

2ND SAMUEL

Week 7, chapter 5 continued

I told you at the beginning of our last lesson that 2nd Samuel chapter 5 is flowing over with information and issues that are easy to rush right by, but are quite important to our overall progression through the Bible and thus we would make a few detours to help explain matters. So we spent a great deal of time last week discussing and defining terms for that ancient city that most represents Israel: Jerusalem. We learned that the oldest known name for this place is Yerushalayim and that name, surprisingly, is NOT Hebrew but Akkadian. The term Yerushalayim was represented in clay tablets found in northern Syria in the late 1960's and early 1970's. The tablets were written in the Akkadian language about 4500 years ago, or about 500 years before the time of Abraham.

Meaning something like “the foundation of the god Shalem”, a shortened name for this city was Shalem and we find that this is the name of the place (or at least one of the names) that was in use at the time of Abraham's encounter with the mysterious king and priest Melchizedek. Further, a clan or tribe named Jebus eventually conquered or built-up Yerushalayim and walled off a section of it, so Jebus and Yerushalayim were both common names for this place and in use at the same time. The walled off section the Jebusites named Zion. It was this walled off section that we find David and his private army conquering in 2nd Samuel chapter 5, and then renaming it The City of David.

Since David took Zion with his own men and didn't involve the national tribal troops he felt free to assign a personal name to his new capital, the City of David, because in fact this became his private estate. We need to get the picture that Yerushalayim was the name for the general area and the City of David was merely the name of the walled city that resided on a portion of that area; the area that lay downhill on the southern slope of Mt. Moriah. So the City of David was NOT synonymous with Yerushalayim and as we go forward in the Bible we need to keep this in mind. We'll revisit this subject as we arrive at the time of King Solomon building the first permanent temple for Yehoveh atop the crest of Mt. Moriah, which is located OUTSIDE of the City of David.

Let's re-read a portion of 2nd Samuel Chapter 5 to get our bearings for today's lesson.

RE-READ 2ND SAMUEL 5:6 – end

Starting in verse 6 we get a very brief account of the conquering of the Jebusite-held walled city of Zion, and so we get frustratingly little detail that is so typical of Biblical narrative when it comes to battles. The thing that is striking about this event is that the writer of this narrative focuses on the apparently insulting words that the Jebusites hurled at David from the safety of their massive fortress walls, and (from David's side) the clever means that David uses to gain entrance into this stronghold.

Let's start with the latter first. It seems that David used a water tunnel to more or less sneak his men into the city. This tunnel, or really more a "shaft", was first rediscovered in the modern age by Sir Charles Warren in 1867 and has been aptly named Warren's Shaft; it neatly verifies the Biblical account of David's conquest of Zion. Here we will take another detour because this will not be the last time that the water system of Jerusalem plays a pivotal role in its history. As an archeology buff I find this fascinating and hope that you will as well.

The City of David was built on a hill of hard limestone, in which underground water formed natural caves. The Gihon Spring is the only source of water for the city and it emerges in the Kidron Valley on the east side of the City of David. It is mentioned many times in the Bible and this valuable water source is what made the founding of the City of David (formerly Zion) possible and it sustained its existence for thousands of years. The Hebrew name of the spring (Gihon) is derived from the verb meaning "to gush forth," reflecting the rapid flow of the spring, which tends to vary with the seasons of the year and the amount of annual rainfall. This particular spring operates in a fascinating way; first the water accumulates in a subterranean cave and then that cave behaves as a cistern (a reservoir) that fills to the brim and then empties through cracks in the rock and by means of capillary action the water is siphoned upwards to the surface. This natural feature made it necessary to accumulate water in a pool so there would be water available in the seasons when the spring was not "gushing forth."

The Gihon spring emerged in a cave on the eastern slope of the City of David above the Kidron Valley. Over the centuries the various inhabitants of the walled city found it important to protect their water supply from enemies and to increase the amount of water available so the population could grow. Therefore three different manmade water systems fed by the Gihon spring were carved into the rock beneath the City of David and they are the most complex and advanced of any known from the Biblical era. All three water systems were in operation simultaneously in the First Temple period, and each contributed to the efficiency of the city's water supply. They also attest to the efforts of the kings of ancient Jerusalem to guarantee the water supply in time of siege.

In times of war and siege the city's water supply was vulnerable since the Gihon spring in the

Kidron Valley was outside the city walls and various means, including these tunnels and shafts, were designed to solve the problem. What is today called Warren's shaft is the earliest of these subterranean water systems. The entrance to the Warren's Shaft System is located in the middle of the eastern slope of the City of David inside of the ancient city's walls. It consisted of a subterranean, rock-cut tunnel with a shaft at its end. At the entrance the tunnel slopes steeply downward in a stepped passage.

But all of this leaves us with a question: how did David's men get inside this water shaft if it was located INSIDE the city walls? This question has caused many scholars to question either the reliability of this account in 2nd Samuel 5, or to wonder if the translation is incorrect.

But let's leave that matter open while we take the time to understand how the water system was expanded in later times. The next facility to be built is called the Siloam Channel or it is also called the Canaanite Tunnel. It was cut at the beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C. and it emerges from the Gihon Spring and extends approximately ¼ of a mile southward along the low, eastern slope of the City of David, around the city's southern end and then empties into a reservoir in the Tyropoeon Valley. The channel's northern part is 3 feet deep and is covered by large stones; the southern part is open, but becomes a rock-cut tunnel towards the end. Openings along the channel allowed water to flow out and irrigate the terraces on the eastern slope of the City of David (these were David's private gardens).

The third and last water system to be constructed goes by a familiar name to us, Hezekiah's Tunnel. The tunnel was cut during the reign of King Hezekiah of Judah (at the end of 8th century BC) and described in detail in a six-line inscription written in an early Hebrew script, cut into the rock near the exit:

"...breakthrough and this was the account of the breakthrough. While the laborers were still working with their picks, each toward the other, and while there were still three cubits to be broken through, the voice of each was heard calling to the other, because there was a crack in the rock to the south and to the north. And at the moment of the breakthrough, the laborers struck each toward the other, pick against pick. Then the water flowed from the spring to the pool for 1,200 cubits. And the height of the rock above the heads of the laborers was 100 cubits."

It is the most impressive of the water systems built in the City of David. The tunnel was cut into the rock beneath the City of David over a nearly ½ mile "S" shaped course. Even more, in order to hurry to finish the tunnel it was dug from each end and they managed to meet in the middle perfectly, which is what the inscription was explaining. How they did that without modern instruments is simply amazing. In a straight line, the distance from the Gihon Spring to the Siloam Pool is only ¼ of a mile. The average width of the tunnel is about 2 feet and it is about 6 feet high along most of its course

This final water system is what feeds the newly discovered and very large Pool of Siloam that we read about in the New Testament. I have been in both the Canaanite Tunnel and Hezekiah's Tunnel and it is not for the faint of heart! But I can also tell you that the tunnels are amazing and it's hard to imagine that they were built using the most primitive tools. The flow of

water in the winter especially is substantial and one can understand how a sizeable city could grow from only the water supplied by this single spring, Gihon.

Let's move now to the 2nd focal point in this chapter, the words spoken to David and his army by the inhabitants of this walled fortress.

As big a mystery as how David was able to use the water tunnel to get into Zion, is the meaning behind the words of the residents of Zion who taunted David's army by saying that even the lame and the blind could fend them off. Thus I don't think very many Bible translations agree with one another on this point and so if we did some comparisons we'd find slightly different meanings assigned to those words from version to version.

Further, when we look down to verse 8 the passage ends with yet another statement about the lame and the blind and it seems to be saying that David is disgusted and repelled by people who are lame and blind. So when the two statements about the lame and the blind of Yerushalayim are taken together we get a mystery. The most popular assumption is that this is simply insulting words thrown at David by the Jebusite soldiers who are standing in their defensive positions atop the city walls. And that David's retort about him despising the lame and the blind is sarcasm thrown back in return.

But another theory is that lame and blind people were actually brought to the scene and lined up on the walls of the city and THEY hurled the insults at David, and thus David made it clear that when he entered the city that he wouldn't look upon them with mercy the way you would normally expect a warrior to deal with such severely disabled people.

Yet another approach is from the Rabbis. Some Rabbis say that the lame and blind were pagan idols that the Jebusites placed upon the walls as talisman to place a curse on David and his troops. Rashi has another solution: he says that the inhabitants were descendants of Abimelech and that the lame and the blind were two statues; one who symbolized Jacob (who was made lame in that all-night wrestling match with the Angel of the Lord), and the other who symbolized Isaac (who became blind in his latter years and so was easily tricked by Jacob). Thus David despises those statues and plans on destroying them. There are also a few other theories that rely on Hittite mythology to solve this riddle. Some scholars just say that the text must be corrupted so that this is the reason we get such strange wording and unintelligible thought. But the Dead Sea Scrolls say essentially the same thing so that seems rather disingenuous.

What are we to make of this issue with this strange emphasis on the lame and the blind? I think the problem can be solved by incorporating the Biblical principle of progressive revelation; we need to look to the entire Bible and not just focusing on this particular passage in isolation. Using the progressive revelation principle let's remember who David presages: the Messiah. Whether one adheres to Judaism or Christianity David is the model or type for the future Messiah. And in both religions the Messiah must come from David's line. So I see this issue about the lame and the blind in the same light as we see some of David's Psalms: it is prophetic and Messianic. Not until we have the New Testament does the key to unlock the mystery of these words spoken in 2nd Samuel 5 appear.

Listen to this passage from Matthew 11:4-6 : ⁴ ***Yeshua answered, "Go and tell Yochanan what you are hearing and seeing ⁵ the blind are seeing again, the lame are walking, people with tzara'at are being cleansed, the deaf are hearing, the dead are being raised, the Good News is being told to the poor ⁶ and how blessed is anyone not offended by me!"***

And then later in Matthew 15:31: ³¹ ***The people were amazed as they saw mute people speaking, crippled people cured, lame people walking and blind people seeing; and they said a b'rakhah to the God of Isra'el.***

I think it is hard not to see a connection to David's descendant Yeshua triumphantly entering into Yerushalayim and healing the lame and the blind. In 2nd Samuel 5 I see the people of Yerushalayim saying to David (on one level) and to Messiah (on another level) that unless you are the one who can heal the lame and the blind you are not welcome to come in to Yerushalayim. And the response of both David and Messiah is that they despise the blindness and lameness that has harmed these people. In other words where so many translators have David saying that he despises lame and blind people (which is rather out of character for God's anointed), what we really have is David saying that he despises the condition of lameness and blindness itself. And so when Jesus speaks in Matthew 11:6 and says, "How blessed is anyone not offended by me" (in referring to the blind and the lame) this fits hand and glove with David's response to the people of Yerushalayim in 2nd Samuel 5:8.

In any case David conquers Zion and we learn that he set about expanding the city. His first step was to start building at the terraced area at the north end of the city just outside the city walls. Called the Millo at that time, and in later times known as the Ophel, homes were built in this open area that lay between the City of David and the crest of the hill known as Mt. Moriah where the Temple would someday be constructed. In time the walls of the City of David were added onto in order to incorporate the new housing area into David's compound.

But verse 10 re-centers the entire narrative by reminding the listeners that David's success was actually Yehoveh's doing; David was merely a participant. David grew greater because God was faithful to His word, for His own Name's sake, and David sees and acknowledges that. I believe this is the key to godly success in life: act in co-operation with the Lord and give Him all the glory because whatever victories that come will be His. In my 6 decades on this earth I've known and observed many good people who have worked hard and made sound judgments, but things just never worked out for them. And substantially more often than not when things were on the upswing in their lives they credited their own wisdom and hard work as the reason. David knew that his own hard work and courage were definitely needed to become king and to rule God's Kingdom as king but the results were dependent on the Lord. And that's the same attitude that a worshipper of the God of Israel needs to approach life.

Next we hear that David set about building a palace for himself. King Hiram of Tzor sent cedar

logs along with especially skilled craftsman to David to aid in constructing a proper palace for the King of Israel. Tzor is another name for Tyre, the capital of Phoenicia. While the story seems to make the construction of David's palace a nearly immediate event after conquering Zion, in fact it must have happened later in David's reign. It's not at all unusual in Scripture for events to be placed in an order that has little regard to time. We know that David reigned until about 960 B.C. and that King Hiram didn't begin his reign over Phoenicia until about 970 B.C. So somewhere in between those two dates is when this palace construction began.

The Cedars of Lebanon are proverbial because cedar was such an admired and valuable wood. Cedar was as beautiful as it was durable. It was strong enough to be used for load-bearing and lovely enough to be used for exquisite interior paneling. As early as 3000 B.C. cedar was being exported from Phoenicia to Egypt (so prized were this wood's qualities). Cedar wood was in such demand that by the time of David the cedar forests were nearly depleted and thus it became a precious commodity that was reserved for only the wealthiest aristocrats and kings.

This passage implies that David must have had a good relationship with the Phoenicians. No doubt it served an economic purpose that was mutually beneficial. Phoenicia lay along the Mediterranean coast; the Phoenicians were seafarers and merchants. But a people who rely on shipping and trading for their economy need goods to sell. Wine and olive oil produced in Israel was highly prized and so it made sense for Israel to ally with Phoenicia.

Verse 13 adds to the overall picture of what occurred once David acquired his new capital city; once he was settled in the City of David, David moved his harem from Hebron to Yerushalayim and even added to it with more wives and concubines. Let me remind you that a concubine was not a sex slave or a play thing for the man. Rather she was a like a wife but usually she didn't receive a marriage document so she was sort of a 2nd class wife. A concubine (especially in the case of kings) was often the handmaiden of an aristocratic woman that the king would marry to create a needed or wanted political alliance with another king or potentate. The list of names of David's sons represents only the firstborn sons from each of the mothers. Many daughters and other sons were born as well to these women. David was creating quite a dynasty of loyal leaders for his administration.

But what of David's jilted friends the Philistines? Up to now the Philistines had not deemed David to be a threat to them and this was due primarily to the strong relationship he had established with the Achish, Lord of Gath, when David was a guest in Philistine territory and lived in Ziklag. They apparently looked upon him as a trusted vassal when he left Philistia to return to Judah, and no doubt David let them continue in that fiction because as he was consolidating his power over Israel the last thing he needed was a confrontation with the Philistines to distract him.

Being made king over Judah would have raised eyebrows among the 5 Philistine lords, but upon being crowned king over Israel any pretense of vassal status vanished. The Philistines attacked. Was it to punish David for what in their eyes was rebellion? Probably that was at the heart of it but it was also undoubtedly to keep David from achieving the full political unity of the Israelite tribes and clans that Saul had never been able to achieve. Philistia desired to keep

Israel destabilized; a united Israel was a much bigger threat than an on-again off-again coalition of tribes. A united Israel was not likely to be so easy to lord over as a fractured Israel.

When David heard that the Philistines were coming for him he removed himself to a place called the stronghold. The stronghold was certainly not the City of David (even though the place was termed a stronghold). It is self-evident that this particular stronghold was somewhere else and the most logical place is that it was the one that David had used so often in years past: Adullam (more specifically The Cave at Adullam). Was David fleeing for his life from the Philistines? Probably not; more likely he was intentionally drawing them away from his family and his private estate to a place that he knew so well from a strategic battle standpoint. Not only that but certainly not all the tribes would have been keen to fight the Philistines in order to defend King David's private estate, the City of David. In fact after David inquires of Yehoveh through the Urim and Thummim stones about how he should proceed, the Philistines set up camp in the Refa'im Valley (southwest of Yerushalayim) and David takes his army and goes to a place called **Ba'al P'ratzim** (which means "the lord of breaking through") and defeats them there.

Why would Hebrews incorporate the name Ba'al to commemorate a great military victory? Let me point out that in an earlier lesson I explained that the term Ba'al means "lord" when used generically, even though it also was used as the formal name of a Canaanite god. It is very similar with the word "adonai" that generically means lord or master, and yet it is also a well-known title that the Hebrews commonly used to refer to God, Yehoveh. By David's day the word ba'al (little "b" ba'al) apparently had been adopted into Hebrew and it simply meant "lord" as in "master" and was NOT meant to indicate a pagan deity. So the name **Ba'al P'ratzim** was not at all about honoring the Canaanite god Ba'al.

This use of the name Ba'al in this context gives us a good opportunity to pause momentarily, back away from this episode and look at the bigger picture of the condition of Israel in their relationship to Yehoveh. While the use of the term ba'al in the commemorative naming of this mountain was undoubtedly not intended to honor the Canaanite god, the problem is that this was just another subtle step in the perversion of the true Hebrew religion as defined by God through Moses on Mt. Sinai. The term Ba'al had evolved from being entirely identified with everything that God hated, to simply a common word used by Hebrews in everyday communications. We have watched the Hebrews (as the proverbial frog-in-the-kettle) slowly over decades and centuries integrate seemingly small and insignificant pagan observances, people, customs, and words into their culture and worship practices. But as miniscule and unimportant as these changes were, they add up; and by the time of David we hardly hear mention of the word "Torah" or "Moses" or "Law" any more. The Constitution of God's Kingdom, His divine regulations and commandments, had been infiltrated with traditions and common Middle Eastern social conventions to the point that other than for a few oddities, the Israelites were indistinguishable from any of the other Middle Eastern peoples.

During David's ascent to the throne and his reign his focus was not to purify their religion; rather it was to unify the tribes into a powerful sovereign nation. David loved the Lord, but His hands were full and all his faculties aimed with tunnel vision towards finishing what Joshua had started over 300 years earlier. So with Solomon in time taking over from David and then with a

long line of various kings that followed, the Hebrew religion became corrupted with paganism and social customs because the Word of God was no longer the authority but rather it was manmade doctrines and traditions that ruled. In fact it would be several hundred more years after David before a long abandoned Torah Scroll was discovered in a pile a rubble, it was brought to the king and read to him, and this king realized what had happened to Israel since that wonderful moment at Mt. Sinai. King Josiah tore his clothes in a sign of mourning and grief and ordered painful reforms to bring back proper Torah understanding, proper worship, and therefore a restored relationship with Yehoveh.

It was the rediscovery of the Torah that brought about a true revival for Israel. I am convinced in all my being that we are living in such an age if only we'll stand back far enough to recognize it. If Yeshua's church on earth is to experience a true revival that we so desperately need then it is ONLY going to be from the church rediscovering the Torah and falling on our faces in grief and mourning and repentance over our failure to heed God's instructions for all these years. Let those who have an ear to listen, hear.

Verse 22 describes a second attempt by the Philistines to reassert their control over David and Israel. Once more David consults with the Urim and Thummim but this time the Lord instructs David not to make a frontal attack but to circle around behind the Philistines. They are to wait in a grove of trees, in hiding, and only attack once they hear the sound of marching in the treetops. And the marching sound was David's indication that Yehoveh had gone out ahead of him and defeated the Philistines.

Most Rabbis explain that the sound of marching in the treetops was of God's heavenly angels moving into battle and rustling the leaves of the trees on the way. I don't know if that is exactly the case, but I have no doubts that this is meant spiritually more than physically. Wind rustles the leaves of trees, and wind is often a Biblical metaphor for a movement of God's spirit. So while it indeed may have been God's angels going into battle against the evil spirits that fought for the Philistines, or whether it was God's spirit preparing the way for victory, it was Yehoveh who won this battle ahead of David.

David did what the Lord instructed and the Israelites achieved a great victory that day. The rule of the Philistines over Israel was broken after centuries of aggression and subjugation.

We'll take up chapter 6 and the incredibly meaningful move of the Ark of the Covenant to Yerushalayim next week.