

Today we are continuing with our stories from the life of David. In this series we will be only looking at a few more of them, although there are lots more stories. So I might be coming back to David and some of the stories from when he was older in the new year. Today's story is from 2nd Samuel chapter 5 and it is also in 1 Chronicles 11 verses 4 to 9.

### *An update of story*

The years had passed by. David was no longer a young boy. He was 30 years old and David was king.

He had been the young shepherd with potential, he had spent time with Saul and his family, he had fled when Saul had tried to kill him, and spent years in the wilderness. Time had continued to flow.

There had been a battle between Saul's army and the Philistines. Jonathan, Saul's oldest son and David's close friend had been killed and when Saul had realised that he could not escape, he had fallen on his sword, killing himself.

Only one of Saul's sons had survived, Ishbaal, he hadn't been with Saul and his army that day.

Now you might have thought, well with Saul gone, the next day David would have been proclaimed king. It would have all been sorted.

But the move from Saul being king to David becoming king was not smooth at all. David's tribe, the tribe of Judah, had declared him to be their king.

But Saul's supporters were not ready to let go of the throne. They declared Ishbaal to be king, and Israel was torn apart in a civil war. The southern tribe of Judah, the house of David fighting the northern tribes, the house of Saul.

Civil wars, wars between tribes are terrible things and this war was no exception. People who knew each other, fought in battle, some of them died and this civil war went on for years. Gradually over time the house of David grew stronger and stronger and gradually over time the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker. Ishbaal was assassinated, betrayed and killed in his bed by some people from his own tribe, that was done without David knowing it was going to happen.

And David was really upset that it had happened like that and he made sure that those who carried out the assassination were executed.

But after Ishbaal's death, all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron, the main city of Judah, David's headquarters and said, "Look, we are your relatives, we are the same flesh and bone as you. For some time, while Saul was king over us, it was actually you who looked after Israel, it was actually you who really ran the country. We recognise that the Lord said to you: It is you who shall be shepherd of my people Israel, it is you who shall be ruler over Israel.

So all the leaders of Israel came to David there at Hebron, and they made a covenant, an agreement before the Lord, and they anointed David king over Israel.

### *David now king*

Now sometimes you hear stories about families being torn apart over things like wills and inheritances. Occasionally stories like that are in the paper. People do not speak to each other for years.

You do not need to live in the Hawkes bay for long to realise that Napier and Hastings have issues, they are like relatives that don't really get along, who don't trust each other even though there has not been any blood that has been spilt.

Now those things are minor compared to a civil war.

After a civil war, after a feud, where blood has been shed between relatives, rebuilding is almost impossible. The two sides do not trust each other.

Just imagine if Hastings and Napier merged, what the letters in the paper would be like when it came to deciding where the new city council would be centred. Just imagine it...

The mayor, well that would be voted on, but the chief executive for the council, well that would be an open contest. There would be plenty of people who would get upset over that.

And there were similar issues in Israel.

Where would the capital be? Down in Hebron, the main city of Judah, or where Saul came from in Gibeah 50 kilometres north in the tribal area of Benjamin.

Who would command the army? someone from the north or the south.

And how would these things be decided?

And in doing this, David showed some godly wisdom that he had gained over the years. And he also showed that he had a glimpse, an insight into what God was wanting to achieve.

*Jerusalem - refer to today, but then picture of what it was like then*

Now what major city is the first one you think of when you think of Israel.

... Jerusalem.

For almost everyone it is Jerusalem. Jerusalem one of the great cities of the world.

But that wasn't always the case. That wasn't the case at that time.

Back then Jerusalem was still Jebusite territory. Enemy territory, it had not been conquered by the Israelites. Jerusalem is in the middle between Hebron and Gibeah. It is in the tribal area of Benjamin, that was Saul's tribe. It sits there in the middle of the country. It does now, it did then.

But for 250 years since the time of the Exodus when Israel entered the land, to the time of David. Jerusalem had remained a Jebusite city. An enemy city in the middle of Israel, in the tribal area of Benjamin.

Now Jerusalem then, wasn't Jerusalem as it was to become. The location was the same. Set on a ridge on a hilltop, with steep ravines on a couple of sides.

But it was smaller, really the size of a village. Smaller than Flaxmere park. It had walls, defences, but not as big as they were going to become.

It was a difficult place to attack. It had its own water supply.

It was small, it was not very inspiring, attacking it looked like hard work, so people left it alone for year after year. Two hundred and fifty years.

And Jerusalem remained Jebusite territory.

But God prompted David to attack Jerusalem. It might have been that David just thought of it as being a good neutral place for a capital, one that had a good defensive position. But God knew that there was going to be more in store for Jerusalem than that. God knew that it was going to become incredibly strategic, from that day to this. Even though generations of Israelites had passed it by without a second thought.

The Jebusites, living in Jerusalem, well they were totally self confident. They mocked David and his men saying - "You might as well go home! Even the blind and the lame could keep you out. You can't get in here!" They were totally convinced that David and his men couldn't break through.

Their taunts got to David, while they were trying to discourage him, they actually made him absolutely determined to take the city.

So David looked over and scouted Jerusalem for a weakness, and he found it in their water supply. The route that the water was drawn up from the spring at the

bottom of the hill to the city at the top. What the Jebusites were so proud of, having their own water, to resist a siege, was actually their weakness.

And then David, had another master stroke. He said, the first person into Jerusalem, the first one who attacks the Jebusites will be the commander in chief of the army. This wasn't about who you know, or finding a job for the boys. The commander in chief had to show that they deserved it.

And Joab was first into Jerusalem. David and his men attacked the city and it fell, without any problems at all. The city was taken. Jerusalem was now an Israelite city. Joab became the commander in chief and was accepted in that role by the rest of the country.

But David did not just leave Jerusalem as it was. He cleaned the city out.

He built new walls, new defences, he turned it into a fortress. He developed the city, he chose to live there, he built his home there.

Not in Hebron where he had been living, or in Gibeah where Saul had come from.

David made Jerusalem the capital of Israel. A neutral city, making it a uniting point between the North and the South.

David showed godly wisdom in choosing Jerusalem and in choosing the commander in chief of the army. He helped unite the country.

Now David - saw Jerusalem with a glimpse of God's eyes, he saw some of the potential. A good defensive position with its own water supply. A place even though it was small and not very inspiring and had been overlooked for 250 years, a place that could become a uniting point for Israel. And that is what happened, and Jerusalem became known as the city of David.

But Jerusalem became far more strategic, far more famous than David would have ever dreamed. Even today, thousands of years later, Jerusalem is still the key to that entire region.

Joab became one of the most famous army commanders ever and Joab did not try to become king.

And as for David, he became greater and greater, for the Lord, the God of hosts, was with him.

As I have been thinking about this story, as I have been preparing this message I have seen an outward application and an inward one as well. And I will cover both of these this morning.

I will start with the outward first, the big picture. And that is the way that God sees the big picture, the total jigsaw puzzle, while we might just see one or two pieces. Jerusalem did not look like spectacular. It had been overlooked for years. David, with godly wisdom had a glimpse of what God wanted it to become. But the future role of Jerusalem would have staggered him. God knew what was going to happen, and it was God who provided the opportunity and insight for David to carry out his role.

Now the way that God sees the big picture has been a real lesson for me over the last few years. One of my skills is that I am by nature a big picture person, I can see interactions that others often miss. My work before I became a Pastor involved doing things like that for Carter Holt Harvey. That is what people paid me to do, that is what they asked me to give them advice about and I was very good at it. But I have discovered that God sees far far more than I could ever see. God's picture is not a static one, it is one which not only includes what is there now, but it also

includes what things will become over time as well. If I just focus on what I can see, what I can understand I will miss seeing with God's eyes.

And that is a challenge for me, it is a challenge for all of us as well. To trust God, we might just get a glimpse of things with God's eyes, just a taste. And realise what God is wanting us to do, and then it is up to us to trust God in what God is doing.

Trusting God with the big picture.

So that is an outward application.

But there is also an inward application as well.

We often have places like Jerusalem in our lives.

Places where God does not yet reign.

Places near the centre of who we are, that seem so difficult, so hard to change that we avoid them. It just seems like too much work.

It might be tied in with something from our past. Worry, rejection that then leads to fear and anxiety, that then feeds into what we do and what we say and how we respond to situations.

It seems to be so near the centre of who we are, surrounded by deep ravines, too hard to change. Just like Jerusalem was, controlled by the Jebusites for all those years.

But God wants to reign in those area of our lives, God wants to replace fear with love. God accepts us. God loves us.

God wants to reign in the Jerusalem's in our lives.

To take them over, to clean them out, to adjust the walls. To realign them so that we become who God has created us to be.

Do you know that the personality traits of someone who is worrier are very similar to those of someone who is a prayer warrior. Both see things before they happen.

Both are very concerned for others.

But for the prayer warrior, well they use the opportunities that are there to pray about those things, to hand them to God and to leave them to him.

And the same sorts of things are true for whatever is in those areas in our lives as well. They can be transformed, renewed if God reigns there.

Only God knows what will happen when he reigns in those Jerusalem in our lives.

Those areas might seem small and not very inspiring and we might have overlooked them and learned to live with them. Just like what happened with Jerusalem in Israel before David.

But just like what happened with Jerusalem, what they might become, what they might lead to, well that might be inspiring for others for generations to come.

If we let God and God's love into those areas of our life. And that is my prayer for us all this morning.

let us pray..