

# David, king and Saviour by God's grace

## 2 Samuel 5

In 1990 we experienced the unification of West- and East Germany. Belonging to the same brotherhood but being separated from each other for tens of years, these two countries united themselves. In 2 Samuel 5 we can read about the unification of Israel and Judah. Two countries, which a few years earlier had each gone their separate ways, unite themselves under one king. This, however, was not a purely political event. This was a church reunion!

This outline was written at the time when it was decided that not Bonn but Berlin would become the capital of a unified Germany. At this point, however, we concern ourselves with the fact that not Hebron (where David had resided for 7½ years) but Jerusalem becomes the capital of David's kingdom. Both human considerations and political motives must have played a role in this decision (see KorteVerklaring, p.71). These considerations, however, did not form the determining factor in this decision. The most important reason for choosing Jerusalem is because the LORD had chosen this place. This is where he desires to live. In the following chapter, therefore, the moving of the ark to Jerusalem is described. God wants to make this city the centre of his kingdom, which he wants to rule through David. David is allowed to rule as a **theocratic** king (see 2.1.4). Important passages in this context are 2 Chronicles 6:4-6, Psalm 2 (esp. v. 6) and Psalm 132 (esp. v. 13 and 16).

The promises that God gave to David (1 Sam 16) are being fulfilled. 1 Chronicles 11, where this history is written as well, contains very explicit references to these promises (end of v. 3). For years David had to travel through deep valleys in order to arrive at this summit. The road to the throne ran through a valley of struggles and tears, even after Saul's death. Through all these valleys, God guided his servant, held on to him, and, where necessary, brought him back on the right track. Now he shows why he did this, he wants his Word to be fulfilled!

While Saul falls in the battle against the Philistines, David triumphs over this hostile nation. Yet, it is **God's grace** which triumphs, there is no doubt about it. It is God who 'breaks through' (v. 20). David is king and Saviour by God's grace.

### 1. Verses 1-5

"We are your own flesh and blood." Literally, this stands for 'your bone and flesh'. This is an expression that can be traced back to the song that Adam sang to Eve (Gen 2:23). Solidarity cannot be expressed more powerfully than with these words. The civil war (as described from chapter 2:8 on) had been a complete failure. Even though they do not say it in so many words, you can easily determine that from their words.

**Question 1:** What connection is there between this event and the law for the king in Deuteronomy 17?

**Question 2:** In Lord's Day 28 of the Heidelberg Catechism you can encounter the expression, 'flesh of his flesh and bone of his bones' (Q&A 76). What is the meaning of this expression in that particular context? What is the similarity

and what is the difference between it and the expression that you come across here in 1 Samuel 5?

Notice that the Israelites point to the facts (v. 2a) and to the Word of the LORD (v. 2b). However, only the second reason for choosing David as ruler can be the determining factor.

Before he is anointed as king, David makes a covenant with the Israelites. This is both a beautiful and an important moment. Notice that David initiates the covenant. All of Israel came to him to accept him as their king. For his part, he now promises to be a faithful king for all the people. In the same way, Christ would later be a faithful King for all the members of his Church.

## 2. Verses 6-16

To understand the chronological order of the following events, I refer you to the 'KorteVerklaring'. Its interpretation is correct, in my opinion. The 'KorteVerklaring' can also be used to clarify some of the difficulties encountered in verse 8. The middle of verse 8 reads as follows: "those 'lame and blind'..." (in other words, those **so-called** lame and blind) "...are hated by David." In the RSV translation David's words may sound discriminating. In what circumstances the proverb was used is not exactly known.

Especially compared to verse 6, verse 7 sounds very brief and concise. David conquers the so-called impregnable fortress as if it is the most natural thing in the world! From God's standpoint it *is* the most natural thing in the world. His plan simply progresses. From this time on, Jerusalem becomes a place of great significance in Old Testament history. The name of the city continues to live on in the **New** Testament. There, Jerusalem is another expression for the **church**, which God is building and which will be completed on the last day (Gal 4:26 and Rev. 21:2). When you sing psalms that deal with Jerusalem (e.g., Ps 87 and 122), you are actually singing about the church.

***Question 3:** The LORD has said that he would live in Jerusalem forever (e.g., Ps 132:14). Does this not imply that the city of Jerusalem is still the city of God and that God still lives among the **people** of Israel? Substantiate your answer!*

A king from another nation provides materials for the building of David's palace (v. 11). This forms a firm proof that David's name and fame has spread beyond the borders of Israel. In addition, it is a proof that God had firmly established his kingdom here on earth (v. 12). This is in contrast to Saul's kingship, which had started to flounder soon after it had started. Also notice verse 12: "...for the sake of his people Israel." The point of the matter is not that David can glory in his lofty position. God magnifies the king because he has his eye set on the spiritual welfare of his people. After all, David's kingship is a kingship of **servitude**. As a shepherd he has to lead the flock (cf. v. 2). In doing so, he will portray the image of the good Shepherd who comes after him. Christ did not withdraw himself to his own heavenly glory. He wants to use his glory for the benefit of the church.

The dying out of Saul's house (his last son is assassinated - ch 4) stands in stark contrast to the expansion of David's family (vv. 14-16; children born earlier are mentioned in chapter 3:2-5).

*Question 4: Can we also speak positively about the increase in the number of David's wives, or does this run contrary to the law for the king (Deut 17:17)? Incorporate in your judgment what the LORD tells David in chapter 12:8.*

### 3. Verses 17-25

The Philistines mobilize their whole army against the God-anointed king and his reunited people. This move is very dangerous for Israel. As long as Israel was involved in a civil war, the Philistines were apparently satisfied to be mere onlookers. When different groups within the church stand opposed to each other, the world can be a laughing bystander.

“As waters break out, the LORD has broken out against my enemies before me” (v. 20). In 1953 the waters of the North Sea broke through the dikes in the Netherlands. There is no way to stop such a flood. Similarly, when God comes into action there is no way to stop him! After the battle David confesses that all honour is due to the LORD. He is a Saviour by God's grace. And what David confesses, the LORD confirms when the Philistines make another attempt. He lets his people **hear** that he fights for them (v. 24).

*Question 5: According to 1 Chronicles 14:11 David says, “God has broken out against my enemies by my hand.” In 2 Samuel 5:20 it says, “... before me”. Are you able to reconcile these two verses?*

### 4. The work of the LORD in this account

You can see how the LORD establishes David's kingship, maintains it, and causes it to flourish, despite satanic opposition. There exists no enemy who can successfully oppose him. God breaks through. He breaks through to the coming of his Son. Now also, he will not let anything or anybody stop him from accomplishing his goal, the full glory of his kingdom. When he goes ahead of us in the battle we may follow him in complete confidence.

### For the introduction

1. The acknowledgment of David as king by all the tribes of Israel does not reflect a sudden change of heart after the death of Ishbosheth. Previously, it appears that they had already realized that God intended to make David king (v. 2). Then they had been eager to have David as their king. Abner knew that David was chosen by God (3:17)! It appears that he imposed Ishbosheth upon the Israelites, even though they had not heartily accepted this king.
2. From the verses 1-3 you can draw a line to the future. The unification of the two brother nations is reversed after the death of Solomon. The separation will last for a long time from then on. During the time of the exile the Israelites are allowed to hear about a promise of unification (Ezek 37:15-28). Pay careful attention to Ezekiel 37:24 in which the LORD announces, “My servant David will be king over them...” In time to come there will be **one** sheepfold led by **one** shepherd, David's great Son, Jesus Christ. Thus, this promise of unification finds its fulfillment beyond the Old Testament. Throughout the world Christ will gather his church, from among Jews as well as Gentiles, in the unity of the true faith (see Jn 10:16 and Eph 2:11-22). After his return, this unity will become completely visible (Rev. 7:9). In your introduction you may want to pose the question whether our text has any implications for the divisions that exists among the churches today. However, make sure that this question is not going to dominate the discussion!

3. When dealing with verse 6 you may want to pay attention to Jerusalem's history which you find in Genesis 14:18 (Salem, with Melchizedek as king), Joshua 18:28 (Jebus, or Jerusalem, was assigned to the tribe of Benjamin after the conquest of Canaan), and Judges 1:21 (Benjamin allowed the original inhabitants to live there). In the course of time Jerusalem has been destroyed two times, as a punishment of God over the disobedience of his people. First this city was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and then by the Romans. The latter destruction sealed God's definite rejection of the city. As was pointed out earlier in this outline, the name of this city was passed on to the New Testament church, which in heaven is built '... as a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit' (Eph 2:22).
4. Verse 21 demonstrates the complete powerlessness of the heathen idols. In battle they form nothing but a burden that has to be left behind. Besides, the Israelites themselves once had to leave the **ark** behind, allowing it to fall into the hands of their enemies (see 1 Sam 4:1-11). That is possible as well. However, that was not due to God's lack of power, but to the way in which they thought they could control God.
5. Show clearly that God's dealings with his people is the climax of this chapter. It is a climax that leads to the coming Christ.

Halbe Geertsma