

## Prayer

Stir within me, Holy Lord, the fire which warms my soul; feed it with the breeze of Your Spirit and breathe it into life. Make me glow with all the radiance of the faith within me, so that I may give testimony to Your truth, Your majesty, Your life and Your transforming power; and may I burn with love, the eternal fuel of Your magnificent Creation! Thank You, Holy Lord: AMEN

## Other Prayer Suggestions

### Weekly Theme: Preachers

*Pray for those you know who will be preaching tomorrow, whether at your own church or anywhere else. Pray that the Lord will speak through them in power and love.*

### On-going prayers

- *Pray for Israel and Palestine, and pray for God's will to be done*
- *Give thanks for the guiding hand of God on your life*
- *Pray for Universities and Colleges beginning courses right now*

## Meditation

*(a reflection on overcoming problems in daily life)*

Grant to us, Lord Jesus Christ, that quality of love which  
 Forgives those who have hurt us,  
 Overcomes all manner of anger and bitterness,  
 Refocuses us on that which is good, not bad,  
 And seeks ways to build bridges over troubled waters.

Grant to us, Lord Jesus Christ, that quality of faith which  
 Believes that problems can be solved,  
 Displays love towards the most difficult of people  
 Trusts that God is in control of everything,  
 And seeks to defeat the works of the evil one.

Grant to us, Lord Jesus Christ, that quality of hope which  
 Sees beyond the troubles of the day,  
 Longs for peace to be established between people  
 Is passionate about overcoming all odds, in Christ,  
 And seeks the ultimate glory of the Father.

Grant to us, Lord Jesus Christ, those special spiritual gifts  
 Which daily help us live our lives according to Your will.

## Bible Study - 2 Samuel 5:1-5

<sup>1</sup> All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, 'We are your own flesh and blood. <sup>2</sup> In the past, while Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns. And the LORD said to you, "You shall shepherd my people Israel, and you shall become their ruler."<sup>3</sup> When all the elders of Israel had come to King David at Hebron, the king made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel.

<sup>4</sup> David was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned for forty years. <sup>5</sup> In Hebron he reigned over Judah for seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah for thirty-three years.

## Review

David's long journey to the kingship of all Israel began many years ago when Samuel anointed him King of Israel in front of his brothers (1 Samuel 16:13). As soon as the prophet Samuel had anointed him, he was filled with the 'Spirit of the Lord' (1 Samuel 16:14), but David had to receive his anointing by faith. The disgraced King Saul was still on the throne of Israel, and David had to wait many years for the moment described in this passage of scripture.

Since his first anointing, David had experienced many things; a meteoric rise to fame as leader of Israel's armies after the famous defeat of the Philistine Goliath, marriage into the royal family of King Saul, exile from Israel due to the jealousy and paranoia of the King, and life on the run with a band of followers. Then, when Saul died, he was anointed as King of his own tribe of Judah (2 Samuel 2:4). This anointing must have been bitter sweet for David, because he would have rejoiced to know that his call was partly fulfilled, but only partially, because God's people were divided despite various attempts to bring about unification (2 Samuel 3,4). Now, the leaders of the northern tribes came to the deep south of Judah, to Hebron, from where David ruled Judah.

The leaders of Israel had little choice but to seek out David at Hebron. From their point of view, the great King Saul had died in battle with most of his sons, and many of the people now lived in servitude to the Philistines, leaving them in poverty. Saul's son Ishbaal (Ishbosheth) had proved to be a useless replacement as King, and David's army commander Joab had slaughtered the leader of Israel's armies (2 Sam 3:26f.). There was no-one left to whom they could look for help. They finally recognised what so many people had believed for so long. David was the rightful leader of all Israel, from Judah in the south to the most northern tribes of Zebulun and Issachar, and also of Benjamin the tribe of the dead King Saul.

In reality, they knew David and he was no foreigner to them. He had been their army commander before Abner and before the erratic Saul had sent him into exile. David had assiduously shown good faith towards Saul whilst he was still alive, and had nothing to do with his death, or that of Abner. This made them confident to come to David and ask him to be their King. The leader's speech to David (2 Sam 5:3) made this all clear. They needed an experienced army commander to lead them again, and liberate them from the servitude imposed on them by the Philistines. They also knew that the great Samuel had anointed David a long time ago, and they were now prepared to put that anointing into effect by asking David back again.

Consequently, David was declared King and anointed (again) by the people at Hebron, and verse 3 refers to a 'covenant, or agreement made between David and the leaders of the northern tribes. The Hebrew word for this covenant meant a formal agreement before God calling Him as witness that the tribes were re-unified. It was a great and triumphant day for David. As so often in scripture, these powerful and important facts of history are recorded with a minimum of fuss. It was not a triumph for David, but a triumph for God, and for David's trust in God over many, many years.

The figures now tell us that David became King over Judah when he was thirty, that he reigned there for seven and a half years before the great re-unification Covenant. From then on David reigned for a further thirty three years, making a total of forty years.

Two things are impressive about the whole long story concluded in this passage today, the faith of David, and the authority of God over the destiny of His people. Both were necessary for the re-unification Covenant which signalled a time of extraordinary success and growth in the Israelite Kingdom. The years of trouble and strife must have seemed long to the northern Israelites who were waiting for liberation from their Philistine overlords; but their time of waiting was worth it to have a King who truly knew the will of God.

Yet the story of David is by no means complete just because the unified tribes had anointed him King. There was one important thing he would have to do. He had been ruling Judah from the heartland of the tribe in Hebron. If he was to be an effective King of the united tribes, then he would need a new capital city from which to rule; somewhere that would strategically unite God's people and be a home for the 'Ark of the Covenant'. The next story in 2 Samuel in which David solves this matter by God's help and guidance is crucial!

## Questions (for use in groups)

1. Are you aware of the three different anointings that David received before he became King of all Israel? Discuss the significance of all three.
2. Check what you know about the story of David up to this point. How much of this is familiar within the church, and how much is relatively unknown, and why?
3. What can the story of David's patient wait for the crown of Israel teach us today?

## Discipleship

### Personal comment:

*The story of David is inspirational. There are many times in my own life when I thought that God had brought me to where He wanted me as if He had no further plans for me than to continue where I was for the rest of my life. I have found that the Lord always has more for us if we make ourselves available to Him without reserve. Behind the scenes of the story of David is the history of a man who unreservedly waited on the Lord for what was coming next, knowing that there was always more! He is an example to us.*

### Ideas for discipleship programme

- *If you are married, discuss what more the Lord might have for you in your marriage. If you are not married, then discuss your personal feelings about this with a friend.*
- *Write a letter as if to be sent to your own church in which you look into the future and try to envision God's will for your church. When you have written this, then, and only then, decide whether it is a letter which should be sent!*

## Final Prayer

Keep me in Your presence this day, Jesus Christ, my Lord; keep me close to Your side as I walk the path You have before me. Then, when difficulty comes, may I have the confidence to deal with everything in the way You would wish of me, knowing that You are always there to help me. Thank You, Lord; AMEN