



THE AWARDING OF CROWNS

Lesson 4: Establishing an Earthly Kingdom
(2 Samuel 5:1-25)

Mephibosheth (4:4)

Even as the author records the demise of the house of Saul, he inserts this oddly-placed note about one of Saul's heirs who has been passed over amid all the conflict raging between the House of Saul and the House of David.

2 Samuel 4:4 “Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son who was lame [naké] in his feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel; and his nurse took him up and fled. And it happened, as she made haste to flee, that he fell and became lame [pasach]. His name was Mephibosheth.”

The comment about Mephibosheth seems to have nothing to do with the rest of the narrative which is wholly focused is on the death of Ishbosheth and the subsequent executions of Rechab and Baanah. The narrative literally hops over Mephibosheth without developing his character at all.

Any time a verse seems out of place, it isn't. The authors are purposely inserting the information to make a comparison point or a statement.

Mephibosheth (4:4)

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What do we know about Mephibosheth?

- 1) He is Jonathan's son. **Why is that significant?**
Because David made a covenant with Jonathan that extended to Jonathan's sons.

1 Samuel 20:14–17 *“And you shall not only show me the kindness of the LORD while I still live, that I may not die; but you shall not cut off your kindness from my house forever, no, not when the LORD has cut off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.” So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, ‘Let the LORD require it at the hand of David's enemies.’ Now Jonathan again caused David to vow, because he loved him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul.*

Mephibosheth (4:4)

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What do we know about Mephibosheth?

- 1) He is Jonathan's son. **Why is that significant?**
Because David made a covenant with Jonathan that extended to Jonathan's sons
- 2) Like his brother, Ishbosheth, his name is changed from how it appears in later genealogies and the name change lends itself to the picture of the man.

In 1 Chronicles, his name is **Merib-Baal**, which means “Baal contends for me.” Now, his name is changed to **Mephibosheth**, which means:

[mephi] “to dash to pieces, shatter and scatter it so that no memory of it remains”

[bosheth] “the shame or shameful thing” (like a Baal).

Mephibosheth (4:4)

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Whenever these authors opt for a different usage of the name, it is to add to the picture they are creating. Even as Ishbosheth (man of shame) is being killed, we now have a picture of Mephibosheth (a shameful thing dashed to pieces).

Why would the man be considered a shameful thing?

The man is a broken thing. His feet have been dashed to pieces in a way that makes him **naké**. **Naké** means to be stricken or smitten or otherwise **brought to one's knees**. It is used only 3 times in Scripture: twice in 2 Samuel regarding Mephibosheth, and once in Isaiah:

“For all those things My hand has made, and all those things exist,’ says the LORD. ‘But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite [naké] spirit, and who trembles at My word.’” —Isaiah 66:2

Mephibosheth (4:4)

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His lameness has brought him to his knees and put him at the mercy of his caregivers, and he is a contemptible thing in the eyes of the world.

Notice: This is a different word for “lame” used the second time. It is the word, ***pasach***. **Pasach** describes a hopping motion:

- **The hobbling gait of a cripple** who must hop along.
- In general, **the act of hopping over or passing over something**, like jumping over a log.
- **An attitude of indecision**—to be halting or hesitating, to hop back and forth between choices when making a decision.

Mephiboseth not only hobbles, but he has been passed over on account of his weakness (although Ishbosheth was no less weak in his own way).

Mephibosheth (4:4)

Pasach is a loaded word to use because it has the imagery of Passover associated with it. When you hear this word, the LORD's *Pesach* or Passover should come to mind. What does it mean to be "passed over"?

When the world passes over a man, he is forgotten. But when the LORD passes over a man, the man is remembered. The LORD *pasach*-ed Israel, He passed over them, when He brought them out of Egypt. He did not do this to make them contemptible or as a statement that He intended to forget them. Quite the opposite. He remembered them and so, passed over them to save them even as His judgment was being rendered on the firstborn sons of Egypt.

Here in 2 Samuel 4 the context is an echo of the Passover. The focus is on the death of sons, and yet we find one who has been passed over, and perhaps for the purpose of bringing him out of bondage and removing his reproach. This one who is *naké*, on his knees, is the one whom the LORD holds in regard, and who the king will seek out as he comes into his kingdom. He alone is spared as Saul's house dies. Even in the genealogy list in First Chronicles 8, it is Jonathan's line through Mephibosheth that survives and becomes the new House of Saul.

Mephibosheth (4:4)

So, why does the author include this information here?

1. To remind us of David's covenant with Jonathan, which must now extend to Mephibosheth. That will have some implications in the narrative to come.
2. To demonstrate God's grace by providing redemption for Saul's house through one son.
3. To create a comparison with the death of the house of Eli in 1 Samuel 4.

Throughout the books of 1 and 2 Samuel, the author has been creating deliberate parallels between people pictures to reinforce or draw attention to certain points. Just as there is this odd mention of a surviving son here in 2 Samuel 4 as the House of Saul falls, so there was a oddly-mentioned surviving son in Eli's house. His name was Ichabod.

Mephibosheth (4:4)

Descent of the House of Eli

God charges Eli with “kicking at the sacrifices”—mishandling them and allowing his sons to mishandle them by taking for themselves what was supposed to be offered to God. (1 Samuel 2)

Descent of the House of Saul

God charges Saul with mishandling His sacrifices by using them for his own glory, disobeying commands, and keeping spoil for himself that was supposed to go to God alone. (1 Samuel 13, 15)

Mephibosheth (4:4)

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<p>Death of Eli’s sons, Hophni and Phinehas at the battle with the Philistines, followed by the death of Eli (1 Samuel 4)</p>	<p>Death of Saul and his sons in the battle with the Philistines (1 Samuel 31)</p>

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<p>Death of Eli’s sons, Hophni and Phinehas at the battle with the Philistines, followed by the death of Eli (1 Samuel 4)</p>	<p>Death of Saul and his sons in the battle with the Philistines (1 Samuel 31)</p>
<p>The news of the defeat in battle comes to Phineas’ wife and she gives birth to Ichabod. (1 Samuel 4)</p>	<p>The news of the defeat in battle comes to the nurse, who flees with Mephibosheth. (2 Samuel 4)</p>

Mephibosheth (4:4)

Two houses have fallen in like manner: The priesthood and the first royal family. Both houses were charged with shepherding the flock of Israel according to their tasking, but they failed and lost their crowns and their glory. Initially, the houses survive as the father's role passes to a son. Eli's mantle falls to his son Ahitub, who carries on the priestly line; Saul's crown falls to Ishbosheth, who dies without passing the crown.

Two other sons are highlighted: Ichabod and Mephibosheth.

Ichabod means "no glory," and he embodied the shame of his father's house. He has no other role in Scripture than to immortalize that moment when the glory departed Israel on account of the priesthood's sin and sealed the curse of the House of Eli.

Mephibosheth also embodies the brokenness and shame that crippled Saul's house, and yet, because of the covenant David made with his father Jonathan, there is hope for its redemption and the removal of shame.

Having the covenant of grace with *the king* is the only reason that a measure of glory might return to the House of Saul. Salvation was not granted to or provided through the priesthood.

Overview: High Level Comparison of the Kings

(A1) Saul performance as king of Israel

(B1) Interim: David's exile years

(C1) David wins his battle

(C2) Saul dies in his battle

(B2) Interim: David reigns as king of Judah

(A2) David's performance as king of Israel

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(A2) David's performance as king of Israel

- 
- a. Establishing the earthly kingdom
 - b. Losing the eternal kingship
 - c. Losing the earthly kingdom

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- a. Establishing the earthly kingdom
 - b. Attaining the eternal kingship
 - c. Losing the earthly kingdom
 - d. Regaining the earthly kingdom

Overview: High Level Comparison of the Kings

We are going to work our way through the text of 2 Samuel 5 today, and begin the comparison between the kings.

- **The narrator's summary statements** about how they established their sovereignty over their earthly kingdoms (2 Samuel 5:1-16 compared to 1 Samuel 14:47-52). The earthly kingdom is defined in two ways:
 1. The physical land
 2. The king's "house" in terms of a legacy of children
- **Their battles with the Philistines** (2 Samuel 5:17-25 compared to 1 Samuel 14:1-46)

David, King of Israel (5:1-5)

2 Samuel 5:1–5 *“Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and spoke, saying, ‘Indeed we are your bone and your flesh. Also, in time past, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and brought them in; and the LORD said to you, “You shall shepherd My people Israel, and be ruler over Israel.”’ Therefore all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD. And they anointed David king over Israel. David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.”*

We see the formulaic statement,

2 Samuel 5:4 *“David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years.”*

2 Samuel 2:10 *“Ishbosheth, Saul's son, was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned two years.”*

But it isn't oddly missing in Saul's narrative. Instead we get an incomplete statement:

1 Samuel 13:1 *“Saul reigned . . . year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel,”*

Summary Statements: Establishing Sovereignty

2 Samuel 5:6–8 *“And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spoke to David, saying, ‘You shall not come in here; but the blind and the lame will repel you,’ thinking, ‘David cannot come in here.’ Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion (that is, the City of David).*

Now David said on that day, ‘Whoever climbs up by way of the water shaft and defeats the Jebusites (the lame and the blind, who are hated by David's soul), he shall be chief and captain.’ Therefore they say, ‘The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.’

As David sets out to establish his sovereignty, he opens with one signature battle against the Jebusites to claim Jerusalem as his capital. He makes a pointed attack to achieve one particular objective. Unlike Saul, who remained in his hometown of Gibeah, David specifically selects Jerusalem instead of his hometown in Judah as the place from which he will reign.

Summary Statements: Establishing Sovereignty

Since the days of Joshua, Jerusalem has been called Jebus after the Jebusites who took up residence there. As David takes it as his capital and drives the Canaanites out, it undergoes this name change from Jebus to Jerusalem, and with it, a character change.

Jebus means “threshing floor” in the sense of being trodden down, rejected, or polluted.

Jerusalem is a compound word that means “teaching of peace.” Salem or Shalam means to be in a covenant of peace, like shalom but with the added sense of being recompensed, restored, or rewarded.

Thus, the city goes from being a polluted place trodden down by Canaanites to one that is restored to a covenant of peace when the king takes it as his capital, and that covenant of peace includes a reward and recompense. David now puts his name to it and it becomes known as the “City of David.”

Why would David pick this particular place?

Summary Statements: Establishing Sovereignty

1. Jerusalem is on the border between Judah and Benjamin, which makes it somewhat neutral territory and easily accessible to both sides. I think it is a mark in David's favor that he didn't show preference to his own tribe by rubbing Judah's honor in Israel's face as Saul had done in lording the tribe of Benjamin over Judah during his kingship.
2. The mountains associated with Jerusalem have some notable history.
 - a) Mount Moriah where Abraham went to offer Isaac is a mountain in Jerusalem (the same place where Solomon will later build the Temple).
 - b) It is the place where Melchizedek ruled as king of "Salem" to whom Abraham paid tribute.
 - c) Mount Zion is associated with God himself. Scripture doesn't say exactly when it came to be known as "God's mountain" but the fact that God has claimed it is made evident through David's words in the Psalms . . .

Summary Statements: Establishing Sovereignty

“Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion.” - Psalm 2:6

“Moreover, He rejected the tent of Joseph, and did not choose the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion which He loved.” - Psalm 78:67-68

“For the LORD has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place:” - Psalm 132:13

Jerusalem becomes David’s chief target because of its association with the Great King, and by placing his own throne there, the king’s sovereignty is tied to God’s sovereignty. But first he must push out the Jebusites who are dwelling there.

As David and his men come to take Jerusalem, they get this challenge from the Jebusites:

“. . . You shall not come in here; but the blind and the lame will repel you . . .” (v6)

Why would the Jebusites say this?

Summary Statements: Establishing Sovereignty

Maybe they literally push the blind and lame forward as the first line of defense. There is a derisive play on words in the use of *pasach*, or the hoppers. David would have to pass over those who limp and grope blindly and still would not succeed in taking the city.

Or it might just be a taunting statement that reflects the Jebusites' trust in their strength of position in the mountain stronghold. They believe that even the weakest among them are stronger than David's forces.

But, for a man who defeated Goliath the Giant, the lame and blind pose little obstacle. In response, David proposes to enter the city by way of a subterranean water shaft. He doesn't pass over them; he passes *under* them and boils up in their midst. It's risky, and he offers a reward to the man who tackles the task (not unlike Saul's reward for the man who beat Goliath).

Summary Statements: Establishing Sovereignty

The original Hebrew in 2 Samuel 5:8 reads a bit awkwardly, because it isn't a complete sentence:

“Now David said on that day, ‘Whoever climbs up by way of the water shaft and defeats the Jebusites (the lame and the blind, who are hated by David’s soul).’

Whoever climbs up the water shaft will . . . What? It suggests a reward will be offered but omits to say what the reward would be.

Some of our English versions fill in the reward based on the cross-reference to First Chronicles, which says that *“the man will be made chief and captain,”* but it is not in the original 2 Samuel verse.

Neither does it tell us which man claims the reward of being chief and captain. First Chronicles tells us it is Joab. But here in Second Samuel, Joab is pointedly not mentioned—he gained the reward, but his name is written out of the account, perhaps as a further act of censure for his crime against Abner.

Summary Statements: Establishing Sovereignty

As David offers this battle plan, he makes a harsh statement about the blind and the lame, that they are “*hated by David’s soul*” (v8). That is very strong wording, to be hated, but the object of the hate is a little vague in the Hebrew and depends mostly on how you punctuate it. The verse has been translated in these main ways:

- “. . . the Jebusites, *and* the lame and the blind, hated of David's soul.” (KJV)
- “. . . the Jebusites (the lame and the blind, hated by David’s soul).” (NKJV)
- “. . . Whoever strikes the Jebusites is to reach those who limp and those who are blind, who are hated by David’s soul . . .” (NASB) Note, the NASB adds the phrase “*is to reach those*” but that isn’t in the original Hebrew. The translators added that to make the incomplete sentence in the Hebrew into a complete sentence in the English.

So, who are the ones who are “hated by David’s soul”? Is David referring to the Jebusites as being the ones who are lame and blind? Or is he making a categorical statement that he hates all lame and blind people along with the Jebusites?

Summary Statements: Establishing Sovereignty

Those who hear David's statement take it to mean that he categorically hates all blind and lame people, and it becomes a saying that is perpetuated in Israel that no blind or lame person will come into "the house." What is "the house"?

Is that what David said, that they wouldn't come into the house, or did the people embellish on his words?

If David hates all the lame and blind, does that mean he hates Mephibosheth?

I think this is another reason that the authors included that detail about Mephibosheth, to challenge this false conclusion that Israel is perpetuating in regards to the king's words. How can David hate the lame and yet still show kindness to Jonathan's son? If that is the case, how is he going to reconcile that? Will he bring Mephibosheth into his house or keep him out?

Summary Statements: Establishing Sovereignty

Is it the king's heart to hate someone for being lame or blind? Is this how he establishes his sovereignty, by declaring perpetual enmity with disabled people?

No, he doesn't.

I think, in this case, the more important fact is that these people were Canaanites who had claimed God's hill. The LORD commanded Israel to push the cursed Canaanites out of the kingdom because of their idolatry and failure to acknowledge God as King, and David aligns himself with the LORD's agenda in that. He is making an effort to reestablish God's sovereignty even as he establishes his own. That is something that Saul never did.

Summary Statements: Establishing Sovereignty

2 Samuel 5:9–12 NKJV *“Then David dwelt in the stronghold, and called it the City of David. And David built all around from the Millo and inward. So David went on and became great, and the LORD God of hosts was with him. Then Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters and masons. And they built David a house. So David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, and that He had exalted His kingdom for the sake of His people Israel.”*

Notice the distinctive narrative pattern here. First, David takes the city of Jerusalem and builds it up (5:6-9). Saul never invested in these kind of building projects. This is then followed by the narrator comment:

“So David went on and became great, and the LORD God of hosts was with him.” (5:10)

Note the name for God: Jehovah Elohe Sabaoth. Sabaoth, or hosts, is the term for vast assemblies, particularly for armies that go to war. This most formal name is first introduced in First Samuel, but it is used here to lend “heaviness” to David’s glorification.

Summary Statements: Establishing Sovereignty

Then a house was built for David in Jerusalem (5:11). David didn't build the house himself. He didn't even order it to be built. The house was built as a tribute from Hiram, king of Tyre, who sent the supplies and the craftsmen to build it. Saul had no such tribute paid to him. This is followed by another narrator comment:

“So David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, and that He had exalted His kingdom for the sake of His people Israel.” (5:12)

(Psalm 127:1 “. . . Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it . . .”)

It is as if God is walking with David through this glorification process and lending His own glory to the king. David battled to reclaim one city set on God's hill. He did it with control and strategy, and with a mindset to exalt God even as he established himself. And God, in return, rewards him and establishes him. And it is not just David who is established. God establishes Himself and His kingdom for the sake of Israel. When the Great King is glorified, all the people are glorified.

Establishing a House

David (2 Samuel 5:13-16)

“And David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he had come from Hebron. Also more sons and daughters were born to David. Now these are the names of those who were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

We also know from the text that David had one daughter by Maacah named Tamar, who is sister to Absalom, and one other son, Nogah, mentioned only in 1 Chr. 3:7. As we work through Second Samuel, we will see how David’s sin takes a toll on his legacy of children.

Sons in Hebron

1. Amnon by Ahinoam
2. Chileab by Abigail
3. Absalom by Maacah
4. Adonijah by Haggith
5. Shephatiah by Abital
6. Ithream, by Eglah

Sons in Jerusalem

7. Shammua (*by Bathsheba, 1 Chr. 3:5*)
8. Shobab (*by Bathsheba, 1 Chr. 3:5*)
9. Nathan (*by Bathsheba, 1 Chr. 3:5*)
10. Solomon by Bathsheba
11. Ibhar
12. Elishua
13. Nepheg
14. Japhia
15. Elishama
16. Eliada
17. Eliphelet

War with the Philistines

As God establishes David as king, there is a reaction from his enemies, the Philistines, who come out in force. The action is presented in two stages, broken by a note about the spoil that David and his men took.

2 Samuel 5:17-19 *“Now when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David. And David heard of it and went down to the stronghold. The Philistines also went and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim. So David inquired of the LORD, saying, ‘Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You deliver them into my hand?’ And the LORD said to David, ‘Go up, for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into your hand.’ ”*

The Philistines go up from the southern deserts, and David goes down to the desert strongholds. They meet on David’s home turf in Judah. The Philistines deploy, that is, they spread out or overrun, the Valley of Rephaim which is a wide valley southwest of Jerusalem. In the first leg of battle, David doesn’t just go winging out onto the battlefield. First, he asks the LORD if he should even go.

War with the Philistines

2 Samuel 5:20-21 *“So David went to Baal Perazim, and David defeated them there; and he said, ‘The LORD has broken through my enemies before me, like a breakthrough of water.’ Therefore he called the name of that place Baal Perazim. And they left their images there, and David and his men carried them away.”*

Naming a place of victory is a way of giving tribute to a king, and David gives God tribute with this name, Baal Perizim, or “Lord of the Breaks.” That tribute is his immediate response to the victory. Only then does it say that David and his men took spoil—the idols that the Philistines left behind.

David doesn’t just overcome the Philistines. He glorifies his God and despoils them of their gods. The narrative focuses on the reward aspect—what is first given to God in terms of credit for the victory and what is then extended to the men as spoil. We should note that David’s men didn’t take the idols for themselves. 1 Chronicles 14:12 adds:

1 Chronicles 14:12 *“And when they left their gods there, David gave a commandment, and they were burned with fire.”*

War with the Philistines

Now, the sequence plays out a second time:

2 Samuel 5:22-25 *“Then the Philistines went up once again and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim. Therefore David inquired of the LORD, and He said, ‘You shall not go up; circle around behind them, and come upon them in front of the mulberry trees. And it shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, then you shall advance quickly. For then the LORD will go out before you to strike the camp of the Philistines.’ And David did so, as the LORD commanded him; and he drove back the Philistines from Geba as far as Gezer.”*

Again, David inquires of the LORD, but the directions change this time. It is not to be a forward attack, but an ambush from behind. The LORD will go out first, and then David will strike from the grove of mulberry trees. David obeys, and it is a rout. Again, there is a strong emphasis on David’s obedience to God’s commandments.

Now let’s look at Saul’s narrative for comparison, this time from 1 Samuel 14:1-46.

War with the Philistines

The authors have been setting up people comparisons throughout the books of Samuel, and as we come to the kings, we started out with some distinct parallels:

- Both kings had an anointing sequence, with some important differences
- Both kings had an initial battle (Saul and Nahash/ David and Goliath)
- Both kings had a coronation. David's coronation didn't immediately follow his battle with Goliath the way that Saul's coronation followed his battle with Nahash, but David did eclipse Saul in reputation to the point that Saul thought he would take the crown and kingdom.

1 Samuel 18:7–8 *“So the women sang as they danced, and said: ‘Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands.’ Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, ‘They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed only thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?’”*

War with the Philistines

The comparison was broken by the interim period where David goes into exile and Saul dies in battle. But now we pick up the comparison again, now that David is officially king of Israel. So, let's put aside the interim period for a moment, and pair up the elements of Saul's and David's opening acts as king.

David:

- Is crowned king (formulaic statement)
- Takes Jerusalem for his capital
- Builds up Jerusalem
- A physical house is built for him
- Builds up his own "house" or family
- Battles Philistines

Saul:

- Is crowned king (formulaic statement)
- No mention of his capital
- No mention of building projects
- No physical house is built for him
- Battles Philistines
- Builds up his own "house" or family

War with the Philistines

So, we get a sense, first of all, that David has more stability and permanence about him. He is grounded, where Saul isn't. David's sovereignty is established by steps beginning with settling in a central location which he then begins to build up and reinforce in terms of physical buildings. Then he expands his "house" in terms of family. Then he responds to the outward threats. It's all very orderly and with purpose.

Saul is a distinct contrast. As we pointed out earlier, he is crowned king, but the usual formulaic statement for announcing kings is sketchy and incomplete. The narrative omits any mention of him settling his capital anywhere. We assume it is at Gibeah. There is no mention of improvements being made to his place, nor is any tribute given to him in regards to a house being built for him. He is not grounded as David is, but then it is not David who established himself, but God established him.

War with the Philistines

In David's case, the author relates the building of his family first and then his two engagements with the Philistines.

In Saul's case, the author relates his two battles with the Philistines first, and then the summary of his reign and legacy of children second. The order is flipped, and even the way the author writes the narrative of the battles highlights the disorderliness of how Saul goes about his business.

- It is Jonathan who starts both battles, not Saul. Saul should be taking the lead as king, but he refuses to engage the enemy. Saul enters into battle only after the fact, when compelled.
- In the first battle, Saul panics when he sees the people running from the Philistines and goes ahead with the sacrifices without waiting for Samuel as he has been told. His failure to wait for and obey commands costs him the eternal kingship, which we will discuss more thoroughly in the next lesson, but it is the main contrast between Saul and David in battle.

War with the Philistines

- In the second battle, Saul again only acts after the battle is well in hand.
- He doesn't ask God first, even though the priest with the ephod is sitting right there with him. Instead, he calls for the Ark, only to cancel the order when he decides the situation is too urgent and launches into action.
- He rushes into the LORD's battle and takes credit away from God by claiming the battle for himself. He gives no tribute to God even though God was the one who saved Israel that day.
- His vain oath creates chaos among the people. They battle until they are weak, then fall on the first food they find and eat it with the blood in it. Everything is out of control.
- He doesn't stop to question whether he should continue the battle or not. He presses the people forward, and it is only the priest that suggests that perhaps he should ask God first. This is where the chiasmic structure peaks, at the singular moment when Saul asks God the same question that David asks Him. "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will You deliver them into the hand of Israel?" (1 Sam 14:37 / 2 Sam 5:19). God answers David, but He doesn't answer Saul.

War with the Philistines

- Saul forgets about the Philistine enemies and drags Israel into internal conflict.
- Not only is there no victory or even spoil for Saul from the battle, but his oath also almost costs the life of his son Jonathan.

Everything Saul does is disorderly and reactionary, instead of being proactive. He cuts God out of his battles, and they end in failure. He ultimately loses the reward of an eternal kingship as a result.

David, by contrast . . .

1. Asks God if he should go into battle and gets an answer.
2. Gives tribute to God for the victory immediately.
3. Takes spoil from the Philistines.
4. Then asks if he should continue the battle and is given the go ahead.

David has a double victory against the same enemy, in addition to taking the spoil.

War with the Philistines

Saul's battles—and failures—are the first thing the authors relate, and then they are capped off with the summary passage that is, again, similar to David's.

1 Samuel 14:47–50, 52 *“So Saul established his sovereignty over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, against the people of Ammon, against Edom, against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he harassed them. And he gathered an army and attacked the Amalekites, and delivered Israel from the hands of those who plundered them.*

“The sons of Saul were Jonathan, Jishui, and Malchishua. And the names of his two daughters were these: the name of the firstborn Merab, and the name of the younger Michal. The name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam the daughter of Ahimaaz. And the name of the commander of his army was Abner the son of Ner, Saul's uncle. ...

“Now there was fierce war with the Philistines all the days of Saul. And when Saul saw any strong man or any valiant man, he took him for himself.”

Summary Statements: Establishing Sovereignty

In regards to establishing his physical kingdom, Saul's method of establishing himself was through war. He battled and harassed enemies, and took his kingdom by force. There is no mention of God helping him through any of it. Instead, he conscripted every strong and valiant he could find for his army. Saul's tactic was to amass as much physical manpower as he could to tackle his enemies, and he flailed about the countryside with a fury.

David sought the prize of one place, and fought one strategic battle. It wasn't just about taking land (not yet), but taking particular land with a particular association with God's sovereignty. Once he attained the hill, he then began to build it up into something solid and settled. He reestablished God's place in Israel, and then God established him in return.

So, already we can see David's distinct superiority to Saul, just in how he sets goals, how he aligns himself with God's sovereignty and agenda, and how he demonstrates his understanding of his own sovereignty in relationship to God. This is what makes him a man after God's own heart.

Establishing a House

Saul's house (1 Samuel 14:49-50a)

In regards to establishing his house, the narrator only comments once on Saul's family, but there is more to his family which we discover somewhat haphazardly in Second Samuel. This is similar to the haphazard way the House of Eli is presented. It emphasized their disorderly character and undermines the glory of both houses overall.

Sons

1. Jonathan by Ahinoam . . .
2. Jishui, by Ahinoam
3. Malchishua, by Ahinoam
4. Ishbosheth
5. Armoni, by Rizpah
6. Mephibosheth, by Rizpah

Daughters

1. Merab by Ahinoam
2. Michal by Ahinoam

Grandsons

- Mephibosheth
- Five unnamed sons

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When Saul loses the reward of the earthly kingdom, God doesn't just take the crown and kingdom from him. He takes Saul's legacy in terms of his children, leaving only one to carry on Saul's name.

Sons

- ~~1. Jonathan by Ahinoam . . .~~
- ~~2. Jishui, by Ahinoam~~
- ~~3. Matchishua, by Ahinoam~~
- ~~4. Ishbosheth~~
- ~~5. Armoni, by Rizpah~~
- ~~6. Mephibosheth, by Rizpah~~

Daughters

- ~~1. Merab by Ahinoam Five unnamed sons~~
2. Michal by Ahinoam

Grandsons

~~Mephibosheth~~

Establishing Sovereignty

There are right and wrong ways for a king to go into battle when seeking to establish their earthly kingdom.

1. Inquiring of God first
2. Obeying the commands
3. Giving God tribute first

Those are three vital steps for a king to secure the victory and the reward. The reward flows from the Great King to His earthly kings, but the kingdom is His, the enemies are His, and the battle and spoil are His. As a generous King, God often chooses to grant His king some of the spoil, but not always. Sometimes God demands it all.

It is not a matter of manpower, but the acknowledgment of God's sovereignty over the kingdom and king himself that makes the difference.

Are these things we can apply to our own lives?

Applying the Picture

What is our version of the earthly kingdom?

How do we go about establishing our kingdoms?

War with the Philistines

The LORD is the Great King, and earthly kings bow to His authority and seek His direction when making decisions. When He grants them victory in battle, they give Him credit and spoil as their tribute, and they don't mishandle the His holy things like His offerings, His table, or the Ark of the Covenant. How well the kings align with the LORD's kingdom goals and His values, how well they follow procedure, and their heart motives as they administrate their kingdoms are all things that God judges.

When Israel first demanded a king, the LORD warned them of this through Samuel:

1 Samuel 12:14-15 *“If you fear the LORD and serve Him and obey His voice, and do not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then both you and the king who reigns over you will continue following the LORD your God. However, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you, as it was against your fathers.”*