**David Conquers Jerusalem**

**2 Samuel 5:6-25**

**Key Verse: 2 Samuel 5:10** “And he became more and more powerful, because the Lord God Almighty was with him.”

**1. David conquers Jerusalem**

David became the king of Judah at the age of 30 after 15 year’s training since God had anointed him as king and then became the king of the United Kingdom of Judah and Israel at the age of 37. After he became the king of the United Kingdom, what did he do?

Please look at verse 6. “*The king and his men marched to Jerusalem to attack the Jebusites, who lived there*”. Jerusalem is first mentioned in Genesis 14:18, “*Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High*”. Melchizedek who was king of Salem and priest of God met and blessed Abraham who was returning from defeating king Kedorlaomer and his allies.

After the Exodus, God commanded Israel to take the whole land of Canaan, but Jerusalem was still in the hands of the Jebusites. Joshua 15:63 reads “*Judah could not dislodge the Jebusites, who were living in Jerusalem; to this day the Jebusites live there with the people of Judah*”. Judges 1:8 and 21 state, “*The men of Judah attacked Jerusalem also and took it. They put the city to the sword and set it on fire. The Benjamites, however, did not drive out the Jebusites, who were living in Jerusalem; to this day the Jebusites live there with the Benjamites.*”

Although David became the ruler of the whole Israel, Jerusalem located in the middle of his kingdom was still not under his control. David’s first military operation for his United Kingdom of Israel was conquering Jerusalem because he chose Jerusalem as the capital of his kingdom. Jerusalem was an excellent choice as a capital for many reasons. First, it had no prior tribal association and was therefore good for the United Kingdom of Israel. Second, the geography of the city made it easy to defend against enemies. Third, Jerusalem possessed the water supply from natural springs, which was a precious commodity in a desert country. Fourth, Jerusalem was at a crossroad and was centrally located.

How did the Jebusites react when King David and his army marched to Jerusalem? Please see verse 6, “*You will not get in here; even the blind and the lame can ward you off. David, catch me if you can*”. The Jebusites mocked David because they underestimated him and were overconfident because Jerusalem was a natural fortress surrounded by deep valleys.

David was bullied by the Jebusites, but was not intimidated by their negative words because David had faith in God. More than 20 years ago when David faced the Philistine giant, Goliath as a teenager, he was despised by Goliath. 1 Samuel 17:42-45 state.

*He looked David over and saw that he was little more than a boy, glowing with health and handsome, and he despised him. He said to David, “Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?” And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. “Come here,” he said, “and I’ll give your flesh to the birds and the wild animals!” David said to the Philistine, “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.*

Our enemy, Satan tries to intimidate and discourage us through many negative words. It is true that our enemies are strong, while we are weak, but we must remember that we are stronger than our enemies when God is with us. When we are mocked or bullied by someone, it is easy for us to become fearful and anxious. Or some may react emotionally with anger. “What did you just say to me? Alright, I am going to put some dirt in your eyes.” However, we should not be controlled by negative words from our enemy but listen to the words of God.

There is a Christian rock band called Casting Crowns. About 10 years ago when I was living in a small city in Washington State while working as a postdoctoral researcher at a national lab, I had a chance to attend a concert of Casting Crowns because my wife recommended. It was the time when I was frustrated and discouraged because my research papers were repeatedly rejected and not published for almost 2 years. However, one of Casting Crown’s songs encouraged me. It was the song called Voice of Truth. It goes like this:

*The giant keeps on telling me time and time again.*

*"Boy, you'll never win!" "You'll never win!"*

*But the voice of truth tells me a different story*

*The voice of truth says, "Do not be afraid!"*

*And the voice of truth says, "This is for My glory"*

*Out of all the voices calling out to me*

*I will choose to listen and believe the voice of truth*

We may hear many different voices around us, but we must choose to listen and believe only the voice of truth from God that gives us true encouragement and hope, not Satan’s voice that intimidates and discourages us.

Please look at verse 7, “*Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of Zion—which is the City of David*.” Despite the discouraging and distracting words from the Jebusites, David focused on his mission and was able to capture the fortress of Zion, Jerusalem, which was later called the City of David. Verse 8 shows how David seized Jerusalem, “*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*””. As a man of God and great strategist, David successfully planned and executed a military operation to capture the city. It appears that David sent his men through ancient water tunnels called “Warren’s Shaft”. David and his men persisted through difficult circumstances and finally captured Jerusalem.

Please read verse 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*”. David converted a small Canaanite city into the capital of his kingdom and called Jerusalem the City of David. The city remained the capital of the David’s dynasty for 400 years, until the kingdom was conquered by the Babylonians. Following the return from the Babylonian exile, Jerusalem again served as the capital of the Jewish people for the next five and a half centuries. Although Jerusalem was a great capital city for David’s kingdom, it was only a shadow of what is to come.

Revelation 21:1-4 state, “*Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away*.”

Someday, all believers will joyfully dwell with our true King, Jesus in the new Jerusalem. When the time comes, our home address will change from “New York” or “New Jersey” to “New Jerusalem”.

Please read verse 10, “*And he became more and more powerful, because the Lord God Almighty was with him*.”. After David conquered Jerusalem and made it the capital of his kingdom, the foundation of his kingdom had been completed. King David grew more and more powerful not because of his own ability but because of the presence of God Almighty with him. Hiram king of Tyre sent envoys to David, along with cedar logs and carpenters and stonemasons, and they built a palace for David. This shows that King David was internationally recognized and honored as the king of the United Kingdom. It appeared that only glorious and splendid days were waiting for the young leader, King David. However, David didn’t become proud but stayed humble because he knew that his kingship and success were attributed to God, not to himself. 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. David was a spiritual and humble king who fully understood that God established him as king to shepherd his people unlike other kings who oppress and torture their people. David was the shadow of the true shepherd king, Jesus Christ. In John 10:11, Jesus said, “*I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep*”.

David was able to keep his humbleness and focus on God’s mission even during his prime time because he was by no means an overnight success but God trained and prepared him for 15 years just like Moses was prepared in the wilderness for 40 years. David learned that God was with him all the time even when he was running away from King Saul as a miserable fugitive. When we are successful, it is easy to be proud and complacent, but we must stay humble and remember that we are blessed because God is with us. Even when we are going through suffering and failure, we must also remember that God is still with us and will restore us in his time.

**2. David trusted in God**

Please see verse 17, “*When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, they went up in full force to search for him, but David heard about it and went down to the stronghold*.”.

When the Philistines heard that David became the king of the United Kingdom of Israel, they wanted to challenge King David because they knew that David’s kingdom will be a serious threat to them. The Philistines were a long standing enemy of Israel. Since the Israelites moved back to Canaan where the Philistines were living, there had been constant conflicts and battles between them. David also experienced a few battles against the Philistines. The Philistines knew about David well because David even lived in Philistine territory a year and four months while running away from King Saul according to 1 Samuel 27. The Philistines considered David their troublesome enemy given the history that David had defeated the Philistine army several times before he became the king. David had such a great winning record against the Philistines, so he could feel confident about himself and believe that he could easily defeat the Philistines once again. However, on the other hand, the army of the Philistines that David faced at the time seemed much more powerful than before given that they completely destroyed King Saul’s army and killed King Saul and his sons only about 7 years ago.

Now the Philistines had come and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim. David could either depend on his own ability and start a battle or could hide himself out of fear for the strong Philistine army. What did David do? Let’s read verse 19, “*so David inquired of the Lord, “Shall I go and attack the Philistines? Will you deliver them into my hands?”*.

Here, we can find that King David was different from King Saul. In 1 Samuel 28, when Saul saw the Philistine army, he was afraid and filled with terror. Although Saul inquired of the Lord, God did not answer to him. Then he decided to inquire of a medium. Why did God not respond to Saul when he inquired? It was because the spiritual relationship between God and Saul was broken. Saul inquired of God just to escape the situation without sincere faith and trust in God. Unlike Saul, David had built and maintained the strong trust relationship with God throughout his lifetime. Not only this time but also many other times, David inquired of God when he was in trouble. For example, in 1 Samuel 23, David inquired of the Lord when the Philistines were fighting against Keilah, “Shall I go and attack these Philistines?” The Lord answered him, “Go, attack the Philistines and save Keilah.” In 1 Samuel 30, when David and his men found Ziklag destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive, David inquired of the Lord, “Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?” God answered, “Pursue them. You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue.”

King David had a full trust in God and inquired of God for his guidance, while God faithfully answered David and provided spiritual direction every time. This time, again God was faithful answering David’s inquiry.

Please see verse 19. “*The Lord answered him, “Go, for I will surely deliver the Philistines into your hands*.” God assured David that he would deliver the Philistines into his hands. This means that King David will defeat the Philistines not by the power of David’s army but by the power of God. We should remember that God is not our assistant but our commander. The almighty God fights for us when we face our enemies.

Look at verses 20 and 21. “*So David went to Baal Perazim, and there he defeated them. He said, “As waters break out, the Lord has broken out against my enemies before me.” So that place was called Baal Perazim. The Philistines abandoned their idols there, and David and his men carried them off*”. As God promised to David, God made David defeat the Philistines at Baal Perazim. God destroyed David’s enemies like powerful breaking waters. The Philistines abandoned their idols and ran away. The Philistines brought idols because they thought idols would help defeat the Israelites, but they were actually dead and useless. Unlike the Philistines, the Israelites experienced a great victory through the mighty power of living God.

Look at verse 22. “*Once more the Philistines came up and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim*”. After the first victory against his enemy, King David could have been more confident about himself and gone out to defeat the Philistines once again without depending on God. However, David still kept his humbleness and again sought God’s direction. Let’s read verses 23 and 24.

*so David inquired of the Lord, and he answered, “Do not go straight up, but circle around behind them and attack them in front of the poplar trees. As soon as you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the poplar trees, move quickly, because that will mean the Lord has gone out in front of you to strike the Philistine army.”*

This time, God’s direction was more complicated and strange than the previous one. How did David respond to God’s direction? Please see verse 25, “*So David did as the Lord commanded him, and he struck down the Philistines all the way from Gibeon to Gezer*”. David obeyed God absolutely although he could have disagreed with God’s direction based on his experience and knowledge that he had gained from numerous battles in his lifetime.

Here, we can learn why David is called a man after God’s own heart. David not only inquired of God but also obeyed his command. People may ask God for his direction, but many of them may fail to obey God when they find that God’s direction is against their own will. We must fully trust God to absolutely obey his direction. David’s trust relationship with God was not built overnight. David had built the trust relationship with God over many decades. David trusted God not only during the moments of success but also during the moments of failure. In Psalm 56, David said, “When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise—in God I trust and am not afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?”.

King David acknowledged God as his true king and shepherd. Psalm 23 shows David’s deep trust relationship with God, “*The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name’s sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me*”.

Do I trust in God? Yes, I do, but I must also confess that I had to struggle with doubt from time to time. When I look back my missionary life, I realize that God has been with me all the time and led me faithfully as my good shepherd. After serving the campus ministry with Columbia Fellowship for about 5 years until summer 2009, my family and I moved to Madison, Wisconsin for my postdoctoral position at the University of Wisconsin. My wife and I served several Bible students and opened our living room for Worship Service every Sunday. After spending less than 2 years in Wisconsin, my family and I moved again to Washington state for my second postdoctoral position at a national laboratory. My wife and I still kept Sunday Worship service every Sunday as a house church although we did not have any other members. Although I have such a beautiful memory about the life in the Midwest and the Pacific Northwest for about 5 years with my wife and my two children, and learned how to depend on God only while serving a house church ministry, my postdoctoral status had not changed at all, which frustrated me a lot. In 2014, we came back to NYC through my wife’s job that was opened by God’s mercy. However, I became jobless and suffered from depression for a few months. However, God miraculously provided a faculty position at a state university in Jersey City and now I am working as a tenured faculty and a department chairperson. Although I can see there are many new challenges ahead of me, I will continue to trust in my God who is my good shepherd. I pray that I may inquire of God’s direction every day and obey his direction absolutely for the sake of his glory.