

David Anointed King Over Y'hudah

Second Samuel 2: 1-7

DIG: How might David have felt as he returned "home" from exile? What would be hardest for him in this move? Why Hebron in Y'hudah of all places to relocate (see First Samuel 17:2, 30:26-31 and Joshua 15:13-15)? Why did the men from Jabesh Gilead rescue the bodies of Sha'ul and Y'honatan (see Bw - Sha'ul Takes His Own Life: The Rescue of the Bodies)? Why did David bless them now?

REFLECT: Have you ever had to wait patiently for something for a long time? If so, how did that experience affect you? About what future "moves" are you inquiring of ADONAI? So far, what is He telling you? Are you listening? Who is calling the shots? Have you ever had the opportunity of returning "home?" What does returning "home" mean to you? Is it a place or a feeling? Are there objects that you associate with "home," or are there memories? When was the last time you "blessed" someone who had been kind to you in the past, or had gone out of their way to bless you in some way?

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The death of Sha'ul was the signal for David to act. There was a political vacuum and someone was going to fill it. He was still hold up in his private refuge of Ziklag, but finally, it was safe to go back to the territory of Y'hudah. He needed to return if he was to be a factor in the new decisions of power that were sure to come.

David Anointed King at Hebron: David began his reign over all Isra'el by being king over Y'hudah. In the course of time, Samuel's anointing of David as king made it very clear to David that ADONAI had chosen him as the next king over Isra'el (see Ah - Samuel Anoints David); and though David had known this for many years, he did not rush it, but waited for God's timing. Samuel had anointed David many years earlier, and YHVH was using all the time since then to prepare David to be king. Is there something in your life for which you are anxiously waiting for? Are you allowing the Lord to make you into the person He wants you be for the job/marriage He has in mind for you?

As long as Sha'ul and Y'honatan lived, David had refrained from pressing the issue. But now his people had been miserably defeated and subjected by the Philistines, and David was the only man in Isra'el who was both connected with the royal household because of his marriage to Sha'ul's daughter Michal, had the political experience, the military genius, the personal charisma, and the faith of the public to undertake the

slow and difficult task of rebuilding Isra'el's political fortunes. It was clear that God had foreseen what would happen to Sha'ul and had provided for His people Isra'el by providing for a new king to be ready at the perfect time.

At the outset, David's charge to power was shaped as an act of obedience. Unlike Sha'ul, he inquired of ADONAI by the use of the Urim and the Thummim (see the commentary on Exodus Gb - The Urim and Thummim: The Means of Making Decisions). He would have to ask a series of questions because the Urim and the Thummim would only respond with "yes" and "no" answers. "Shall I go up to one of the towns of Y'hudah?" he asked. The LORD replied in one word: Go (Hebrew: *alah*). David asked a second question: Where shall I go? Then he probably began naming different cities one after another and the Urim and the Thummim kept saying "No." But at some point he asked if he should go up to Hebron. Again a one-word answer, "Yes." Its size, and importance as the burial place of the patriarchs (see the commentary on Genesis Fv - Abraham Buried His Wife Sarah in the Cave in the field of Machpelah), its central position in Y'hudah (twenty miles from Yerushalayim) and its strong defensive position made Hebron extremely suitable as the capital of the new southern kingdom of Judah.

So in obedience to YHVH, David went up to Hebron with his two wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. Then the men of Judah came to Hebron. David also took the 600 men who were with him, each with his family, and they settled in Hebron and its surrounding towns. David's procession was a show of power and determination. His own clansmen, as should be expected, were the first to recognize him as king. We are given no clue as to the negotiations that went on with the powers of Judah. We are only given the conclusion: And there they anointed David, king over the tribe of Y'hudah (2 Samuel 2:1-4a).

This was a historic occurrence. No, we have not yet heard of David's many military victories (see Cx - David's Victories); it would be a long time before we are amazed by Solomon's lavish splendor (First Kings 4 and 10), and even later before we enjoy the just rule of the Stump of Jesse (see the commentary on Isaiah Dc - A Shoot Will Come Up from the Stump of Jesse). But here, for the first time in the history of the world, ADONAI's chosen king ruled on the earth at Hebron. It was only one tribe. It was a small beginning, but the kingdom of God had been tucked away in the hills of Judah. His Kingdom is like a seed (see the commentary on The Life of Christ Eu - The Parable of the Seed Growing By Itself).²¹²

At this point the prophet Samuel had already anointed David to become king over all Isra'el (see Ah - Samuel Anoints David). But it was a three-step process. And here we have the second step, to be king over Judah. From the Philistine viewpoint, King Achish viewed

David as merely a vassal of Gath, otherwise the Philistines, who had just won a great victory, wouldn't have allowed it.²¹³ But the third step would come when the northern tribes agreed to have David rule over them as their king after the death of Ish-Bosheth (see Cm - [David Anointed King Over All Isra'el](#)).

David Blesses the Men of Jabesh Gilead: The northern tribes of Isra'el were a difficult and persistent problem for David, especially Sha'ul's tribe of Benjamin. Sha'ul was dead, but the Sha'ul movement was by no means dead. The tribes of the north did not automatically rush to a new loyalty in the south.²¹⁴ Jabesh-Gilead was a special city for Sha'ul, and Sha'ul was special to the people there because he had courageously rescued them from the Ammonites long ago (First Samuel 11:1-11). The people of Jabesh-Gilead didn't forget. Their town was located across the Jordan in the tribe of Gad, and the men who recovered the bodies of Sha'ul and Y'honatan had to travel northwest and cross the Jordan River perhaps 25 miles. It was a dangerous and courageous endeavor. When David was told that it was the men from Jabesh Gilead who had buried Sha'ul (see Bw - [Sha'ul Takes His Own Life: The Rescue of the Bodies](#)), he sent messengers to them.

David said: The LORD bless you for showing this kindness (Hebrew: *chesed*) to Sha'ul your master by giving him a proper burial (see the commentary on Ruth Af - [The Concept of Chesed](#)). David was grateful and well aware of the considerable risk they took to do so. May ADONAI now show you kindness and faithfulness, and I also will show you this goodness (Hebrew: *tobah*, a rough synonym for *chesed*) to you because you have done this. But his message may have been prompted as much by diplomatic motives as well as gratitude. He virtually claimed to be Sha'ul's legitimate successor, their best source of security, and appealed for their loyalty. Now then, be strong and brave, and hold the land of Gilead against the Philistines until I can come to your aid. For Sha'ul your master is dead, and the people of Y'hudah have anointed me king over them (Second Samuel 2:4b-7). Sha'ul was thirty years old when he became king over Isra'el, and David was thirty years old when he became king over Y'hudah.

Unfortunately, the people of Jabesh Gilead didn't choose to submit to David, but instead followed Abner and Sha'ul's weak son, Ish-Bosheth. They took the easy way out. A right response, however, to Messiah's - or David's - appeal can be costly. Most of us reading this today can detach ourselves from Jabesh Gilead. We think, that's so long ago and so far away. On the contrary, we must count ourselves citizens of Jabesh Gilead. That's were we all live, for the text clearly shows that Jabesh Gilead is sandwiched right between David and Abner, between the true Kingdom in its seed form, and the counterfeit kingdom that expects allegiance (see Cg - [War Between the Houses of David and Sha'ul](#)).²¹⁵

There's only two kinds of spiritual food. There's angel's food and devil's food, and if you aren't eating one, you're eating the other. To be a believer in the true Kingdom of **God**, it takes courage, and courage only comes from **grace**. **For it is by grace you have been saved through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).**