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Hold On To the Promises

II Samuel 5:1-10

Intro: As we move into **ch5**, we're presented w/ a slightly different literary approach from the previous chapters. **Ch5** isn't a single flowing story from beginning to end; it's more of a collection of scenes or episodes, bits of information lined up end-to-end. It's like a photo collage, a grouping of several pictures of different locations or events that all relate to a similar theme. A collage is an artistic technique that **makes other people's vacation photos more bearable**. That's what's going on here: the writer gives us 5 completely different events that all relate to 1 specific theme: the **establishment of David's kingdom**.

What's interesting about **ch5** is that the various sections do not follow a strict chronological order. Of the 5 scenes, only 3 happened early in David's reign, 1 occurred thru-out it and 1 couldn't have happened until the last 10 yrs of his reign. We'll discuss this in more detail next time but it is important for us to remember that the biblical writers are not chained to chronological order, as we have already seen in I Sam. Suffice it to say that this chapter is orderly, just not in a sequential way. It's a collage; a grouping of certain stories intending to give us a proper view of the kingdom.

1-3- The cowardly assassination of Ishbosheth (ch4) left the 11 northern tribes without a king. Abner was dead but he had paved the way for David to be made king over all the 12 tribes. The only thing necessary was for the elders of all the other tribes to convene at Hebron and anoint David as king. That's exactly what they're doing here.

The elders present themselves to David & receive him as king b/c they see 3 characteristics of leadership in him:

1) He was 1 of them (1b). David was an Israelite. This was significant b/c for a while there, David lived as a Philistine among the Philistines but the elders let that slide & rightfully embraced David as 1 of their own.

Can you imagine how different this would have gone had David actually fought alongside the Philistines against Israel? Yet again we see **YHWH** protecting David from his own foolishness. As we will see, He doesn't always do this. Why is that? My opinion is that **YHWH** protected David when

he was in danger of disqualifying himself from God's plan for him & Israel. There will be other opportunities for David to be stupid & **YHWH** allows him to do it. The only difference is that in these instances, David's actions won't prevent him from being king; they'll only determine how easy or difficult his reign will be. Many times the Lord allows us to persist in foolishness b/c it won't disqualify us from His plan, it only makes following His will more difficult. **Christian life is tough; it's even tougher if you're stupid.**

2) He was a natural leader (2a). David had excelled in leadership under Saul & the whole nation had seen it. They knew he could successfully lead men in battle & they believed he could successfully lead them as a nation. Whether David was serving under Saul or running for his life from Saul; he had always conducted himself in such a way that revered Saul's position & authority as the Lord's anointed. It might have seemed silly to others at the time, especially when David had the advantage over Saul; but none of his actions were done in secret & all Israel knew his character.

3) He was called by YHWH (2b). It seems that everyone was aware of the fact that David was **YHWH's choice** as king over Israel. The people knew that Samuel had anointed David as king some 15-20 yrs before & that it was **YHWH's** will that he ascend to the throne. The nation needed a shepherd & David was that shepherd. Remember, Saul had been the people's choice for king but he wasn't **YHWH's** 1st choice. God had given him as a judgment against Israel b/c they wanted to be like all the other nations. **YHWH** loved His people & equipped David to be king.

These 3 characteristics should be present & easily recognized in the life of anyone who would lead God's people:

- **a godly leader must belong to God's people in heritage & heart:** they must obviously be saved & even more, they must be willing to sacrifice their own desires & expectations in order to effectively minister to those God gives 2 them

- **a godly leader must show a capacity to lead:** leadership is an acquired trait but it's not acquired on-the-job! Reality is – b/4 you can be a good leader, you have to learn how to be a good follower. B/4 you can ever give proper orders you have to learn how to properly receive orders. Good leaders empathize w/ their people b/c they've been there.

- **a godly leader must have an evident call from God.** Many people think they are called to lead but what is the evidence? They're already leading –

they don't wait for someone or something to open the door, they start doing what God has called them to do where they are: at home, work, neighborhood, etc.

they anointed- I Chron 12:23-37 reveals the great assembly that gathered at Hebron to recognize David as king over all Israel, an impressive army numbering over 340K. But vs38-40 describes the celebration: **there was joy in Israel!** This celebration came late (7 yrs after Saul's death) but it did come. This great joy was the result of Israel finally receiving their rightful & anointed king! What a wonderful day it was, Israel hadn't seen a day like that in a long time!

While this is a joyous day, it's **sad** to see that the tribes only turn to David **after** their alternate choice has been taken away. Imagine, all the tragedy & loss from ch2 until now could have been avoided if **YHWH's** people had submitted to **YHWH's** will from the very beginning. Instead of the death & loss of good men in unnecessary conflict, Israel could have been experiencing the joy that's always associated with being in line with God's desires and intentions. By the same token, it's sad when Christians only really recognize Jesus as King when all their other choices have fallen apart. We should recognized Jesus as King from the very start & avoid all the inevitable pain and suffering that comes with rebellion and self-seeking. We should choose Jesus outright, not just when all our other options fail. How much **joy** has been **denied**, **rejoicing missed** simply because we stubbornly insist on doing everything our way?

4-5- began to reign- What significant event has taken place here? The **fulfillment** of **YHWH's** promise to David! This promise of the kingdom to David begins in a threat to Saul (**I Sam 13:14**) & becomes visible when David is anointed by Samuel in front of his family. This promised constantly nagged a tormented Saul which he eventually resigned himself to. It was accepted as fact by David's friends as well as his enemies. **YHWH's** promise of the kingdom was so well known, even the elders of the northern tribes knew about it, they referred to it & now they have instituted it.

We can see that **YHWH's** promise to David has finally come to pass but do we see how? Do we see how it has withstood the onslaught of Saul's venomous rebellion; how it survived David's own foolishness and the self-seeking actions of "friends" (**the Amalekite / Baanah & Rechab**) & close

relatives (Joab)? Do we see how YHWH's promise has remained firm in the face of intense opposition, chapter after chapter of it since I Sam 18? The implication here is that *all God's promises are certain no matter how much opposition they may meet.*

6-10- this scene appears completely different than the previous but it's actually closely related in theme because the taking of Jerusalem is the fulfillment of yet another of YHWH's promises, it's just not a promise made to David. Why does David want Jerusalem? He needs a capitol city that would be acceptable to all parties involved. Hebron was too far south to be accepted by the northern tribes & anything north would have been just as unacceptable to Judah. In Jerusalem, David has a city centrally located between north & south that has never been occupied by any tribe. The only problem was: it was still occupied by pagan Jebusites that Israel had failed to remove since the days of Joshua!

The 1st thing we hear from the locals is a lot of smack talk! B/c of its location, Jerusalem was easy to defend. Built on a rocky hill & surrounded on 3 sides by valleys & hills, the city was vulnerable only on the north side. This situation made the Jebusites overconfident & quick to mock David & his troops with an arrogant putdown: *sightless eyes & helpless legs are enough to repel any attack of yours.* Those are sharp words, especially if you have 2 eat them!

Vs7 says they did. The real question is *how* they were defeated. David offers a reward to anyone who could gain entrance to the city & defeat its defenders ("lame & blind" may be a reference to the mocking Jebusites themselves). David also offers a battle plan – make your way 1-by-1 up the water system & execute a sneak attack. The defenders are blind – they'll never see you coming. Scholars disagree on how David gained entrance to the city but we have the *fact* of David's victory if not the method. Regardless, David picks a great capitol for a united kingdom.

But, the promise connection? We've seen the Jebusites before, they factored into Joshua's conquest of Canaan but they actually appear in the plans & promises of YHWH much earlier than that. You see, when YHWH promised the land from the Nile to the Euphrates to Abraham's descendents, He was referring to land that was already occupied by others at the time & the Jebusites were last on the list of current occupants YHWH

mentions (**Gen 15:18-21**). This same promise is repeated 6Xs in **Ex**, once in **Deut** & twice in **Joshua**. Here's where it got tripped up: Judah won a solid victory at Jerusalem but they were unable occupy the city & dispossess the Jebusites, neither could Benjamin. But now, nearly 400 yrs later, David overruns the Jebusite stronghold & takes possession of Zion for the 1st time!

Here again, **YHWH**'s promise has proven true! If **vs1-5** teach us that **YHWH**'s promises are certain in spite of **severe opposition** then **vs6-10** teach us that **YHWH**'s promises are certain in spite of **chronological distance**. **800 yrs** (Abe – David) cannot dilute or erode the **reliability** of **YHWH**'s word. God's promises don't come with an expiration date. God's promises to His people are so firm that time cannot dissolve them and our enemies can't destroy them. All of this should make a difference in the way we Christians read our Bibles and live out our lives today.

The Bible lists countless promises for believers and most of them relate to this present life. We have the promise of **divine: provision** (**Mt 6:33 all these things** [food/ clothes] **shall be added to you**); **protection** (**Ps 34:19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all**); **presence** (**Mt 28:20 lo, I am with you always...**; **Isa 43:2**) & **power** (**Acts 1:8**). There are even promises that **affirm** the promises (**Rom 4:21; II Cor 1:20; II Peter 1:4**). These are just a few of the multitude of promises that God has given to His people in His word. But, do we believe them? Do we live our lives according to them? Do we honor & serve the Lord with abandon, being obedient 2 His word & trusting Him to make up the difference? Or, do we hedge our bets & try 2 retain as much control as we can?

If so, that is a miserable way to live for a Christian b/c if nothing else, you're missing out on the joy that comes from making Jesus the rightful & anointed king of your life. Why wait 7 yrs to celebrate? Some folks wait an entire lifetime. That's not what God wants for any of His children but if you insist on retaining your weak faith, He'll allow it. Stronger faith won't make your Christian walk any easier but it will sure make it more enjoyable! If we're going to make a difference in our community, if we're going to reach the world with the gospel then, as God's people, we must come to the place where, if God is who He says He is, we trust Him completely & wholeheartedly without reservation. That's our only real option!

You may believe you're a hopeless case; that you've gone to far for God to forgive you. Don't flatter yourself – that's just Jebusite smack talk! He truth is, when King Jesus becomes king over **your** life, He will conquer all those old strongholds. There's no habit that's gone so deep that the blood of Jesus Christ cannot go deeper. There's no bondage to sin that has gone so far that the power of the risen Lord cannot go further. You don't have to fight the battle over sin – Jesus has already won that victory – just invite Him into your heart & enjoy the forgiveness of sin. 😊