7-13 July 2024 All coming together: David’s story

2 Samuel 5: 1-5, 9-10

**5**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…

9David then took up residence in the fortress and called it the City of David. He built up the area around it, from the terraces[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Samuel+5%3A1-10&version=NIV#fen-NIV-8142b)] inward. 10And he became more and more powerful, because the Lord God Almighty was with him.

**Bible notes**

Following Saul’s death there was war for seven years between David, ruling the southern area of Judah, and Saul’s sons, who held the northern area of Israel. David’s forces gradually gained the upper hand, and the war ended with the death of Saul’s last son, Ishbaal. David was already well known among the Israelites of the north as a military leader from Saul’s time, and so they were ready to accept him as their king, travelling south to his headquarters at Hebron to acclaim and anoint him. It is possible that this unanimous agreement on the transition of power is deliberately shaped to emphasise David’s legitimacy as king of the whole nation.

The Israelite tribes picked up on imagery from David’s past, and Israel’s future, when they named him as ‘shepherd of my people’ (v.2). David had been a shepherd in his boyhood and had learnt the skills of caring for the sheep, skills that he was now able to use as king. In Israel’s tradition, the shepherd king would become an image for the leaders of the people (Ezekiel 34), echoing God’s role as the good shepherd.

David’s kingship over Israel was held within a covenant between himself and the Israelites. This follows an Old Testament pattern for articulating relationships of trust. The key covenant, between God and the people, was mediated through Moses (Exodus 19–20). God promised to be their God and they would be his people. This is paralleled by covenants with Noah (Genesis 9) and Abraham (Genesis 17), and by God’s covenant promises to David himself (2 Samuel 8). The covenant expresses mutual responsibility, not just a relationship of power or dominance.

In order to provide a focus of unity for the twelve tribes now coming together, David made the strategic decision to build a new capital city to be home for people from both Judah and Israel. The town of Jebus, home of the Jebusites, was neutral territory, not associated with any of the tribes. The hilltop town was captured by a daring raid in which David and his soldiers climbed up its water-shaft. He then began expanding the city that would eventually be known by at least three names: the city of David, Zion, and Jerusalem.

**Reflection**

Spend a few moments thinking about what stands out for you from the Bible reading. This idea may help.

What makes a leader respected? The ups and downs of political life give us acute awareness of the problems leaders face when they lose the respect of those they are leading. David is respected for his achievements. He protects the people, gives them a home and sets worship at the heart of his city. Jesus is not respected in Nazareth, despite the evidence of God’s power at work in him. The people are limited by their preconceptions about ‘the carpenter’. Do we respect the right people, or are we misled by appearances or preconceived ideas?

Questions for reflection

*You may wish to use these questions and the picture to help you think about or discuss issues arising from this week’s Bible passage.*

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**Questions**

* What skills does a shepherd need?
* Have you ever had to resolve a conflict between warring parties? What worked?

## How is God like a shepherd to us?

## Prayer

Adapt to your local context.

**Prayer of praise and thanksgiving**

Lord, we thank you for those who have the gift of leadership,  
and we praise you for the example of Jesus,   
who shows us how to lead.   
We thank you for those who have the gift  
of bringing people together in peace and harmony,   
and we praise you for sending us the Prince of Peace.  
All thanks and praise be to you,   
for the love and light in which we live.   
**Amen.**

## **A prayer to end the Bible study**

Lead us, Lord, when we lose sight of you.  
Lead us, good Lord, through darkness to your light.  
Lead us through disappointment and failure  
to a place of new calling.  
Lead us though we often struggle  
and sometimes do not listen to your voice.  
Lead us, good Lord, deeper into your love for us.  
**Amen.**