International Bible Lesson
International Bible Study Commentary
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A Prince and A King
2 Samuel 5:1-12

"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'" (2 Samuel 5:2—ESV).

When Samuel anointed David as king, we learned that "The Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from that day forward" (1 Samuel 16:13). Despite how his brothers treated David and how often King Saul tried to kill him, the Spirit of the LORD saved him and helped him face a multitude of threats and even write Psalms of praise to God. He even wrote our beloved 23rd Psalm, "The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want." He knew what true shepherds did for their sheep.

After King Saul died, the people of Israel recognized that David should be their next king. They knew that even though Saul was their king, David had been the one who truly led them and the army of Israel to the glory of God. They also knew that David would lead them like a shepherd who cares for his flock. He would unselfishly help them meet their real needs. He had risked his life repeatedly to save them from their enemies, and he did not mistreat others. They saw his heart and knew that the Spirit of God was leading him. Furthermore, they had learned from experience that no one should ever or could ever replace the LORD as their true King! They knew that David would help them stay true to the LORD, for they had heard and perhaps read some of his Psalms. David would see himself as "a prince" over Israel and help them keep looking to the LORD as their "true King."

The Old Testament shows how "the LORD, the God of hosts" was with David (2 Samuel 5:10). David knew from the Spirit in him and his experiences that "the LORD had established him king over Israel and had exalted him" for the sake of "his people Israel," and not for selfish gain (2 Samuel 5:12). Likewise, we know from Psalm 23:3 why the LORD led David. And by grace through faith in Him, Jesus Christ also leads us in paths of righteousness "for His name's sake."

Remember that David also wrote of the LORD and the coming Lord Jesus Christ in Psalm 110:1, "The LORD says to my Lord: 'Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.'" In Matthew 22:41-46, Mark 12:35-37, and Luke 20:41-44, Jesus applied David's verse to himself and asked the people how David could call the Messiah his Lord if the Messiah was also David's son.

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