

“Lessons from the Life of David” – Pastor Jim Ruddy

Study # 23 – 2 Samuel 5:17-25 – LORD of the Breakthrough

I. THE HEAT OF THE BATTLE

Note: 2 Chr. 14:8-16

A. THE DISSIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE TWO KINGS

- These two victories over Israel’s age-old enemy were not the only battles fought against the Philistines but serve as summarized battle reports.
 - cf. 2 Sam. 8:1; 21:15-22
- Whereas Israel was twice defeated by the Philistines during Saul’s reign, here the Philistines are twice routed by David! cf. 1 Sam. 4:1-11; 31:1-7
- What Saul had failed to achieve in securing victory over the Philistines, is finally accomplished by David. cf. 1 Sam. 9:16; 2 Sam. 3:18

B. THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE TWO BATTLES

- In each of the battles:
 - The Philistines were the aggressors. v17,18, 22
 - The battles were fought in Rephaim. v18, 22
 - David’s response was to seek the LORD. v19, 23
 - The LORD answered David. v19, 23
 - David obeyed God’s command. v20, 25
 - The Philistines were defeated. v20, 25

II. THE HEART OF THE BATTLE

A. GAINING THE VICTORY 2 Sam. 5:17-21

1. THE ADVANCE OF THE ENEMY v17-18

- As soon as the enemy heard that David had been anointed King, they seek to defeat him before his reign can be consolidated.
- David had been a vassal of the lord of Gath, and his elevation to kingship must have been regarded as high treason. cf. 1 Sam. 27:1-12
- “*went up*” = a hostile advance to plunder the land. cf. 1 Chr. 14:9
- “*Rephaim*” = “sunken one” or “powerless ones.”
 - a) Inhabitants of the netherworld – departed spirits.
 - cf. Job 26:5; Ps. 88:10; Pr. 2:18; 9:18; Is. 14:9; 26:14
 - b) Inhabitants of the land known for their great height.
 - cf. Gen 14:5; 15:20; Josh 12:4; 13:12; 17:15

2. THE ACTION OF THE KING v19

- At the threat of attack, David’s response was to go on the offensive, and not the defensive.
- His going down “*to the stronghold*” was not to hide, but a tactical withdrawal to lay the battle plan and prepare to launch a counterattack against the attacking enemy.
- Facing his first crisis as king, David’s first response was to turn to God!
 - cf. 1 Sam. 23:4; 30:8; 2 Sam. 2:1
- Whereas Saul had received no answer, David is given marching orders for victory! cf. 1 Sam 14:37; 28:56

3. THE ACCLAIM OF THE LORD v20-21

- It is the LORD, and not David, who is the ultimate battle-strategist, warrior and victor! cf. 2 Chron. 20:15
- Israel had asked for a King who would go out in battle before them, but in fact, they already had One! cf. Judg. 4:14; 1 Sam. 8:20
- The Lord “*breaks out,*” underscoring the fact that Yahweh is fighting on David’s behalf. cf. Josh. 10:11
 - The image is of floodwaters which sweep away everything that is before them.
 - “*Yahweh has overwhelmed my enemies before me, like the overwhelming floodwaters!*”
- The Philistines carried their idols into battle, hoping that, as lucky charms, they will ensure victory (1 Sam 4:3). Now, in full retreat from an advancing Israel, the Philistines abandon their idols, which David and his men carry away as symbols of triumph and for destruction. cf. Deut 7:5, 25; 12:3

B. MAINTAINING THE VICTORY 2 Sam. 5:22-25

1. A DETERMINED ENEMY v22

- Even after being routed, the Philistines gather again to challenge David’s position. cf. Luke 4:13

2. A DIFFERENT STRATEGY v23-24

- David again seeks the Lord, who reveals a different strategy for victory! Remember Joshua’s failure at Ai. cf. Josh. 7
- Principle: God has a will, a way, and a time!
- David is told not to go “*straight up,*” but to employ a flanking movement, encircling the enemy and using the cover from a grove of mulberry / balsam / aspen trees.
- David is to “*advance quickly,*” as soon as he hears the sound of “*marching in the tops of the mulberry trees,*” the sound made by the rustling of the leaves. This was the sign that the army of God had marched out before him and would smite the enemies of Yahweh. cf. Gen 32:1-2; 2 Kings 6:1-17

3. A DEFEATED ENEMY v25

- David drove the Philistines back from Gibeon, six miles from Jerusalem, to Gezer in the northern foothills of Ephraim.
- Whereas Israel had failed to drive the inhabitants out of the Land, David succeeded in neutralizing the Philistines so that they would never succeed in defeating Israel again.