

Although the LORD was with him, David did not immediately become king over all Israel at Saul's death. He initially became king over his home tribe of Judah and was anointed king over the entire nation of Israel some seven and a half years later. David trusted that the LORD would keep the promise to make him king even though it took years for it to happen.

After the death of king Saul, David is led by the LORD to return to Judah (David's tribe) and live in Hebron (2 Sam. 2:1). Representatives from Judah came to David and they anointed him as the king of Judah (2 Sam. 2:4). Meanwhile Saul's son Ishbosheth reigned as king over the remaining tribes of Israel. There was long war over the next 7 and a half years between David and Ishbosheth (2 Sam. 3:1) which did not end until the latter was assassinated by two captains of his army, leaving Israel without a king.

1 Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh.

“Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron” – After the assassination of Ishbosheth, who had been king over all the other tribes of Israel, these tribes send representatives into Judah where David is governing from Hebron. Without a king, they are now ready to have David reign over them.

“and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh” – The first reason that they give that David should be their king is that he is a fellow Israelite, descended from the same father of their nation as they were (Jacob/Israel). This was in compliance with the Mosaic Law (**Deut. 17:15** “*Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother*”).

2 Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the LORD said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel.

“Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel” – The next reason they gave is that David had already demonstrated that he was a capable military leader when he served under king Saul (1 Sam. 18:13). This began when the LORD used David to defeat Goliath and continued until Saul's jealousy forced David to flee.

“and the LORD said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel” – The fact that the LORD had destined David to be king seems to have been common knowledge. Abner, who had served under Saul as general over the army and was a supporter of Saul's family, had a falling out with Ishbosheth and stated his intent to cooperate with the LORD's plan for David to be king (2 Sam. 3:9-10). He then contacted the leaders of Israel about making David their king as the LORD had planned (2 Sam. 3:17-18). These representatives of Israel now acknowledge to David that it was the LORD's will that he become the king of Israel, serving as the nation's provider and protector.

3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the LORD: and they anointed David king over Israel.

Apparently David agreed with the representatives' proposal and so the elders of Israel came to David's home in Hebron to officially make David king over Israel. With the LORD as a witness, David made a “league” (covenant) with the elders that presumably laid out David's responsibilities to Israel as protector and provider, as well as Israel's promise of allegiance to David's leadership. Once the terms of the league were finalized, they anointed David as king over the entire nation of Israel. Notice that this verse refers to David as “king” twice even before he is anointed king of Israel, reminding us that he was already king of Judah at this point.

4 David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. 5 In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.

“David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years” – David became king over Judah at the age of 30, and his total time as king was 40 years, meaning that he was 70 years old at the time of his death.

“In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.” – The description of David's 40 years as king is broken down between the time when he was king only over Judah in Hebron (7 and a half years) and the time when he was king over the entire nation of Israel (33 years).

Verses 6-9: At this time Jerusalem did not yet belong to Israel because it was inhabited by the Jebusites. David captured the city from the Jebusites and proclaimed it “the city of David.” Thus Jerusalem became David's capital city from which he ruled over Israel.

10 And David went on, and grew great, and the LORD God of hosts was with him.

David was a man who loved the LORD and so the LORD was with him and caused him to prosper and become great. We should learn from the fact that God honors those that honor Him (1 Sam. 2:30).

11 And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons: and they built David an house.

“And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David” – Tyre was a seaport city of Phoenicia north of Israel on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. King Hiram sent messengers to David to congratulate him on becoming king and his successes thus far. The two kings became friends and the two nations enjoyed a commercial relationship of trading goods and services for many years.

“and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons: and they built David an house” – Tyre and Sidon were known for having skilled craftsmen that could cut trees and use the lumber to build beautiful buildings (1 Kings 5:6) and David made a deal with Hiram to build a home of cedar for him.

12 And David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake.

“And David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel” – David recognized that the successes that he was seeing in his kingdom was because the LORD was with him (v. 10). He understood that he had not become king because of his own abilities, but because the LORD had established him on the throne.

“and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake” – David also recognized that the LORD had not caused his kingdom to grow stronger solely for David's benefit. The LORD prospered David so that the people of Israel could reap the rewards of having a righteous king who loved and obeyed the LORD. A nation's citizens benefit when their leaders are righteous (**Prov. 29:2** *“When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn”*).

Verses 13-16: 2 Sam. 3:2-5 list the sons that David fathered while he was in Hebron. Once he made his residence in Jerusalem he took more wives and concubines and vs. 13-16 list the sons that he fathered while living in Jerusalem.

17 But when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines came up to seek David; and David heard of it, and went down to the hold.

When David was fleeing from Saul, there was a period of time that he hid among the Philistines and he had led the Philistine king Achish to believe that he had defected from Israel and had aligned himself with the Philistines (1 Sam. 27, 29). When the Philistines heard that David was now the king of Israel, they may have felt that they had been duped and/or betrayed by David. They mobilized their army to seek revenge and David went into the “hold” (stronghold/fortress) in order to prepare for the battle.

18 The Philistines also came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. 19 And David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the LORD said unto David, Go up: for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand.

“The Philistines also came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim” – The valley of Rephaim (“valley of the giants”) was a plain just SW of Jerusalem and the Philistines likely chose this place because they believed it gave them an advantage against David and the armies of Israel. One commentator suggested that the Philistines were seeking a logistical advantage by fighting David so close to his home.

“And David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand?” – David wisely consulted the LORD about how he should handle this situation. If only more leaders sought God's guidance instead of following their own human reasoning!

“And the LORD said unto David, Go up: for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand” – The LORD responds to David's inquiry, sending him into battle with the promise of victory.

20 And David came to Baal-perazim, and David smote them there, and said, The LORD hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters. Therefore he called the name of that place Baal-perazim.

Baal-perazim was probably in or near the valley of Rephaim, and David chose to engage the enemy at this location. David credits the LORD with the victory, declaring that the LORD had “broken forth” (to burst through) upon David's enemies like the way flood water bursts through and overruns all barriers. As a result of the victory, David names the place “Baal-perazim” (Lord of the outbursts).

21 And there they left their images, and David and his men burned them.

The fleeing Philistines had left behind the images of their gods that they had trusted to give them victory. David and his men wisely disposed of these images so that they would not be temptations to Israel. This was also in obedience to Mosaic Law (**Deut. 7:5** *“But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire”*). A later king, Amaziah, was not so wise and took home idols captured from the enemy and began to worship them despite the fact that these idols had not helped their previous owners (2 Chr. 25:14-15).

22 And the Philistines came up yet again, and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim. 23 And when David enquired of the LORD, he said, Thou shalt not go up; but fetch a compass behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees. 24 And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall the LORD go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines.

The Philistines return sometime later, choosing the same valley from which to fight David. David again consulted the LORD but this time the LORD does not instruct David to attack the enemy head-on. Instead, he is to go around and approach the enemy from behind near a grove of mulberry trees. They are to wait for the signal from the LORD (the sound of “a going” [marching]) and when they hear it, then they are to advance and engage the enemy. The LORD would go ahead of them and ensure their victory over the enemy.

25 And David did so, as the LORD had commanded him; and smote the Philistines from Geba until thou come to Gazer.

It may be that the Philistines had assumed that David would use the same tactics as in the first battle and so they may have adjusted their battle plans accordingly. However, the LORD gave David a different battle plan and David was victorious because of his obedience. The Philistines fled the battlefield and David pursued them with his army from Geba to Gazer, a distance of some 18 miles.