons in it. His first inquiry [R4235 : page 267] was, "Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah"? The answer was favorable. The next question was, "To which city?" Which city shall be my headquarters or capital? The Lord directed to Hebron. David wisely estimated that the people of his own tribe knew him well and understood why he was persecuted by King Saul. David was not without honor in his own country and not without confidence in his own tribe. But with all this he had special confidence in the divine wisdom and the divine power. He recognized that the Lord was directing him and that the anointing oil had already been poured upon him and that it was only a question of time when the Lord would point out the next step. Nevertheless he recognized it to be his duty to wait on the Lord and not attempt to grasp and take hastily the things which were his by promise. He had waited for more than ten years. He could afford still to wait patiently on the Lord.

How important a lesson for the antitypical David – the Beloved – the Christ! The Apostle testifies this respecting our Lord Jesus, that he thought the Kingdom not a thing to be grasped or usurped. He waited the Father's time. He meanwhile humbled himself in harmony with the Father's will and gave evidence that he delighted to do that will at any cost. This faithful and patient waiting was pleasing to God in the One who was to be heir of all things and highly exalted. Similarly we, his followers and

members, are to remember the Prophet David's words, "Wait, I say, on the Lord." Some of us have learned by experience that to attempt to go before the Lord in any matter is dangerous. We are not wise enough to guide ourselves. Indeed, as the poet has expressed it,

"We fear to touch  
Things that involve so much."

If we could recognize the delicacy of our situation at times, it would make us more modest and cautious. Not only our own interests and eternal glory are at stake, but also the interests of other fellow-members of the Body of Christ. A rash word, a thoughtless action, inconsiderateness in any sense of the word might lead to unfavorable conditions of heart, and, even though we gained the promise, it might be by tribulation rather than by the way in which the Lord would lead.

### **LET YOUR MODERATION BE KNOWN**

Some, miscalculating David's temperament and sentiments towards Saul, supposed that they would gain his favor by reciting incidents showing how they had assisted in Saul's overthrow, but such met with prompt rebuke, David in every instance speaking of King Saul in considerate language, not merely because it would be wrong to speak evil of any man, but also because, as king, Saul had been God's representative, "The Lord's anointed," as David himself styled it. Quite to the contrary of any exaltation over the death of his enemy, David sent a special message of appreciation to the men of Jabesh who had given decent burial to Saul and his sons. He wished them to know that he did not regard this as an act of enmity to himself, but rather as an act of decency and loyalty in which he himself would be glad to have had a share. He said, Blessed be ye of the Lord that ye have showed this kindness. And now the Lord show kindness unto you and I will

also requite you this kindness. Therefore let your hands be strengthened, and be ye valiant, for your master, Saul, is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.

It may be contested by some that David's course was a case of policy and that he was too wise to antagonize the men of Jabesh in giving Saul and his sons decent burial. Even if this were the case it would reflect credit on David instead of discredit. It would show that he had the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of a sound mind. But we think it unnecessary to attack the motive of any person who wishes to do a kind act. Instead of attributing the motive to evil, we should "think no evil." The same principle is applicable to the Lord's people. They should not attribute wrong motives to business men who contribute money for benevolences, etc. It may, indeed, be true of some (perhaps of many) that the thought of gain associates with the gift, but it by no means follows that the act is destitute of generous motives and wholly sordid. We are the happier when we endeavor to think kindly in all the actions of life. A blind brother recently remarked, "I have no doubt that my blindness saves me from many disadvantages. When I meet people I endeavor to think of them as looking happy and generous and good; whereas if I had my sight I might consider it impossible to think of them as favorably and generously as I want to."

David's adverting to the fact that he was not King of Judah was an intimation to the men of Jabesh that they would perhaps like to have him king over them, as he was now king in the place of Saul who had hunted him for ten years. It was an intimation that they might go farther and fare worse – all of which was true, as we know.

## **WE WALK BY FAITH**

Quite probably King David expected after his recognition by the tribe of Judah that very speedily other tribes would rally to his banner. Nevertheless we are not informed respecting any

move he made to accomplish this. He was waiting on the Lord. Surely it was a long wait, too. Abner, as the general of King Ishbosheth of the eleven tribes of Israel, waged war against the enemies of Israel and to some extent gained victories. King David had plenty of opportunity of wondering whether or not the Lord intended to carry out the programme instituted in his coronation. With the prestige of victories over outside enemies, King Ishbosheth turned attention to the tribe of Judah, claiming it was in rebellion against the lawful head. The result was a civil war, instead of an entrance upon a reign of prosperity. Brothers fought against brothers – one party of God's favored people against another. And this continued for two years, gradually, however, bringing successes to David and his army. Thus we read, "David waxed stronger and stronger and the house of Saul weaker and weaker."

In considering the period of civil war and how one section of the Lord's people sought to injure others, we are reminded of Spiritual Israel and the fact that brethren in it sometimes become so estranged and so out of the leading of God's providence that they also become antagonists to each other. Alas, that this should be so! – that the love of God should at any time fail to constrain us so that we would not only turn from his love and fellowship, but that the sword should be used to smite down brethren! Get the picture impressed in our minds and sealed in our hearts of coming days **[R4235 : page 268]** with Spiritual Israel, when brother shall be against brother, which the Lord will permit just prior to the establishment of the Kingdom. Let us resolve that however others may fight, the weapons of our warfare shall not be carnal and that our battling shall not be against those who are the Lord's by covenant, but against the great Adversary. Carnal weapons are not merely guns and swords – but more injurious and death-dealing is the tongue when used to slander and wound. God forbid that our tongues, wherewith we praise God, should work injury to any man, but particularly to any of the household of faith.

## **KING OVER ALL ISRAEL**

Ultimately King Ishbosheth and his general Abner were both foully murdered and we carefully note that David had no complicity in the matter, and that so far as the sons of Saul were concerned, David's oath of friendship with Jonathan was quite sufficient protection to them. However, the death of these men opened the way for the people of Israel to consider matters further and, as they considered, they perceived that God's favor was with David; that he was a man after God's own heart, and that as a ruler he was doing valiant service to the people who had accepted him as their king. The saner thinking amongst the tribes of Israel brought them to the conclusion mentioned in this lesson – "Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh. In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was thou that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be prince over Israel." Finally they had come to hearken to the voice of the Lord. No doubt the Lord could have brought to pass such a condition of things before. There was no divine purpose in the way. And so it is with all of our **[R4236 : page 268]** affairs, if we only knew it. God, who knows the end from the beginning, is wisely guiding for the good of his people and particularly of those who are individually his of the anointed class.

Our lesson tells us that King David made a covenant or league with the people of Israel. By this is signified that he agreed to serve as king with a limited monarchy, under a constitution. He made a covenant, a constitution which was explicit as to what constituted the rights of the people and a delineation of what were the rights of the king. This institution in Israel indicates that they were the most advanced people in the world, for, so far as we can learn from history, the kings of that time were despots, who governed according to their own ideas, trampling upon the rights

and liberties of the people. The interesting ceremonies connected with the exaltation of David as king over all Israel and the joy amongst the people in connection with David is amply recorded in I Chron. 12:23-40.

David's experiences in waiting for the kingdom and the lessons learned and the character developed and the preparation which made him wise and moderate all serve to illustrate a great lesson to the Gospel Church. We also are called to sit upon the throne of the Lord – to rule in his name. We also have been anointed to the office by the holy Spirit, which the Apostle declares is a foretaste of the glory and joys into which we shall enter when the crowning days shall have come. If discipline, self control, faith, moderation and hope were all requisite to make David a king over the Lord's people and to properly represent him in government, how much more severe lessons should be for us, who are called to so much higher a station – to the throne of earth as God's representatives and to the Royal Priesthood, ruling, judging and trying mankind, to the intent that as many as possible of them may be rescued from their degraded condition and be brought into full harmony with God! Surely we may say as David did that our trials and testings are much less than we expected them to be.

If we carefully scrutinize David's character to note what constituted its strongest points, and what, therefore, we should seek correspondingly to cultivate, we shall agree that the strongest point was his will, which was rightly directed. It is difficult to estimate the power of the human will. Apparently God has placed all the interests of the present life under the control of our wills, and, indeed, much of the success in respect to the future life is similarly under the control of our wills. Apparently the will, rightly exercised against sin, is invulnerable. As we read, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." Just what kind of dynamic force the mind, the will, can exercise against the Adversary,

against sin, against sickness and disease, it is difficult for us to understand, but we have the Scriptural assurance that there is such a will, and our own experiences in its exercise have fully demonstrated the truth of our proposition. Strong wills are not confined to God's people. Satan and many of the depraved are strong-willed. Indeed, in this fact lies much of the suggestion of the spirit of wickedness. All who are the Lord's should recognize the value of determination and the unsatisfactoriness of vacillation.

The Apostle declares truly, "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." Such a person makes a success of nothing. Whatever may come to him above the ordinary will surely be by accident. Herein we see the wisdom of the Lord's method of dealing with the Church in this Gospel Age. "He seeks such to worship him as worship him in spirit and in truth." He tells them of his goodness and gives sufficiency of help to encourage the person to will aright, with assurances that if he will do the willing the Lord himself will give the necessary assistance and succor in every time of need. And although the Adversary is stronger and wiser than we are, he shall not be able to hurt us because He who is on our side is greater than all who are against us. It is to this end that the Lord encourages us to make a covenant with him by sacrifice – to give up our all, our will to his guidance. Happy are they who do this. And these are few comparatively. With the majority there is a continuance of self and much of disputation in respect to things of the Lord – his will. It is in line with this endeavor to fortify the will and strengthen the character that we recognize such vows as would be of assistance. The Adversary is watching continually to touch the spots most liable to assault and we must make the fortification strong, striving to keep our sacrifice with the Lord and our wills firm to resist the Adversary – to serve the truth and all the household of faith, and to guard our own words, acts and thoughts.



## THE SONG OF MOSES AND THE LAMB

With the inauguration of King David came the usual mirth and songs and exhibitions of joy. Indeed [R4236 : page 269] nearly every nation has its national anthem in which it memorializes the king and the kingdom. And is it not so with our Lord's Kingdom, which is shortly to be introduced with most wonderful demonstrations? Is not the glorious temple of God – the Church – the living stones of which are now being shaped, hewn and polished, hailing the great Capstone? The Head of the Church is Christ. Already we hail and crown him Lord of all in our hearts and look forward with joyful anticipation to the time when "every knee shall bow" to the Lord.

Meantime we who hope to be members of the Bride class and "joint-heirs with him" are here expected to learn to sing the song of Moses the servant and the song of the Lamb, for "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor and glory, and blessing." "And they sang a new song before the throne: and no man could learn that song," except the anointed. And the Lord will be with him in Mount Zion, the Kingdom. Realizing that this song is the tidings of great joy which shall be to all people, we are correspondingly interested to know to what extent we have learned – to what extent we can sing it now. We find indeed that it is a life study to learn this lesson. We rejoice in the privilege to bear witness of our God to all those who have ears to hear, even though doing so brings reproaches, frowns, opposition. Our patience and our faith are to continue, and we are to wait for the Kingdom in its beauty and the glorious "change" in ourselves to tell to others more effectively than ever the blessed tidings.

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