

PROMISED LAND 2: Lesson Three, David's God-Given Kingdom ***2 Samuel 1-10, 1 Chronicles 11-19, selected Psalms***

Subject: God made David Israel's king and blessed Israel through his reign.

Main Idea: God planned, established, and advances the kingdom of heaven; He has done it all!

Principles:

1. *God's kingdom advances with our cooperation, not our manipulation.*
2. *In Christ's kingdom, He alone gets the glory.*
3. *It is the duty of all kingdom members to bless others.*

Introduction

Our three youngest grandchildren are all in the stage of exerting independence. You know the scene. The shirt buttons aren't aligned, but that doesn't matter to them. All that matters is that they buttoned it *by themselves*. Somehow, life has a way of proving that we never really accomplish much without the direct assistance, or at least the influence, of someone else. Jesus taught His disciples that apart from Him, we can do nothing. He taught that we are only fruitful to the degree that we remain connected to Him (John 15:4), since He is the Only One who can *do it all*.

We are following the "story" of the Bible. From the earliest chapters of this story, it is evident sin has been destroying humankind. It is so destructive that God promised the first man and woman that He would send a Deliverer (Genesis 3:15). Much later in history, God told Abraham that this "Messiah" would be one of his descendants (Genesis 12:3, 17:6-7). Then, Abraham's grandson Israel (Jacob) prophesied that the Messiah would be a King. Furthermore, he narrowed the field by specifying Judah as the tribe of Abraham's descendants through whom the Messiah would come (Genesis 49:10). For this reason, the story of the Old Testament is largely the story of the children of Israel, with special attention given to the descendants of Judah.

The *Promised Land 2* study has transitioned us into the period of Israel's monarchy. Saul, a Benjamite, was Israel's first king. He was the kind of king the Israelites had asked for, but he failed because he was not God's kind of king. David was God's choice. He was a man after God's own heart. But another relevant fact about David has emerged: David was from the tribe of Judah!

This background is critical to understanding the significance of our present lesson. This is a lesson on the God-given kingship of David. During David's reign, God revealed information that even *further* identifies the roots of the long anticipated Messiah. In addition, David's kingdom is, in some senses, representative of the kingdom of this Messiah. The first three gospels emphasize that the kingdom of God was Jesus' central message (Matthew 4:23). 2 Samuel 1-10 emphasizes that David's kingdom, like the kingdom of God, was entirely planned, established, and advanced as a result of God's power and initiative. David's kingdom was all God's doing and the Messiah's is all God's doing. He has truly accomplished both *by Himself!*

I. **The Establishment of David's Kingdom** – 2 Samuel 1-5

A. **David's Response to the Deaths of Saul and Jonathan** – 2 Samuel 1

- i. The Amalekite's Report: 1 Samuel 31 and 1 Chronicles 10 indicate that Saul was wounded in battle with the Philistines and, not wanting to risk abuse by his enemy, committed suicide. However, that is not the story that an Amalekite who claimed to have come from the battle site told David. The man announced that *he* had killed Saul at Saul's request. Scholars have offered various suggestions about the seeming discrepancy between the accounts.
 1. Most believe that the Amalekite was lying. Perhaps he was an opportunistic thief who stumbled on Saul, already dead, and hoped to exchange Saul's crown and armband for great reward.
 2. David certainly seemed to believe the Amalekite's story. Perhaps the accounts can be reconciled if both the wounds the Philistines inflicted on Saul *and* his self-inflicted wound left him in the throes of death (as the man claimed).
- ii. The Amalekite's Death: Whether the man lied or not, David's position was firm. Anyone who claimed to have killed God's anointed would certainly not earn David's favor but rather, deserved the death penalty. David had the man killed on the spot.
- iii. David's Lament
 1. David's amazing forgiveness of Saul undergirds the beautiful lament he wrote. Although Saul had repeatedly attempted to kill David, David did not say a single word about Saul's misdeeds. The lament only emphasizes Saul's strengths and the close bond David shared with Jonathan.
 2. David ordered that the people of Judah be taught the lament. He wanted Saul remembered well. *Even though Saul considered David his enemy, David never considered Saul his enemy. He was entirely innocent in Saul's death.*

B. **David's House Strengthened** – 2 Samuel 2-4

i. David Anointed King of Judah

1. David sensed that it was time for him to leave Ziklag, the town given him by the Philistine king when David came under his protection. So David prayed and asked the Lord if he should return to live in a town of Judah. Even though Saul was dead, *he did not ask to be king*. He simply asked God if he should relocate.
2. The Lord sent David to Hebron. Hebron was a city of importance in Israel's history. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were buried in the vicinity, and after the Israelites came out of Egypt, faithful Caleb received Hebron as his inheritance.

3. Judah was the tribe to which David's family belonged. Furthermore, he had deepened his relationships with Judah's elders during the years he was fleeing to escape Saul (1 Samuel 25:15-16; 30:26). When David, his two wives, and David's men and their families arrived in Hebron, the men of Judah came and anointed him king over their tribe. David was 30 years old at the time (5:4). Notice that "the men of Judah came to Hebron" to anoint David (2:4). As we will later discover with regard to Israel's northern kings, many usurped the throne. David, however, took no initiative on his own behalf. God had promised to make him king and he waited for God to make it happen in His time and way.
4. The first recorded act of David after becoming king of Judah was to send his personal thanks to the men of Jabesh Gilead for their bravery in retrieving the bodies of Saul and Jonathan after their deaths. Since all Israel knew that David had been *Saul's* enemy, the men of this Israelite town were no doubt relieved that the new king of Judah had not considered Saul *his* enemy and therefore, they had not put themselves in a bad position with him.

ii. War Between David's House and Saul's House

1. Except for Judah, the other tribes of Israel were without a king for about five years. It is unknown whether these years were at the beginning or the end of David's 7-1/2 year reign over Judah but, at some point, Saul's relative and army commander Abner was successful in placing Saul's surviving son Ish-Bosheth on the throne. Abner is portrayed as having been the most powerful man in Israel, even after he placed Ish-Bosheth on the throne. Ish-Bosheth's capital was east of the Jordan at Mahanaim.
2. 2 Samuel 2-3 detail one particular battle in the war that ensued between the house of Saul and the house of David that ultimately brought Saul's dynasty to an end. The power struggle between the two "houses," however, was one in which David personally took no side. He simply refused to manipulate his way to the throne.
 - a. David's nephew Joab learned that some of Israel's troops, under Abner's leadership, had moved to Gibeon and he met them there. An initial stand-off ended when representatives of both forces were selected to engage in hand-to-hand combat. When all the representatives died, a battle erupted.
 - b. During the struggle, Asahel, one of Joab's two brothers, pursued Abner. When Asahel refused Abner's appeal to stop the chase, Abner was forced to kill him.

- c. After this, Abner successfully reasoned with Joab to stop pursuing their “fellow Israelites” (2:26) but by then, Joab’s men had proved themselves far more powerful than Abner’s.
 - 3. The biblical writer summarizes this part of the story: David’s house grew stronger and stronger, while Saul’s grew weaker and weaker (3:1). As further evidence of God’s blessing, six sons were born to David during his 7-1/2 years as king of Judah. As chapter three continues, it is all the more evident that he became king as a result of God’s promise and not by his own manipulation. He did nothing to steal Saul’s kingdom. A great amount of detail is given regarding the murders of Abner and Ish-Bosheth to prove David’s innocence.
- iii. The Deaths of Abner and Ish-Bosheth
- 1. Nothing positive is stated about Ish-Bosheth’s reign. He lost Abner’s support after he accused him of sleeping with one of his father’s concubines. Abner was no fool. David’s house was growing stronger. Apparently, all Israel knew that God had promised that David would rule all Israel (3:9, 5:2) and Abner concluded that it was in his best interest to get on the winning team.
 - 2. *Abner’s Death*
 - a. Abner sent David a message offering to help him gain the support of the other 11 tribes. From David’s point of view, it was an opportunity to unite and thus strengthen Israel.
 - b. Years earlier, when David had fled from Saul, Saul had unlawfully given his daughter (David’s wife) to another man. David considered that having Michal returned to him would advance a peaceful transition to a united monarchy since any Israelites who still felt loyal to Saul would be reminded that he was, in fact, Saul’s relative by marriage. Therefore, David agreed to Abner’s proposal on the condition that Michal was returned to him. Ish-Bosheth consented to have his sister sent. With his house weakening, perhaps he feared the possible consequence of refusing.
 - c. Abner negotiated in person with the Benjamites, Saul’s relatives. They would undoubtedly be the most difficult to persuade. However, the Lord was working in their hearts and minds and they, like the rest of Israel, declared their desire to make David king.

- d. Abner then went to Hebron to inform David. When Joab learned that Abner was in Hebron, he used the opportunity to exact vengeance for the death of his brother Asahel and he murdered Abner. David was stunned, quickly condemned Joab's deed, and made a public display of his respect for Abner at his funeral.
 - e. Abner's death could have deepened the breach between Judah and Israel, but because of David's response, just the opposite happened.
3. *Ish-Bosheth's Murder*
- a. Since Abner had been the real power behind Ish-Bosheth, his death had two effects: Ish-Bosheth lost his courage and all Israel became alarmed (4:1).
 - b. Two men who had led raids on behalf of Ish-Bosheth believed the situation provided them with an opportunity to earn David's favor. Obviously, they did not know David very well or of what had happened to the Amalekite who sought David's favor by killing (or claiming to have killed) Saul. So they murdered Ish-Bosheth and brought his head to David, thinking they were bearing good news.
 - c. David had them both put to death. As evidence that he had not been complicit in the matter (as some surely would have accused him), he desecrated the men's bodies and hung them in a public place.
4. If David had been eager to avenge himself against Saul and his house, he would have rejoiced in the deaths of Abner and Ish-Boshth, but his humble and righteous response to the murders earned him the respect of the nation (3:36-37). Verse 36 asserts, "All the people took note and were pleased; indeed everything the king did pleased them."

C. The Consolidation of David's Kingdom – 2 Samuel 5

i. David's Coronation

- 1. According to 2 Samuel 5, all the elders of Israel came to David at Hebron, entered a covenant with him, and anointed him king of Israel. 1 Chronicles 12 lists many warriors who were also determined to make him king. Once again, the people came to David and not the other way around (5:1).
- 2. According to 1 Chronicles 12:39, the celebration surrounding David's coronation lasted three days and was a time of great joy in Israel. David ruled a total of 40 years: 7-1/2 over Judah and another 33 over all Israel and Judah (2 Samuel 5:4).

ii. Two Important Consolidating Steps

1. *A New Capital*: Shortly after David's anointing, two important events helped to consolidate his kingdom. The first was to establish a capital further north than Hebron.
 - a. Since Jerusalem was technically within the boundaries of the tribe of Benjamin but still on the border of Judah, the location would be more agreeable to all.
 - b. Israel had never been successful in gaining complete control of the stronghold of the Jebusites at Jerusalem (Joshua 15:8) since the time of the conquest. *This was part of the land God had promised to Israel*, and David finally brought it under Israel's control.
 - c. According to 1 Chronicles 11:6, Joab earned his role as David's commander by leading the charge to take the city. From that time forward, Jerusalem was known as the City of David. After David's household relocated to the new capital, God further blessed him with many more children (5:13-14).
2. *The Philistine Threat*: In addition to establishing the new capital, another immediate concern was thrust upon David by the Philistines.
 - a. 7-1/2 years earlier, he had come under the protection of the Philistine king, Achish. Then, while David ruled over Judah, they may have continued to perceive him as their ally since he was still an enemy of Saul's household. However, once David became king of *all* Israel, the Philistines viewed him as a threat and came out in full force to search for him.
 - b. David inquired of the Lord before launching an attack. In response to God's answer, David attacked and routed the Philistines on two separate occasions. Thus, David not only clarified his position in relation to the Philistines, he began to subdue all of Israel's enemies, as chapters 8-10 later detail.

Summary Statement: In the latter of the two battles with the Philistines, the Lord told David to move quickly when he heard the sound of marching in the tops of the trees because that would mean that He had gone out in front of David (5:24). The picture is one that summarizes the whole of these chapters. The Lord was out in front of David, granting him success and paving the way for him to be king. David merely followed the Lord's lead.

Principle: *God's kingdom advances with our cooperation, not our manipulation.*

Just as David's kingdom was established at God's initiative, God is the one who planned, who established, and who advances the kingdom of Heaven. He does it all!

Sincere and well-meaning believers are often tempted to believe we can successfully usurp the role of the Holy Spirit and advance God’s kingdom by our own manipulations. Of course, we would never call it manipulation. We would put a pleasant label on it. We might say we are evangelizing or “helping” someone grow in Christ.

To ask a preschool or young school-aged child if they want to become a Christian since “Mommy is a Christian” or “Daddy is a Christian” is manipulative. Our role is to *cooperate* with the Holy Spirit by making Christ attractive to our children. We should model Christ-likeness. We should present His word and relate it to everyday situations in a positive, relevant manner. The same is true with older children, spouses, other family members, and friends and neighbors. We should never try to bribe or argue them into the kingdom! Similarly, the husband or wife who attempts to nag their spouse into learning lessons that “God wants them to learn” is attempting to usurp the role of the Holy Spirit.

Today, the kingdom of God is evident in the lives of believers as we submit to His sovereign rule over us. We see His kingdom advanced as individuals put their faith in Christ and as we daily submit to His rule. We have most definitely been commissioned as Christ’s ambassadors and should be eager to testify of Him. The difference between a cooperative, eager ambassador of Christ and a manipulator is one of motivation. The cooperator speaks and acts *for God’s glory*, believing *God* will accomplish His work in each life, while the manipulator speaks and acts out of *selfish motives* and out of *fear*.

Application: If the story of your life were told from God’s perspective, as is David’s in the Bible, would you be shown to be a manipulator or a cooperator? Have you been guilty of trying to manipulate someone into the kingdom or manipulate God’s reign over his or her life? Will you trust Him to do what only He can do?

Transition: At Saul’s coronation, the Lord announced that the Hebrew monarchy would only be blessed if the king and the people alike recognized *Him* as their true King. Saul’s kingdom ended because he failed to live in submission to the Lord. David, by contrast, recognized that the Israelites were *God’s* people and sought to acknowledge *His* sovereignty over the land. One of the ways this is evident is in David’s decision to move the Ark from Kiriath Jearim, where it had been for many years, to the capital city.

II. The Relocation of the Ark and the Davidic Covenant

A. The Relocation of the Ark – 2 Samuel 6

i. The Symbolism of the Ark

1. The Ark was the most important furnishing in the Tabernacle because it symbolized God's throne. God's presence symbolically dwelt between the cherubim atop the Ark's atonement. Therefore, *the arrival of the Ark in capital city of Jerusalem was, in a manner of speaking, the coronation of the Lord as king.*

ii. David's Failed and Successful Attempts

1. The Ark had been captured by the Philistines during Samuel's lifetime (1 Samuel 4-5) but remained at the house of Abinadab in Kiriath Jearim for many years after its return.
2. According to 2 Samuel 6, David's first attempt to move the Ark was unsuccessful. Later, he discovered the fault was his own for attempting to transport it on a cart (1 Chronicles 15). The Ark was only ever to be transported by poles inserted in its attached rings and then carried by the Levites. David obviously had had good intentions when he ordered a new cart to be built to carry the Ark, but he learned that good intentions are worthless if they contradict God's law. David's failed attempt to move the Ark and his later success undoubtedly taught him to value the word of God highly. The writer of Psalm 119 is usually considered to have been David. In it, he expresses his deep reverence for the word of God.
3. David successfully transferred the Ark to a tent in Jerusalem by following God's instructions.
 - a. The remainder of the Tabernacle was left in the care of the priests at Gibeon (1 Chronicles 16:39-43, 21:29) under the leadership of Zadok, the descendant of Aaron through Aaron's son *Eleazar*.
 - b. Abiathar, who had escaped to David's stronghold when Saul slaughtered the other priests at Nob (1 Samuel 22:20), was a descendant of Aaron through Aaron's son *Ithamar*. He oversaw the worship of the Lord at the new tent in Jerusalem (together with Asaph, 1 Chronicles 16:7, 37). Another priestly descendant of Ithamar was Eli. In accordance with the word of the prophet to Eli (1 Samuel 2:30-36), God eventually transferred the high priesthood out of the line of Ithamar and Eli. This happened in Solomon's day. Abiathar was removed from the priesthood, and Zadok and his descendants were established as Israel's high priests (1 Kings 2:27, 35).

- c. 2 Samuel 6 and 1 Chronicles 13-16 detail the many individuals who were blessed by the transference of the Ark to Jerusalem. Indeed, all Israel was blessed (1 Chronicles 15:3-4, 28).
- d. As the Ark approached Jerusalem, David danced before the Lord with all his might. His wife Michal observed from a window and thought David was making a fool of himself. When she voiced her objection, David told her he was willing to act in an undignified manner since he did so out of devotion to the Lord. As a result of her attitude, Michal never bore any children to the day of her death (2 Samuel 6:23). The insinuation is that Michal's attitude toward David was merely a symptom of a deeper problem she had with God.

B. The Davidic Covenant – 2 Samuel 7

i. God's Promise

1. 2 Samuel 5:11-12 indicates that David had made an alliance with Hiram, king of Tyre, and that Hiram had provided him with the renowned cedar of Lebanon to build his palace in Jerusalem. As David pondered the luxury of his palace, he told the prophet Nathan that he had a desire to also build a house for the Lord. At first, Nathan encouraged David to go ahead with the plan, but the Lord came to Nathan that night and said differently.
2. Of course, the "house" David wanted to build for the Lord was a physical structure, a temple to shelter the Ark. However, the Lord gave Nathan a message for David that spoke of something greater than any physical structure. The Lord promised to give David a lasting dynasty. Bible students refer to this promise as the Davidic Covenant.
3. A covenant (or testament) is a contractual agreement between two parties. The abundance of ancient documents unearthed by archaeologists confirms that covenants were as common in ancient times as they are today. The most well known covenants recorded in the Bible are the Noahic Covenant (the promise God made with all the earth following the Flood), the Patriarchal Covenant that God initiated with Abraham and his descendants, the Mosaic or Sinaitic Covenant that God made with the Israelites at Sinai, and the New Covenant foretold by Jeremiah and Ezekiel and instituted by the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit.
4. God promised that
 - a. He would make David's name great (2 Samuel 7:9)

- b. He would bless the Israelites with security in their land (2 Samuel 7:10-11)
 - c. He would establish David's dynasty and his kingdom would "endure forever" (2 Samuel 7:16)
 - d. David's son (Solomon, as it turned out) would be the one to build the temple in Jerusalem.
5. The great significance of the Davidic Covenant is that *it identifies David as the royal descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob through whom the Messiah would come*. A much earlier prophecy narrowed the field to the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10-11) but until the Lord spoke to David on this occasion, no further specific Israelite family had ever been identified.
- a. This Davidic Covenant became the basis of the expectation of an eternal, Messianic kingdom written about and proclaimed by the Hebrew prophets throughout the remainder of the Old Testament.
 - b. Not only that, but the New Testament goes to great lengths to show that Jesus was David's descendant and the rightful heir to his throne. Paul wrote to Timothy, "Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel..." (2 Timothy 2:8) and Jesus Himself claimed to be "the Root and the Offspring of David" (Revelation 22:16).
- ii. David's Understanding of God's Promise: How thoroughly did David understand the implications of God's promise? The Apostle Peter answers this for us in Acts 2. He quoted two of David's psalms as evidence of what David understood (Psalm 16 and 110). In Psalm 16:10-11, David had said, "You will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. You have made known to me the paths of life..." Peter made these remarks about what David's words:

"Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was ahead, *he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ*, that He was not abandoned to the grave, nor did His body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear."
(Acts 2:30-33, my emphasis)

- iii. David's Response: When Nathan relayed God's message to David, David went and sat before the Lord in the tent that housed the Ark. He was humbled, awestruck, and overwhelmed with gratitude. He expressed these feelings and his confidence in the Lord's promise in prayer.

C. Israel's Borders Secured – 2 Samuel 8

i. God's Promise Fulfilled

1. One of the promises in God's covenant was that He would secure Israel's borders. He said to David, "I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning and have done ever since the time I appointed judges over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies" (2 Samuel 7:10-11). As the Sinaitic covenant made clear, this promise was conditional on Israel's obedience. Since David was God's obedient servant, immediately after issuing the promise to him, God began to fulfill it.
2. This plan for peace required the securing of Israel's borders. The enemy nations listed as those David defeated in 2 Samuel 8 surrounded Israel. We are not given any indication about the time period for many of these battles, although David's battles against the Ammonites are detailed in chapter 10. Because of David's commitment to God's law (Numbers 24:17), he even fought the Moabites, people with whom he had family ties (Ruth 4:13-21).
3. Many believe that, through David's expansions, Israel finally occupied and controlled all the land God had originally promised Abraham. As a result of these victories and just as God promised David, Israel came into an age of peace such as she had never before known. The reigns of David and Solomon are, not surprisingly, often referred to Israel's Golden Age.

ii. David and the Lord's Enemies

1. 2 Samuel 8 tells of David's battles against the Lord's enemies. The Lord's enemies are often referred to in the Psalms. To imprecate means to curse someone or something. The psalms that call for divine retribution, asking God to judge or curse His enemies, are known as imprecatory psalms.

- a. Some say these psalms are reflections of an Old Testament mindset that was replaced by a spirit of love in the New Testament. However, this can't be so, since in other places, the Old Testament directs God's people to love their enemies (Proverbs 24:17-18) and the New Testament quotes the Old Testament imprecations on a number of occasions.
 - b. David wanted his enemies called to account for more than merely selfish reasons. He loved justice and hated evil. He was as concerned about *God's glory* as he was his personal safety (or more so).
 - c. Today, believers can use the imprecatory psalms for worship by relating them to the spiritual war in which we are engaged. Like David, we can be eager for the day in which complete justice finally reigns. In the words of Roger Ellsworth, we shouldn't look at the imprecatory psalms "as the individual child of God seeking personal vengeance against his enemies but rather as him yearning for the only true God to triumph over His enemies. These imprecations are the prayers of those who have a consuming passion to see the cause of God triumph over all." As Ellsworth suggests, we can enter into the outlook of these psalms by using them as prayers against Satan and his hosts and against our own stubborn sins.¹
2. As the chapter twice states, "The Lord gave David victory wherever he went" (8:6, 14). David knew the victories were from the Lord and brought the plunder to Jerusalem where he dedicated it to Him (8:7-12). David gave credit where credit was due.
- iii. The Development of David's Government: As 2 Samuel 8:15-18 summarizes, David chose officials to help govern the people. He reigned over Israel, "doing what was just and right for all people" (8:15).

Summary Statement: David prayed, "Do as you promised so that your name will be great forever" (2 Samuel 7:26). Israel was blessed by the fulfillment of one of these promises.

Principle: *In Christ's kingdom, He alone gets the glory.*

The Lord gave David specific promises and He has also given us specific promises. He has promised us every spiritual blessing in Christ (Ephesians 1:3), an inheritance (Ephesians 1:14), that He will complete His good work in transforming us (Philippians 1:6), that our dead bodies will be resurrected to eternal life (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18), that he will eventually bring an end to death and all our sorrows (Revelation 21:3-4), and that we will live forever in an unbelievably beautiful, heavenly home (Revelation 22:1-5).

We should declare with the psalmist, “Ascribe to the LORD, O mighty ones, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name” (Psalm 29:1-2). “Not to us, O LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory” (Psalm 115:1). After the Ark arrived in Jerusalem, David declared, “Give praise to the Lord... make known among the nations what He has done... tell of all His wonderful acts” (1 Chronicles 16:8-9).

Application: Are you as eager as David was to bring God glory? Are you in the habit of sharing the things that God does in your life for the sake of His glory?

It is a great temptation to congratulate ourselves and seek the applause of others, but God warns us against stealing what belongs to Him alone. He says, “I will not yield my glory to another” (Isaiah 42:8, 48:11). He alone deserves the glory since “apart from Him we can do nothing” (John 15:5).

Transition: 2 Samuel 9-10 describe two acts of kindness that David extended and the very different responses to them.

III. Two Acts of Kindness – 2 Samuel 9-10

i. David’s Kindness to Mephibosheth: 2 Samuel 9

1. David remembered his covenant with Jonathan. They had pledged to protect and show kindness to one another’s descendants. Therefore, David inquired to find out whether any descendants of Saul were still living and discovered that Jonathan had a lame son living in Lo Debar named Mephibosheth.
2. David had Mephibosheth brought to the palace. Surely Mephibosheth expected that David would see any descendant of Saul as a threat to his kingdom. Much to Mephibosheth’s surprise, David restored all of Saul’s land to him and pledged that Mephibosheth would always eat at David’s table. Finally, he gave Mephibosheth his own household of servants.
3. David’s actions were entirely magnanimous. He kept his covenant with Jonathan, and he proved he bore no ill will against the house of Saul. Mephibosheth’s response was very humble: “What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?” (9:8).

ii. David’s Kindness to the Son of the Ammonite King: 2 Samuel 10

1. Just as David had expressed kindness to the son of Jonathan, he also sought to express kindness to the son of another man. Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had shown David kindness in some manner that is not described. An Ammonite king by the same name had been Saul’s enemy (1 Samuel 11:1) and it seems likely that he had entered a peace treaty with Israel following a battle in which Saul soundly defeated him (1 Samuel 11). The kindness he showed

David may have been the respect due the king of a superior nation. If this was the case, David responded to the son of someone with whom Israel had shared a covenant agreement.

2. When Nahash died, David determined to show kindness to Nahash's son Hanun and sent a group of diplomatic representatives to express sympathy. However, Hanun misunderstood David's intentions and humiliated David's men by shaving off half of each man's beard and cutting off his robe at the buttocks (thus exposing them).
3. David's first response was concern for his men. He told them to remain at Jericho, the first Israelite city west of the Jordan, until their beards had grown back. This would prevent them from having to appear defaced before their families.
4. Hanun surely anticipated that his actions would not be taken lightly, and knowing the superiority of David's army, hired Aramean mercenaries to join his own forces. Joab and his brother Abishai divided the Israelite army and successfully met the threats of the Arameans and the Ammonites. Although David's act of kindness was rebuffed, ultimately, it resulted in a further expansion of his influence. Peoples far to the northeast of Israel entered a peace treaty with David (2 Samuel 10:19).

iii. David's "Kindness"

1. The words translated "kindness" in 9:1 and 10:2 are the Hebrew word *hesed*. It is a term that describes absolute, unfailing loyal love, kindness, and devotion often based on a previous relationship, especially a covenant relationship. The term appears over 200 times in the Old Testament, often as demonstrated by God.
2. When the Lord made His covenant with David, He told David that He would discipline David's son when he did wrong but would never take His "steadfast love" from him. The root word is the same, the word *hesed*.
3. In David, we see a reflection of Jesus, our God and our Messiah.
 - a. He is righteous and just (just as David was said to be in 8:15), punishing those who determine to be His enemies. David served as God's instrument of justice in fighting
 - b. However, His "loving-kindness" (*hesed*) toward those who are willing to enter a covenant relationship with Him is immeasurable (Exodus 34:6-7).

Summary Statement: David was reflecting God's own nature by demonstrating *hesed*. Although his two attempts to show kindness were received very differently, both resulted in the strengthening of David's kingdom.

Principle: *It is the duty of all kingdom members to bless others.*

The New Testament teaches that God has expressed His kindness to us in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:7, Titus 3:4). In turn, we are to clothe ourselves with kindness (Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:12-14). We are to bless all people but especially the brotherhood of believers (John 13:34-35, Romans 12:10, Hebrews 13:1, 1 Peter 1:22, 2:17, 1 John 2:10, 3:16-18).

Application: When we receive Jesus by faith, we enter a covenant relationship with God. We become part of a *covenant family* to whom God expects we will show loyal love and kindness. What specific expression of loving-kindness will you commit to showing another member of God's kingdom this week?

Conclusion

At present, the Kingdom of God is revealed in the reign of Christ in the lives of His people. One day, however, that kingdom will be elevated to a higher level. All will see that "the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 11:15).

David knew that his kingdom was all God's doing. The story of the Bible is that God has taken us out of the kingdom of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of light. Since we were powerless to help ourselves, He has done it all!

How did David respond to this? Well, he cooperated with God's work (without attempting to manipulate it), he gave God all the glory, and he made it his business to bless others as God had blessed him. How can we do less for the One who has planned, established, and advances the kingdom we will eternally enjoy?

¹ Ellsworth, R. (2006). *Opening Up Psalms* (157). Leominster: Day One Publications.