

Greatness: The Life of Israel's Greatest King and How Yours Can Be Better
Newness
2 Samuel 5

Introduction: On October 24, 2002, Keri and I woke up super early after an anxious night of sleep on an air mattress in our house in Jacksonville, FL. She then drove me to the airport to catch a flight to Ft. Lauderdale, where I rented a car and drove to Miami to lead a meeting on my last day as an employee of the Florida Baptist Convention. Meanwhile, Keri spent the day loading things into our Jeep that we hadn't sent with the moving company that had been there the day before. After finishing my meeting, I drove back to Ft. Lauderdale, caught a plane back to Jacksonville, and took a taxi straight to the lawyer's office, where Keri met me to sign the closing documents on the sale of our house in Florida. We got everything signed around 6:00 pm, got in our Jeep, and drove straight to the Hampton Inn in Gastonia, NC.

The following day, October 25, 2002, we drove over to a lawyer's office in Gastonia to close on the house we purchased in Lowell, NC, the one we still live in today. We then went to the house and emptied our Jeep, then drove to Morganton to pick up the truck I had purchased, drove back to Gastonia, NC, and grabbed dinner at a Mexican restaurant. While we were there, somebody came in and announced they had just backed their car into a Black Jeep Grand Cherokee, which was ours. So, we got their insurance information, etc., then returned and ate the meal we ordered. We then headed back to the house, filled the air mattress up with air, and slept in front of the fireplace, which ironically kept cutting on and off all by itself!

Bright and early on October 26, 2002, we woke to the sound of the moving truck pulling in with all our stuff! We were super excited, but unfortunately, our excitement was tapped down when the moving company said the movers included in our moving contract had all "called in sick!" So, the driver and I unloaded everything and brought it into the house while Keri started unpacking and putting everything together. We worked until late that night, but we eventually got to lay down on our own mattress and go to sleep.

The next morning, October 27, 2002, after getting up to get dressed, Keri answered a phone call from a leader in the church insisting I wear a suit and tie for my first Sunday as the church pastor. I didn't say anything to the caller, but as a grown man, I refused to be told what I was going to wear to preach, so I put on the same clothes I had worn the Sunday a month prior when the church unanimously voted to ask me to be the Lead Pastor of the church—a suit with no tie. Outside of the brief conversation Keri and I had about the phone call, I didn't think anything else about it. We then drove up to the old campus of Venture for me to preach at the Sunday AM service and officially begin our ministry here in this region.

A week later, while I was preaching my second sermon as the new Lead Pastor of the church, the deacon board (at that time, the group charged with overseeing the church) had a meeting to decide whether or not to keep me as the pastor of the church or fire me. It turns out that there were a handful of deacons who felt I was unqualified to be the Lead

Pastor of the church because I didn't think it was important to wear a tie to preach my first sermon! And thus began our brand-new ministry!

It's incredible how fast the optimism and innocence of newness can wear off sometimes. Our Jeep Grand Cherokee getting hit in the restaurant's parking lot was a sign of what was to come. We had no idea that we were getting ready to spend the next 15-plus years of our lives fighting for the heart of the church to be transformed into what Venture is and is still becoming today.

But, nonetheless, to this day, despite our past experiences and all of human history telling us otherwise, whenever we start something new or get something new, we can't escape the optimism that everything will be a win from that day forward. A new car won't ever break down; a new house wouldn't need things to be fixed, and we would certainly never want to change anything about it; a new job wouldn't create stress like this one, and the list goes on of what in our heads would all be permanently fixed by the simple acquisition of something new. It seems to be a universal truth that whenever we start or get something new, we naturally find ourselves unavoidably feeling as if nothing can or will go wrong despite knowing it will!

Now, what's that got to do with our study of 2 Samuel? Well, today, which is ironically six days after a new president took office in the United States, our study brings us to the inauguration and launch of David as King over all the tribes of Israel. Before this, there had been at least two years of civil war between the tribe of Judah, ruled by David, and the other eleven tribes of Israel, ruled by Ish-bosheth. The war was instigated by Abner, the former general of Saul's army, who, after King Saul was killed in battle and David was appointed as king over Judah, made Ish-bosheth, the only surviving son of Saul, king over the other eleven tribes so that he could use him as a puppet for his own selfish purposes. However, by the time we get to 2 Samuel 5, Abner and Ish-bosheth are dead, and a new day is dawning for Israel. It was indeed the start of the Golden Age of Israel. The time under David and then his son Solomon were indeed the greatest years of Israel's existence, but they were by no means without trial, tribulation, and failure. Like almost everything new in our life, those years started with unfettered optimism and innocence of what was to come, especially given how it all began anew for Israel. Let me walk you through 2 Samuel 5 and point out all the newness in it, and then I want to take you to what it ultimately points us to in Christ!

Proposition: David got five new things in 2 Samuel 5.

The first new thing David got in 2 Samuel 5 was huge.

(1) David was given a newly united Israel to rule. (5:1-5)

- A. 1 Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "Behold, we are your bone and flesh. 2 In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was you who led out and brought in Israel. And the LORD said to you, 'You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince**

over Israel.” 3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel. 4 David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. 5 At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years.

- B. Israel united around what they saw God doing—raising up David to be their King. It was God who brought Israel together and thus, it was God who gave David a united Kingdom. I need to make sure you understand the significance of this.
- C. David didn’t have to tell people he was called to be their King, nor did he have to threaten anybody in Israel to get the civil war to stop. The nation had seen how God had used David under Saul, and by this time, they had also likely heard that Samuel had anointed David to be the next King (1 Samuel 16). Therefore, putting that all together made it clear to them that God called David to be their King not just because David believed it to be true but because they had seen the evidence of it. What God and God alone was doing in and through David inspired Israel to stop fighting each other, lay aside their differences, and come together as God’s people under the rule of David whom they believed to be ruled by God. In this way, it was God who established David as King and not the other way around.

The second new thing David got in 2 Samuel 5 was a new capital.

(2) David conquered a nearly unconquerable city and made it the new capital of Israel. (5:6-9)

- A. **6 And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who said to David, “You will not come in here, but the blind and the lame will ward you off”—thinking, “David cannot come in here.” 7 Nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion, that is, the city of David. 8 And David said on that day, “Whoever would strike the Jebusites, let him get up the water shaft to attack ‘the lame and the blind,’ who are hated by David’s soul.” Therefore it is said, “The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.” 9 And David lived in the stronghold and called it the city of David. And David built the city all around from the Millo inward.**
- B. If you’re like me, verse eight is a bit confusing. Was David literally saying he hated the lame and the blind? H.A. Hoffner brings some needed clarity to the translation of the Hebrew text,
- C. **“... the Jebusites had boasted that, because of the steep cliffs surrounding three sides of their city and the walls on their tops, even lame and blind**

men could repulse David's attack. If Borowski is right that blind and lame individuals were made to live on the outskirts of cities, then the Jebusite boast was that David and his men would not even penetrate the outermost layer of their city's defense system."¹

- D. Therefore, David was in no way saying he hated the lame and blind, but rather, it was a sarcastic response to the arrogant boast of the Jebusites that David couldn't even get past the lame and blind that lived outside the city walls. The reason centuries of Israelite warriors since Joshua, as well as the Philistines, had never conquered Jerusalem was because it was so hard to defeat! But God had anointed David to do what he was doing, and as such, David was able to lead the Israelites to do what nobody in that part of the world would have imagined could be done—defeat the Jebusites and take Jerusalem.
- E. David not only had a newly united Kingdom but also a city that was such a strategically located citadel of such strength that foreign invaders would likely not consider invading it.

This led to the third new thing David got, which we can all appreciate.

(3) David was given a new house. (5:10-12)

- A. **10 And David became greater and greater, for the LORD, the God of hosts, was with him. 11 And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, also carpenters and masons who built David a house. 12 And David knew that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel.**
- B. A united Israel behind a strong, highly respected leader, who was now ruling from a city most considered too dangerous to attempt to conquer, immediately garnered the attention of the king of Tyre. The Phoenician king, King Hiram, wanted to get in good with David as quickly as possible, not only to influence David not to attack him but also to form an alliance with this now stable, strong, and united nation in the region that would financially benefit his sea trading kingdom.
- C. "The cedar logs from Phoenicia (1 Kgs 5:6–10; 6:9–10; 9:11; 1 Chr 22:4; 2 Chr 2:3, 8) were ideally suited for building a palace or temple. They were more resistant to rot than other types of Middle Eastern woods, and they emitted a pleasant fragrance. They were probably tied together in rafts and floated down the Mediterranean coast to Joppa, from where they would be transported overland to Jerusalem (1 Kgs 5:8–9; Ezra 3:7). Also at some later time, the Phoenician monarch supplied David and Solomon with skilled workers such as

¹ Hoffner, H. A., Jr. (2015). [1 & 2 Samuel](#) (Vol. 2, pp. 243–249). Lexham Press.

carpenters and stonemasons (cf. also 2 Kgs 12:11–12; 1 Chr 22:15), which were not available in large numbers in Israel (cf. 1 Kgs 5:6, 18).”²

This led to the fourth new thing David got; something we should NOT aspire to get in the way David got it!

(4) David formed a newer and bigger family. (5:13-15)

A. 13 And David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he came from Hebron, and more sons and daughters were born to David. 14 And these are the names of those who were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, 15 Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, 16 Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

B. This is actually not a good thing. Despite being the custom of the time for a king to have a harem and produce lots of offspring through that harem, it was still ungodly and foolish. The following scholars shed some important light on this reality:

1. “One sign of such elevation in the ancient Near Eastern world was the acquisition of a large harem. Though David’s action in this respect cannot be defended and eventually brought him untold sorrow, he nonetheless followed the prevailing custom.”³
2. “David was a polygamist, in open contradiction of the law of God (Deuteronomy 17:17). This was no doubt in part a compromise with the surrounding polygamous cultures and the practice of taking wives to seal international treaties (1 Kings 11:1–3). But that is not the whole story. David had a wandering eye and a problem with unhallowed desire. It is clear that the acquisition of many wives did not make him more faithful to those he already had. As Matthew Henry puts it, ‘Men that have once broken the fence will wander endlessly.’ Nevertheless, David was God’s man. David was assured of this in his own heart (5:12). He also knew that God had not established his kingdom for David’s sake, but ‘for the sake of his people Israel’. The Lord’s purpose is redemptive, not merely political, and certainly not merely to exalt one man as a monarch.”⁴

This led to the fifth new thing David got, and it was long overdue!

(5) David conquered the Philistines and earned a new level of respect for Israel in the region. (5:17-25)

² Hoffner, H. A., Jr. (2015). *1 & 2 Samuel* (Vol. 2, pp. 243–249). Lexham Press.

³ Merrill, E. H. (1985). *2 Samuel*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, pp. 461–463). Victor Books.

⁴ Keddie, G. J. (1990). *Triumph of the King: The Message of 2 Samuel* (pp. 40–41). Evangelical Press.

- A. Now, remember, at one point, David had the Philistine King fooled into believing he was attacking Jewish cities. King Achish was so convinced of David's loyalty that he even gave David a city called Ziklag, but there's no doubt that by this point, he had discovered that David had been deceiving him. David never attacked any Jewish town or city. Instead, he had been raiding the enemies of Israel in the region and, as such, not only strengthening his own army but also strengthening Israel's position in the region. Add to that, before Saul ran off David, David had commanded Saul's armies into battle and killed tens of thousands of Philistines (1 Samuel 18:7). Therefore, to no surprise, the Philistines immediately attacked David, and, despite David's past success against the Philistines, likely did so with complete confidence because the last big war with Israel resulted in the death of King Saul. With that in mind, here's what happened,
- B. **17 When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David. But David heard of it and went down to the stronghold. 18 Now the Philistines had come and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim. 19 And David inquired of the LORD, "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 And David came to Baal-perazim, and David defeated them there. And he said, "The LORD has burst through my enemies before me like a bursting flood." Therefore the name of that place is called Baal-perazim. 21 And the Philistines left their idols there, and David and his men carried them away. 22 And the Philistines came up yet again and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim. 23 And when David inquired of the LORD, he said, "You shall not go up; go around to their rear, and come against them opposite the balsam trees. 24 And when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then rouse yourself, for then the LORD has gone out before you to strike down the army of the Philistines." 25 And David did as the LORD commanded him, and struck down the Philistines from Geba to Gezer.**
- C. Right out of the gate, in all the newness of David and his newly unified Kingdom, God demonstrated that He had chosen and anointed David for this task. But it was more than that. The beatdown the Israelites gave the Philistines should have proven to Israel that if they obeyed the Mosaic Law, the unique Covenant that God made with Israel through Moses, then He would prosper them in the exact way He said he would! Moses wrote,
- D. **1 "And if you faithfully obey the voice of the LORD your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. 2 And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the LORD**

your God. 3 Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field. (Deuteronomy 28:1-3)

And this is where I want us to leave Samuel and go to where Samuel and the rest of the Old Testament point us—Christ and the greater covenant He made with us for a better life in a greater Kingdom! But before I do, let me read you an important quote from Gordon Keddie’s commentary on 2 Samuel,

“We should be careful to resist the temptation to find applications to Christ in every detail. And we should not conclude that David himself was conscious at this time of any symbolism or typological significance in his actions or in the sequence of events. All we may say is that as David becomes King of Israel, we, with New Testament hindsight and the perspective of the prophets, are led to meditate upon the ultimate goal of history and redemption—the enthronement of the risen Saviour, Jesus Christ, as the mediatorial King for his people.”⁵

Therefore, as I meditated on the newness of all that God was forming for Israel as He raised up David as King, I was not only reminded of the newness they must have all felt in their opportunity to experience the blessings God promised them through the covenant He made with Moses, but more importantly, I was reminded of the newness we have in Christ and all the opportunities that newness gives us to experience an even greater life based on an even greater covenant—the New Covenant!

In speaking of this New Covenant in Christ, Paul wrote to the believers in Corinth and proclaimed,

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

But what’s new about us? I certainly didn’t look any different after I gave my life to Christ. So what was Paul talking about in being a new creation in Christ, and is it like all the other new stuff we get in life?

The following is a sampling of three New Testament passages that point us to the unique greatness of the newness we have in Christ and His covenant. The first passage is Romans 5:1, 10-11.

(1) 1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ... 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. 11 More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. (Romans 5:1, 10-11)

⁵ Keddie, G. J. (1990). *Triumph of the King: The Message of 2 Samuel* (p. 35). Evangelical Press.

- A. **All in Christ have been given new standing with God—we who were enemies of God have been brought into a permanent peaceful relationship with Him.**
- B. Have you ever felt like God hates you or that God is out to get you? Have you ever felt that way because you were fully aware of your own sin? Well, no matter the reason, if you are in Christ, you no longer have any reason to feel that way ever again. Before being in Christ, you were under the condemnation of God, but the blood of Jesus paid the penalty of your sin, and now there is no wrath of God left for you! Jesus paid it all for you, so much so that God is forever at peace with you! Because of Jesus, you have a new and glorious permanent standing with God as His fully favored sons and daughters!

The second passage is Ephesians 2:19-22,

(2) 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:19-22)

- A. **All in Christ have been given new citizenship and family. We were citizens of a world under God’s condemnation, but now we are permanent citizens of His Kingdom and perfectly united in it as brothers and sisters!**
- B. I love being a citizen of the United States, in fact, I’m very proud of it. I know what it costs for me to have it. But, the United States, as good as it may be in comparison to all the other countries on the planet, is a nation under the judgment of God and will cease to exist when Christ returns! Christ is not coming for the United States; He’s coming back for all who are in Him, His church, which is comprised of people from every tribe and tongue!
- C. So, as proud as I am to be an American, I know this citizenship can only get me so far. The citizenship that defines me is not formed by the Constitution but by the Cross, and it will have no end! Furthermore, I’m not a citizen of a kingdom with random people, but rather people who are now my brothers and sisters—literally! Christ has adopted and given us His Spirit so that we all come into the family the same way (His grace!), and we are made into the same image—Christ! We are bound together for all eternity not based on our skill sets or achievements but rather, as those who were undeserving to be in God’s family; we are bound together by nothing less than Jesus Christ and His righteousness!

The third passage is Colossians 3:1-10,

(3) 1 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. 5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 On account of these the wrath of God is coming. 7 In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. 8 But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. (Colossians 3:1-10)

- A. All in Christ have been given a new expectation for life and living. We who once rationalized sin and the life it created are now being driven to run to something more—His life and holiness!**
- B.** Notice that in verse nine, Paul said this new self is “being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator,” meaning the experience of salvation isn’t just something that happened one Sunday AM in a church service or driving down the road listening to songs about Jesus, but it started that day.
- C.** The new thing that Christ started in you the day He saved you continues to be renewed by Him in you as He changes all that we are into all that He is, as He sets us free from our sinful ways and thinking to walk and live in His righteousness and holiness; as He sets us free from our inability to love and be loved, to instead know His love and experience it in such new ways that it continually grows our ability to love and receive love like we never could before!

Challenge: How much of your life’s energy is being spent trying to find newness in the things of this world instead of the newness you have in Christ that is unlike anything this world has to offer?

All the new things we get in this world, as awesome as they may be, don’t compare to what we have in Christ! As awesome as it was to get a new job in 2002 as the pastor of this church, pastoring a church doesn’t compare to the life we have in Christ. I know that sounds weird, given the church is a gathering of all who are new in Christ. However, all of us who are new in Christ, including myself, are still learning to live in the newness of what we have in Christ instead of the old self we used to be. As such, the optimism that pastoring is the perfect job wears off really quickly as we all demonstrate our old selves to one another! The optimism of my newness about coming to pastor this church took a hit before I could even get through my first week! It’s why pastors who find their joy in ministry can’t stay in a church long enough to truly lead it anywhere different than where they found it. When the joy of the newness of the ministry wears off, they move on because the newness they are chasing is not the continual newness of a relationship with Christ but the newness of a career that just so happens to be associated with Christ.

So, listen, the only way for the optimism of the newness found in the life of Christ to wear off is for us to stop investing our mental and emotional energy into what we have in Christ! If we go back to our old self, we will only experience what the old life has to offer, but if we live in the newness of Christ, that newness is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading! Peter wrote,

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter 1:3-5)