

Second Samuel

Lesson 6

The city of Salem, where King Melchizedek lived in the days of Abraham, stood on the east of Mount Zion, across the valley of Tyropoeon. Joshua would give Salem to the tribe of Judah (Genesis 14:18). Salem means *peace*. Even in Abraham's day, it was called the *City of Peace*. He called it the *City of Salem*. In Hebrew, *Jeru* means *city*; *Salem* means *peace*. Thus, before Abraham's days, it was known as *Jerusalem*. But it sat on the east side of the valley. It was called the "lower city," with Zion being the "upper city." The names have to do with the elevation of the cities, not the direction from each other. Here is an important point. From its founding, the Jebusite Citadel on Mount Zion and the city of Jerusalem were two different units. The Jebusite Citadel was a walled city surrounded by deep valleys. Jerusalem was a village of Canaanites who would take refuge in the Jebusite Citadel when enemies approached. Such was the style in Canaan Land during its development. A walled city would support and protect the unwalled cities or villages.

Mount Moriah, where Abraham took Isaac as an offering, stood north of Salem. When Abraham took Isaac, he had to pass east of the Jebusite Citadel, journey through the city of Salem, and climb the uninhabited mountain of Moriah. There was a threshing floor located on Mount Moriah, where grain was separated from the husks. It was already trodden flat. One day it would make a wonderful place to build a Temple. That will be revealed later in David's story.

The great Jebusite Citadel was thought to be impenetrable. Its high walls towered above the steep slopes of the surrounding valleys. It was near impossible for an enemy to approach, much less scale the walls or break through its gates. It had stood the test of time. By the time of King David, Israel had controlled the Promise Land for nearly five hundred years, and Israel could not touch the Jebusite Citadel. So Israel had to learn to live with the Canaanites. The writer of Judges 1:21, probably Samuel, tells us the following. "*But the sons of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem; so the Jebusites have lived with the sons of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day*" (Judges 1:21).

It seems from this statement that Benjamin may have claimed the Jebusite Mount Zion but never controlled it, not at least until King David came along in his seventh year as king. Be that as it may, as the Jebusites saw David approach the city, they sent the message that David would not be successful, for the citadel was so strong that even the blind and lame of Jebus could repel the Israelite army.

(2) The Capture of the City of Zion (5:7-8)

From David's approach to the City of Zion, we come to the capture of the city of Zion. Verse 7. "*Nevertheless, David captured the stronghold of Zion, that is, the city of David.*"⁸ David said on that day, "*Whoever would strike the Jebusites, let him reach the lame and the blind, who are hated by David's soul, through the water tunnel.*" Therefore, they say, "*The blind or the lame shall not come into the house.*" We must remember that this short entry in this book is only a summary of the event. It is not the whole story. We also must remember that at this time, David still had more than a third of a million men in his army, who had defected to him from all the tribes during his first two years as king of Judah alone. After being king for five years over all of Israel, we had no idea how many men David had in his national army. Neither do we know how many men he had surrounding the great Jebusite Citadel then. It had to be much larger than the original third of a million men at his disposal.

The writer first tells us that David took the city in a summary. Then the writer tells us how he took the city. Note that this is how most of the events of our Scriptures have been written by Samuel, Gad, and Nathan. The result is given first, then the details of how the deed was accomplished will follow.

David had already figured out that there was only one way to breach the city walls: "*through the water tunnel.*" We have not addressed the issue of water within the citadel walls that allowed its inhabitants to remain there indefinitely when an enemy approached.

Mount Zion, the Jebusite Citadel, is honeycombed with man-made tunnels. Food was stored in these tunnels the same way our ancestor's stored food in cellars in America. As our ancestors did, these tunnels were also used for refuge during great storms. Natural Bridge Caverns, north of San Antonio, is about the same latitude as Zion in Israel. Its average temperature is about 70 degrees Fahrenheit year-round. It is the same as in the tunnels in Mount Zion. These tunnels were perfect for winter shelter from the cold and summer shelter from the heat. But not all the tunnels were for these purposes.

Zion has a natural spring on its south side. This spring provided fresh water for all the Jebusites in the city. Once the Jebusites built their wall around the city, they had to devise a plan to allow the excess water to drain from the city and not flood its inhabitants. The plan had to allow drainage without compromising security. A shaft was dug down through the mountain that would let the excess water flow down the height of the mount and then exit out to the valley of Hinnom.

David must have noticed the water flow from the shaft tunnel coming down from the citadel at some point in his life and discerned that it was the only way into the city, watery as it was. David disclosed this secret entryway to all the army with him. Ezra, in his Chronicles, fills in a little more of the story. "*Now David had said, 'Whoever strikes down a Jebusite first shall be chief and commander. 'Joab, the son of Zer [Zeruiah] went up first, so he became chief...'*" (1 Chronicles 11:6).

Joab was already leading David's armies as one of his commanders. At this time, David had several commanders. Joab had killed Abner five years before. Nevertheless, Joab took David's words to heart and was the first to shimmy up the shaft tunnel and enter the Jebusite Citadel. He must have been followed by some of his faithful men who helped him open the city's gate, which allowed David's army to rush in. As such, David kept his promise, and Joab became the chief of all of David's armies.

(3) The Name of the City of Zion (5:9-10)

From the approach of Zion to the capture of the city of Zion, we finally come to the author's summary of the name of the city of Zion. Verse 9. "*So David lived in the stronghold and called it the city of David. And David built all around from the Millo and inward.*"¹⁰ *David became greater and greater, for the LORD God of hosts was with him.*" So the new name of Zion and the Jebusite Citabel became the "*City of David.*" But when David took the city as his capital fort, it must have quickly become evident that it was badly in need of repair. For that reason, our writer tells us that "*David built all around from the Millo and inward.*" *Millo* means *the terrace or rampart structure*. A *rampart* is a city's defensive wall with a walkway on top where men may shoot downward. The writer simply meant that David had to rebuild the city from the outer fortress wall inward after he took it for his capital.

And David's power grew "*greater and greater*" as the anointed king of Israel. First Chronicles 11:9 tells us this greatness grew because "*the LORD of Heaven's Armies was with him.*" That statement tells all about how the LORD felt about King David.

b) A Summary of the Building of David's House (5:11-12)

Our writer now turns to a summary of the building of David's house on Mount Zion. Verse 11. "*Then Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David with cedar trees and carpenters and stonemasons; and they built a house for David.*"¹² *And David realized that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, and that He had exalted his kingdom for the sake of His people Israel.*" We already know that David did not take Zion as his home until his seventh year as king. This timing meant that he had thirty-three years left in his reign. Therefore, we must ask, "When was this house built for David by Hiram?" A man named Meander of Ephesus wrote a history of the city of Tyre based on Tyrian manuscripts. Josephus, in his *Apion* i:18, references Meander's book. Quoting Menander, Josephus asserts that Hiram was the king of Tyre

for thirty-four years. Josephus also states that Hiram helped Solomon begin the Temple in the twelfth year of Hiram's reign. Then we must add that Solomon started the Temple in the fourth year of his reign.

Doing the math, we realize that Hiram began his reign as king in the thirty-second year of David's reign, meaning he reigned during the last eight years of David's term as king. What can we make of this information? If Josephus and Meander are correct, David's palace was built during his last decade as the king of Israel. Thus, this passage is simply a summary to tell us who helped David as he rebuilt the structures on Mount Zion and, then, specifically, helped David build his palace after all of the rest of the repairs on Mount Zion were complete. In other words, David took his share last when he had taken care of everyone else. That was David's nature, as seen thus far about David in the Scripture. The LORD had established David as king of Israel to care for Israel, the LORD's people, and he was going to be a good shepherd of the people.

c) A Summary of the Growth of David's Family (5:13-14)

But in between David taking Zion as his city and the building of David's palace, the writer gives us a summary of the growth of David's family. Verse 13. *"Meanwhile David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he came from Hebron; and more sons and daughters were born to David.¹⁴ Now these are the names of those who were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon,¹⁵ Ibbar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia,¹⁶ Elishama, Eliada and Eliphelet."*

"Meanwhile" always means *in between two events, the time intervening between the events*. These verses refer to the time between the taking of Zion and the building of the palace; David took more wives and concubines from the Jerusalem area and had children with them. Of those children, he had eleven more boys to add to the six born to him in Hebron.

Notice that David took more "concubines" before he took more "wives." 1 Chronicles gives us a little more insight into this passage. It says, *"These were born to him in Jerusalem: Shimea, Shobab, Nathan and Solomon, four, by Bath-shua the daughter of Ammiel;⁶ and Ibbar, Elishama, Eliphelet,⁷ Nogah, Nepheg and Japhia,⁸ Elishama, Eliada and Eliphelet, nine.⁹ All these were the sons of David, besides the sons of the concubines; and Tamar was their sister (1 Chronicles 3:5-9).* We are thankful to Ezra for this record because it tells us that Bathshua (a variant spelling of Bathsheba) was the mother of the first four in each list. You will notice the variant spellings between Samuel's passage and the Chronicle's passage. Variant spellings were quite common in Hebrew. Be that as it may, the variant spellings are close enough to recognize easily in context. After the sons of Bathsheba, the remaining nine were sons of the new wives taken while in Jerusalem. However, Ezra also reveals that David had more sons with the concubines who are not listed in either of these lists. Ezra makes one final addition, a girl, Tamar, was born to David also. Whether she was born in Hebron or Zion, we do not know. You can find this same list repeated by Ezra in 1 Chronicles 14:3-5. But in this last reference, we find out something new. It says, *"Then David took more wives in Jerusalem, and David fathered more sons and daughters."* Tamar was not the only daughter of David. He had more, but we were not told their names. For this, we can once again conclude that the chronicle record in Second Samuel was produced well after David's life as king.

Before moving on, we need to address the timing of these births. Many supposed Solomon was the fourth son of David with Bathsheba because he is listed as fourth in both Samuel and Chronicles. However, in chapter twelve, the writer details Solomon's birth order. Here are the highlights found in chapter twelve. *"Then the LORD struck the child that Uriah's widow bore to David, so that he was very sick. ...¹⁸ Then it happened on the seventh day that the child died. ...²⁴ Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and went in to her and lay with her; and she gave birth to a son, and he named him Solomon"* (2 Samuel 12:15-24). Thus, Solomon was Bathsheba's second son. Sometime after the birth of Solomon, Bathsheba gave birth to Nathan. Solomon and Nathan are the only two sons of Bathsheba that we know anything about. As for the other two, we know nothing. With that in mind, one of the names listed with Bathsheba in

both records may be the name of her first child who died. We do not know this for sure. As for the other child, it is quite possible that he, too, died before reaching adulthood.

What we do know about Solomon is this, he was born in the tenth year of David's reign as king. David resigned his kingship in his fortieth year to allow Solomon to become king when he is thirty. This timing means that Solomon was born to David when David was forty years old.

d) A Summary of the War with the Philistines (5:17-25)

(1) The First Battle (5:17-21)

The writer also gives us a summary of the war with the Philistines. It seems that the writer backed up five years to tell us of the first battle after David was anointed king of all Israel in Hebron. Verse 17. *"When the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to seek out David; and when David heard of it, he went down to the stronghold."*¹⁸ *Now the Philistines came and spread themselves out in the valley of Rephaim."*¹⁹ *Then David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You give them into my hand?" And the LORD said to David, "Go up, for I will certainly give the Philistines into your hand."*²⁰ *So David came to Baal-perazim and defeated them there; and he said, "The LORD has broken through my enemies before me like the breakthrough of waters."* *Therefore he named that place Baal-perazim."*²¹ *They abandoned their idols there, so David and his men carried them away."*

The valley of Rephaim does not go by Hebron. However, it is located on the west side of Mount Zion. Next, we must look at the word "*stronghold*." The writer has just associated the word "*stronghold*" with Mount Zion in this chapter in verses 7 and 9. The last time we heard about David and a stronghold was in First Samuel 24:22 when Samuel was still alive. That was more than nine years before this event. As such, this reference must mean the Jebusite stronghold on Mount Zion that David will take in his seventh year. But the writer has backed up in time to the end of David's second year when he became the king of all Israel.

Now we come to the word "*down*" used in the passage. It says that David "*went down to the stronghold*." The term "*down*" simply means he went from a higher to a lower elevation. It does not mean that he changed villages. From Hebron, it was downhill all the way to the valley of Rephaim, and the Philistines were camped. But before going to Rephaim, David inquired of the LORD about attacking the Philistines.

We must remember that just three years earlier, David and six hundred of his men were with the Philistines at Mount Gilboa before the battle that ended the life of King Saul. The day before Saul's death, the Philistine lords rejected David and his men and made the king of Gath send him and his men back home to Ziklag. Now, possibly for the first time, David would face some of the men he once stood in battle with on the Philistine side.

The LORD permitted David to pursue the Philistines. He nicknamed the place "*Baal-parazim*." The actual location is unknown. However, because the LORD tells David to "*Go up ...*" it means that David and his army were to follow the Philistines up the mountain in pursuit. *Baal-parazim* means the *lord who bursts through*. It seems that this location is the same as Isaiah 28:21, called Mount Perazim. It was David who nicknamed the mountain *Baal-parazim*. It would retain David's nickname long after his life and pass on through the life of Isaiah. We know where Mount Perazim sits. It is located west of the valley of Rephaim, west of Zion.