

## November 8

**Scriptures:** Read 2 Samuel 5 & 6

**Key Verse:** “So David knew that the Lord had established him as king over Israel, and that He had exalted His kingdom for His people Israel’s sake.” (2 Samuel 5:12)

### Overview

It would have been shortly after the death of Ishbosheth that representatives from all the tribes of Israel came to make a covenant with David. Abner had strongly encouraged them and probably influenced them to support David. He likely prearranged this meeting before his death (3:17-19). The elders gave three reasons for their acceptance of David to be king over them. It was clear that even if Ishbosheth had not been assassinated, they would have gone down to Hebron to make him their king. Firstly, they were related by blood, and therefore they should be united. Secondly, David had always been their deliverer, even during the reign of Saul. Thirdly, and most importantly, they were aware that the Lord had chosen David to be king, saying: “You shall shepherd My people Israel, and be ruler over Israel” (5:2). It was evident that God was with David, since He had given David much success in his first seven and a half years as king over Judah.

For the third time, David was anointed; the first time was done privately by Samuel (1 Samuel 16:13); the second by only the tribe of Judah (2:4); and now by all Israel in unanimous recognition of David’s kingship over a unified kingdom (5:3). It was only fitting that a new capital be chosen to help solidify his rule. This step marked an important point in the history of Israel. Hebron was too far in the south, so David chose the Jebusite/Canaanite stronghold of Jerusalem; a more centralized capital on the borders between Judah and Benjamin (Joshua 18:28). Shortly after Joshua’s death, the tribe of Judah had defeated Jerusalem, but the fortified stronghold itself was never conquered until this time (Judges 1:8, 21). It was a small city (probably about 9 acres within the wall), but because of the deep valleys on three sides, it was almost impregnable, so that the inhabitants were confident, boasting that even their disabled men could defend it (5:6). However, David was victorious because “the Lord God of hosts was with him” (5:10). When God is with His people, no enemy stronghold can stand.

God gave David favour with the Phoenician king of Tyre (north of Israel), and the people of that nation helped in the building, craftsmanship, and materials of the palace and, later, the temple. David saw this as a sign of God’s blessing upon his rulership. He was honoured by the Lord, because he honoured God and obeyed Him; therefore, God twice gave him victory over the Philistines (e.g. 5:20, 25). He was establishing David’s kingdom for the sake of His glory and the salvation of His people Israel. David perceived that was a part of this redemptive plan of God (key verse, 5:12). As David experienced, life is never dull when you are yielding yourself to God, acting according to His will, and taking part in bringing people into the salvation of the Lord.

In David’s zeal for the Lord, he desired to bring the Ark of the Covenant back to a place of prominence, since for the last two generations it has been neglected in Kirjath Jearim. He made a special tent in which to house it and, with all good intentions, he also made a new cart upon which to transport the Ark. But this was a violation of the Levitical regulation requiring it to be

borne on the shoulders of the Levites (Numbers 7:9). Uzzah was probably a Levite. The Ark had rested in his home for over seventy years (6:3; 1 Samuel 7:1), therefore he should have known the regulations concerning it. When he touched it to steady it, God's wrath came against him and he died. His penalty seems severe for an act which was well-meaning, yet the whole situation showed that at that time in Israel there was a lack of respect for the holiness of God and the regulations of the law.

The law stated that only the priests were allowed to touch the Ark, and the Levites of the family of Kohath were to carry it by poles but not touch it "lest they die" (Numbers 4:15). The holy things, especially the Ark which symbolized God's presence, were to be treated with utmost reverence. Uzzah's death would shock all the people into this realization, and it certainly was effective, since we see that the next time David attempted to bring the Ark up to Jerusalem, he did it in the prescribed fashion (6:13).

When things were done in accordance with the law and will of God, there was great joy and much celebration. David humbly divested himself of his royal attire and, wearing only a simple linen ephod, joined the common people in dancing and worshipping God before the Ark. His "unkingly" behaviour caused his wife Michal to despise him (6:16), and she sarcastically charged him with being base or lowly. To this David replied that he would do anything, no matter how humbling or seemingly undignified, for the glory of God.

## **Prayer**

We rejoice with great joy that, like David, we can worship You in celebration of Your ark of the New Covenant, the symbol of Your mercy seat, the Cross of Christ. Help us to be fervent and not critical of the enthusiasm of others, as David's wife was, when he worshipped You.