THE CITY OF DAVID

At the age of eight, Joel came to live on a farm with his uncle. The couple couldn't have children, so Joel was like their son. But instead of treating him like a son, he was more like their servant. Every morning before school, Joel tended to his uncle's animals in his bare feet.

After school, instead of doing his homework, he had to tend to his uncle's animals and complete any other chores his aunt would give. In his life with his aunt and uncle, Joel experienced none of the emotional warmth that most children have at home. Still, Joel did well in primary school. In the evenings, his grandmother would hold his hand and pray for him. She witnessed Joel's mistreatment but was powerless to stop it.

When he was old enough to leave home and go to a boarding school, Joel finally could enjoy friends and experience greater freedom. One Sunday during the chapel service, he responded to the message to accept Jesus as his personal Savior. It brought peace like never before, knowing that God was in control of his life. In the heavenly Father, Joel found more acceptance than he had ever experienced with an earthy family.

This young boy grew to be a faithful follower of Christ. When he heard the call to train to be a pastor, it made sense. All of those mornings and evenings caring for animals had prepared him with patience and compassion. He would be a shepherd in a different way.

1 What actions can we take to seek the best outcome from a challenging situation?

2 How has God prevented you from disaster or helped you achieve a goal?

2 Samuel 5:1–5 KJV	2 Samuel 5:1–5 NIV
1 Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh. 2 Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel. 3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the Lord: and they anointed David king over Israel. 4 David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. 5 In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.	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.

The Crown

David had been anointed as king, but it was a long road before he would have that role. He served Saul and distinguished himself as a military commander, even when Saul began to see him as a rival.

After Saul's death (1 Sam. 31:1–6), Israel was ripped in two. The northern tribes followed Abner—the commander of Saul's army—and Ish-Bosheth—one of Saul's sons who functioned as a puppet king (2 Sam. 2:8–10). Meanwhile, Judah in the south rallied behind David and anointed him as king at Hebron (2 Sam. 2:4). A civil war between north and south led to bloodshed over seven years. During his own retreat, Abner killed one of David's relatives (2 Sam. 2:18–23). But David was the superior commander, and he continued to succeed.

As the conflict cooled, Abner came to David to reunite the kingdom under him (2 Sam. 3:7–11). When one of David's men heard

that Abner had come to Hebron, he killed the man out of revenge (2 Sam. 3:26–27). After Abner's death, Ish-Bosheth was also murdered (2 Sam. 4:5–7), leaving the people of Israel without the leaders they had looked to for the past seven years.

David publicly separated himself from acts of revenge and from the killing of Saul's kin (2 Sam. 3:28–39; 4:9–12). Instead, he would be a merciful king who honored Saul as God's anointed. Later David would even honor Mephibosheth for Saul's and Jonathan's sakes (2 Sam. 9:1–7). God preserved David's reputation, and the people still considered him an upright man after God's own heart.

The people say, "We are your own flesh and blood" (2 Sam. 5:1), showing their kinship toward David and the tribe of Judah. Further, they recognize God as working through David, even long before he became king. It was David who "led Israel on their military campaigns" (2 Sam. 5:2), recalling the song that compared him to Saul: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands" (1 Sam. 18:7).

They also acknowledge God's direct promise: "The LORD said to you, 'You will shepherd my people Israel'" (2 Sam. 5:2). According to Deuteronomy, a king was not to be selfish or focused on himself—accumulating horses, wives, or wealth—but a ruler who loved and cared for his people (Deut. 17:14–20). As a former shepherd, David has shown these qualities. Moses had even compared Israel's future leader to a shepherd (Num. 27:16–17). The people now stand together in one accord, acknowledging that David is their shepherd-king who will act not on his own accord but according to God's command. They make him king of all Israel, and he rules in this position for forty years, or the length of a full generation (2 Sam. 5:4).

1 Why did the tribes say that they were David's "flesh and blood" after years of civil war?

2 How does David prove to be a good leader, even during the civil war?

3 In what ways did David show patience for God's timing?

6 And the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, David cannot come in hither. 7 Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David.
8 And David said on that day, Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind that are hated of David's soul, he shall be chief and captain. Wherefore they said, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.
9 So David dwelt in the fort, and called it the city of David. And David built round about from Millo and inward.
10 And David went on, and grew great, and the LORD God of hosts was with him.
11 And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons: and they built David an house. 12 And David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake.

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.

The King Leads

David's first military campaign as king of Israel helps to move his capital to a more central location. Jerusalem had been allocated to Benjamin and partially conquered during Joshua's campaigns (see Josh. 15:63; Judg. 1:21). But when Israel failed to drive out the inhabitants, Jerusalem remained occupied by a tribe named Jebusites.

The Jebusites mock David with supreme confidence, saying, "You will not get in here; even the blind and the lame can ward you off" (2 Sam. 5:6). The idea is that Jerusalem's natural defenses are so strong that disabled people could repel attack. They thought, *David cannot get in here.* It's not unlike the taunting from Goliath years earlier (see 1 Sam. 17:42–44).

David was not intimidated, for he knew that God was on his side and would deliver the city into their hands. He had the promise and provision of God Almighty. The text does not dwell on the details but says simply, "David captured the fortress of Zion—which is the City of David" (2 Sam. 5:7).

David's military strategy appears to have been to use a water shaft. Jerusalem was a natural stronghold on the mountaintop, which is why it had not been taken for centuries. The water shaft was a tunnel system accessing the Gihon Spring. David notes, "Anyone who conquers the Jebusites will have to use the water shaft" (2 Sam. 5:8). Entering through the water system was something the Jebusites never expected. After David defeats the Jebusites, he shows that they were "blind" to God's power and "lame" in their inability to stand against God. Their taunt became their undoing.

The text concludes by describing David's new capital city (v. 9). It says, "He became more and more powerful, because the LORD God Almighty was with him" (v. 10). Even surrounding nations recognize his rule by sending gifts of fine materials that David can use to build a palace (v. 11). Just as God had established rulers in the past, God established David as the rightful king.

1 What made Jerusalem the ideal capital for a united Israel?

2 What does the taunt of verse 6 show?

3 How does the conclusion reveal David's understanding of godly leadership?

Waiting on God

Scripture describes David as a man after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14). The text records the years David reigned: seven and a half years in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem over all Israel (2 Sam. 5:4–5). These numbers remind us of God's provision, but they also highlight David's patience to wait on God's timing. From the time Samuel anointed him, David endured fifteen long years before ascending to the throne. Even then, his rule began as partial, since he reigned over Judah before God gave him the entire kingdom. David trusted that the Lord's promises would come to pass in His perfect time.

This lesson speaks to our lives today. How often do we become impatient when God does not act according to our schedule? We demand immediate relief in trials, instant gratification in desires, or quick solutions to our struggles. Yet the story of David reminds us that waiting on God is never in vain. The Lord uses seasons of delay to strengthen faith, shape character, and deepen reliance on Him (see James 1:1–4).

Hebrews exhorts us in this same direction: "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you'" (Heb. 13:5). The promise is not of earthly kingdoms or worldly success but of God's eternal provision. David became king of a nation, but we who trust in Christ are made sons and daughters of the living God (2 Cor. 6:18). This means that we share in the same promise that God is with us, providing for us spiritually through the blood of Jesus Christ. Therefore, as we study this text, we are called to trust in the promises of God. Just as David clung to the Lord through years of waiting, so we must learn to rest in His timing, content with His presence, and confident in Him.

1 What do you think that David experienced during fifteen years of waiting to be king?

2 What do you think David did when he lacked faith in the promised provision of God?

3 What does God want you to trust Him for today?

A Shepherd's Heart

God loves leaders like David—people who lead with a shepherd's heart, caring for the needs of their followers, rather than advancing their fame and influence. Who has God entrusted you to lead? Some people lead entire companies or organizations, others lead classrooms or teams, and still others lead children, small groups, or groups of friends. The size of your role doesn't matter— your shepherding heart is what counts. Offer this prayer to God this week:

Lord, You have entrusted me to lead _____.

Help me to lead with a protective heart of a shepherd, looking out for their best interest above my own.

Key Text

And David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake. —2 Samuel 5:12 KJV

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. —2 Samuel 5:12 NIV

Quiet Hour® and Cross Daily Bible Readings

Week of November 30 through December 5

Mon. Philippians 4:1–9—A Healthy Mindset.
Tue. Isaiah 61:10–62:5—God Rejoices Over You.
Wed. Romans 14:11–18—Righteousness, Peace, and Joy.
Thu. Romans 15:7–13—Filled with All Joy.
Fri. Nehemiah 8:6, 9–12—The Joy of the Lord.
Sat. Psalm 91:7–16—God Our Deliverer.

Next Week: 1 Peter 1:1–12
As we enter a season of waiting for Jesus' birth, what are you hoping to receive?