

2025-06-01

## **Building a Kingdom**

2 Samuel 2:1-7

How do you build a kingdom? Neither Saul nor David took college courses on kingdom building. Neither of these men were trained to establish a kingdom or rule a kingdom. Their fathers could not teach them about being a king because they were not kings. The only examples of kings they saw were the pagan kings living around them. God did have some guidance in Deuteronomy 17 but it does not seem that people were reading their scriptures like they were supposed to. What did happen was, both men were anointed by God. They were each given God's Spirit to guide them. And **God expected them to seek Him, listen to Him** and follow His leadership. The first time David, the son of Jesse, is mentioned in scripture God commands Samuel to anoint him king (1 Samuel 16:13). There was a problem. There was already a king of Israel. Saul was chosen by God to be Israel's first king (10:1). God gave Saul every opportunity to be obedient to God and become a man after God's heart. After Saul made one good, obedient choice for God and His kingdom, Saul kept making wrong choices. He wasn't obedient to God. Saul even built a monument to himself (15:12). God rejected Saul's family from reigning over His kingdom (13:13-14). Then God rejected Saul as king of Israel (15:23). God would seek a person after His own heart. Saul did not do a good job of building God's kingdom. He did unite some of the tribes of Israel but the tribe of Judah never seemed to unite with the other tribes when Saul was king. As a matter of fact, when Saul forced David out of Israel, many Hebrews from several tribes, including Benjamin, joined David while he was in the Philistine town of Ziklag (1 Chronicles 12:8, 16, 19).

Now that Saul and his son Jonathan, along with 2 other sons were killed in the battle with the Philistines (1 Samuel 31:2-6), David can now become king of Israel. Again, **how would you build a kingdom?** How would you build the kingdom of God? David has an army. Some of David's soldiers had joined him because they were killers and in David's army, they could kill others without consequences (27:9 / 30:22). I would hope that most of David's army were men who had a greater vision than just killing. Hopefully, they wanted to be part of a great and powerful kingdom. David could go out with his army and conquer a kingdom by force. He could have sent messengers throughout the land and require them to unite behind him. Instead, David turned to God for direction and leadership. Remember, David is still in Ziklag. I think David has learned a valuable lesson of **how bad life can get when one does not seek God daily or follow Him consistently**. (Proverbs 3:5-6) I would say that David was even going against God when he was trying to join the Philistine armies who were planning to fight against Saul and Israel. God did not let that happen. In

that pursuit, David and his men lost everything, at least they thought so (30:1-3). When David was forced to leave the Philistine army camp because they were Hebrews, they returned to Ziklag to find all their families gone and their town burnt to the ground. **David turned to God for direction** (30:6-8). God miraculously restored everyone's family and all their possessions. Here in Ziklag, around all the ruins David inquired of the Lord (2 Samuel 2:1). David wanted to know how God wanted him to build His kingdom.

**2:1-3** David asked the Lord, *"Shall I go up to any of the cities of Judah? And the Lord said to him, 'Go up.'"* David did not just run off and go after receiving this word, which he could have done. David could have picked any town he wanted. He knew them. He had been courting their favor by supplying some of their needs (1 Samuel 30:26-31). He probably had a favorite town he wanted to go to. Instead, David asked the Lord, *"Where shall I go up?"* Out of all the towns, the Lord told David to go to **Hebron**. Hebron was where Abraham lived for a while and built an altar to the Lord before the sacrifice of Isaac (Genesis 13:18). It was where Sarah died and was buried (23:2, 19). It was where Isaac lived (35:27). Later, Hebron was controlled by the Amorites before Joshua's day (Joshua 10:5). Once the land was conquered by Israel, Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb (14:14). Hebron was a city of refuge (20:1-7) and a city of the Levites (21:11, 13). Hebron was an important city at times. The word means "Brotherhood." David, his two wives and all David's men and their families went to Hebron to live at God's command.

**2:4-7** While in Hebron, the men from all across Judah came to anoint David as their king. God had already anointed David king. Now the tribe of Judah was recognizing David as their king over their kingdom. **A kingdom is an organized community who has a king or queen as their head of government.** Anytime a government is established, politics are involved. The men of Judah informed David that *"the men of Jabesh Gilead were the ones who buried Saul."* However this was presented to David, he takes this information as an opportunity to build the kingdom of Israel. The Hebrews of Jabesh Gilead are not from the tribe of Judah. They are from the tribe of Gad. I had mentioned that some of the soldiers of Gad had joined David in Ziklag (1 Chronicles 12:8). Saul's one good deed that is recorded in scripture is done towards the people in Jabesh Gilead (1 Samuel 11). We will see next week that Abner, Saul's commanding general makes one of Saul's remaining sons, Ishbosheth, king over Israel. They will go to Mahanaim, a city in Gad to establish his control over Israel.

David sent messengers to thank the people of Jabesh Gilead for showing kindness to Saul's memory (2 Samuel 2:5-6). They risked their lives, traveling miles through

territory controlled by the Philistines, crossing the Jordan River to cut down the naked bodies of Saul and his 3 sons from the wall of Beth Shan (1 Samuel 31:9-13). This city at the time was controlled by the Philistines. If the Philistines would have known about this effort, they would have stopped it. David promised to be kind to them and encouraged them to be valiant as he sought their favor now that he is king of Judah (2 Samuel 2:7). David is doing kingdom building, whether he knows it or not.

I want to contrast David with Jesus. **How did Jesus start building His kingdom?** Normally we would think that Jesus started by calling people to follow Him. According to Matthew, Mark and John, Jesus called disciples very early in His ministry. But, according to the Gospel of Luke, after Jesus was baptized and was tempted by the devil, **Jesus did one other thing before** He called any disciples. When Jesus returned to Galilee to call His disciples, one of His first stops was in the town of Nazareth, where Jesus grew up. Everyone knew Him in Nazareth. It was His custom to go to the synagogue. This time He stood to read. He was given the scroll of Isaiah. He found the scripture He wanted to read and began, *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord”* (Luke 4:18-19). This is a Messianic passage. By reading this, the people would wonder if Jesus was the Messiah or if He was referring to someone else. So, everyone stared at Jesus, seeking an answer. Jesus answered their thoughts. He said, *“Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing”* (4:21). Jesus claimed to be God’s Messiah. Everyone seemed to **marvel** at Jesus. They thought His words were **gracious** (4:22). Then He does something unexpected if you catch it. He tells the people in Nazareth that **they will not accept Him** as Messiah. They will refuse to believe in Him because they know who He is, the son of Joseph.

Jesus used two events in the Hebrew scriptures to reveal that the residents of Nazareth had hard, unbelieving hearts. First, **Elijah**, who was from Gilead went to help a widow in Sidon during a famine (1 Kings 17:1-16). Second, God used **Elisha** to bring healing to Naaman, a commanding general of the Syrian army, an enemy of Israel (2 Kings 5:1-15). **God likes helping and healing all people who have the potential to believe and follow Jesus.** But Jesus put a new twist on these events. Jesus said there were many widows in Israel in Elijah’s day. Elijah did not go to help any widow in Israel but he went to help a widow outside of Israel. And with Elisha, there were many lepers in Israel at that time but God brought healing to a man outside of Israel, a foreigner, an enemy of Israel. These two people responded with faith in God. **Jesus knows the hearts of the residents of Nazareth.** No matter what

Jesus would do in Nazareth, no one would believe. And Jesus told them the way it was. Once the people heard this they were filled with **wrath** towards Jesus. They *“thrust Him out of the city.” “They led him to the brow of a hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff”* (Luke 4:29). That would have been a quick end to Jesus’ ministry. But Jesus walked right through the crowd **never to return to Nazareth again**. In Luke’s account, it is not until after this event, that Jesus will call His disciples. Jesus sought to build His kingdom with those who knew Him best but they rejected Him. They would not let God change their hard heart. **A hard heart is caused by hate, anger, pride and greed**. Jesus wanted to build His kingdom with the nation of Israel, but they mostly rejected Him. Jesus would send His disciples to those who would believe, the Gentiles.

David made every effort to build his kingdom with kindness and encouragement, seeking to do the right things. Jesus did too. Jesus healed thousands of people. Jesus fed thousands of people. How many of those people that Jesus helped became His followers? This side of heaven, we will never know. My guess is 10%. I get this idea from the 10 lepers who were healed (Luke 17:12-19). It is interesting that the one leper who returned to give glory to God for his healing was a foreigner. Jesus built His kingdom with those who would believe Him and follow Him.

**Questions to ask yourself:** Are you a part of God’s kingdom? In order for you to be part of God’s **kingdom**, Jesus needs to be your **King**. Is He ruling your life? Are you letting Him guide you? If you are part of God’s kingdom, are you letting Jesus rule your life? Are you seeking Him daily? What are you doing to help build God’s kingdom?

**Actions to take:** If Jesus is not Lord of your life, surrender your life to Him right now. Repent of your sins. Recognize your need for Jesus. And trust in the Lord with all your heart (Proverbs 3:3-8). Be a person after God’s heart. Seek to believe all God’s truth. Study your Bible. Seek to do things the way God wants them done. Be kind to those outside the church. Encourage them to learn the truth of God’s salvation through faith in Jesus. If you find your heart becoming hard from **hate, anger, pride and greed**, ask God to forgive you and cleanse your heart and life of these sins.

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