

## ***Session 2 Five Prophetic Seasons in David's Training***

### **INTRODUCTION**

This is the five seasons, or actually, the five prophetic seasons in God's training strategy for leaders or ministries. The life of David, the seventy years of David's life—he was king for forty years—is broken down into five very significant seasons. In this pattern of David's life, we understand the prophetic seasons through which God takes us, and the reasons He takes us through them. Which is to bring us to a place of training and maturity in leadership. As I say in the notes, each of these five prophetic seasons are related to five different cities of David's life: Bethlehem, Gibeah, Adullam, Hebron, and Jerusalem. Each one of these cities, again, is related to a specific, very strategic thing that God is training in David's life. Not that there's only one; there's actually a manifold purpose of God in each one of those seasons. There are many facets to what God wants in each season, but there's a primary thought or two that God wants to bring forth in that season.

### **PROPHETIC SEASON ONE: THE BETHLEHEM YEARS**

In the first season, in the Bethlehem years, what the Lord wants David to do as he begins his journey is to gaze on the beauty of the Lord. I believe that David wrote Psalm 19 when he was looking at creation. He saw the beauty of the Lord in creation, as revealed in the written Word of God. It's in those early days where the Lord is beginning to draw David into the relationship of being a man after God's own heart. God wants David to derive his meaning in life from being loved by God and being a lover of God. There's a phrase that I've said for some time now: that I'm loved and I'm a lover, therefore I'm successful. That's a phrase I've worked out from the life of David and from the life of the apostle John, putting together different principles and episodes in their various lives. That's the briefest way in which I can say it: that God wants us to derive our primary identity from spiritual truths. He wants our primary identity to be a spiritual identity of who we are in the Lord. As we'll see in Psalm 19, that's what He's establishing in the Bethlehem years as He reveals the beauty of creation, as He reveals the beauty of God in the Logos, the Word of God, or the Torah, in David's setting. When we know that we're loved and that we're lovers of God, that that's who we are, though we struggle, we're not hopeless hypocrites. We are, in fact, lovers of God. In the midst of our struggle, when the enemy calls us hypocrites and failures or tries to define us by our sins and by our shortcomings, we say no. We define our self by the cry in our spirit to be a lover of God. One of them is how God feels about us. The second one is about how we live before God. I may stumble and fall, but at the core of my being, the cry of my heart is to be a lover of God and that's what defines me. I'm not defined by my shortcomings; I'm defined by the cry in my spirit back to God. That's the primary identity that God wants to build into David's life. That's the primary identity that God wants to build into your life in the early days of your spiritual life. It's the thing that most believers don't typically really experience in the early days. They don't see the beauty of the Lord in the natural arena of life, and they don't see the beauty of the Lord in the revealed Word of God; therefore they can't see the beauty of the grace of God in their own lives and who they are as a lover of God. We're loved and we're lovely to God. We're loved and we're lovely, therefore we're successful. That's really how it boils down emotionally. God wants to develop this in David's life.

### **THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY IDENTITIES**

God has ordained that we have a primary identity which is our spiritual identity, what we look like to God. It's also true that we have a secondary identity, our natural identity, what we look like to people. But our primary identity is what we look like to God. Our secondary identity, our natural identity, is what we look like to people. That's like the arena of our finances, for example. If we have a lot of money, we look good to people. It's the

arena of our skills and abilities. If we're really talented or gifted in a particular area, whether you're brilliant in some intellectual skill of life or whether your hands are skilled in some craft or some artistic ability, it doesn't really matter. People typically derive their meaning and their identity by their skills, whether they're mental or physical skills: whether they're a great athlete or a great singer, whether they can build things really well, whether they can design things really well, whether they can figure things out really smartly, they define their life and their value by their skills. Others define their life and their value by their physical conditioning: if they have really pretty looks, or the condition of their body, or if they're a great athlete. Others by their relationships: if they hang around with the rich and the famous, then they derive a certain meaning by hanging around with the "successful" people. There are many ways that we derive our primary identity from our secondary identities, and those secondary identities are really a part of our life. We can't repent from them having some impact on us. God just wants them to be secondary, that's all. He wants us to be successful because of the fact that He loves us and because of who He is and what we are to Him. That's where He wants our identity to lie.

### **HOW DO YOU DEFINE WHAT MAKES YOUR LIFE SUCCESSFUL?**

What I mean by deriving our identity is how we define why we're successful. That's what I mean by our identity. What definition are you using at the end of the day, when you can finally lie in bed and say, "Yes, I'm successful"? That's what I mean by your identity. However you answer, that's the way you identify your life. It's the way you derive your value, your meaning, and your purpose. I'm using those words somewhat synonymously; people conclude that they're successful because of the money, because of the gifts, because of their physical condition, because of the relationships they have with other people, because of the position they have in the company or the ministry. If those things are favorable in the natural value system, then they feel successful, but that's a lie. You're successful in the most dynamic absolute sense of the word because He loves you, because you're the object of His love and you said yes to it and because there has been an emerging, budding impulse of your heart by the Spirit of God. You're a lover of God; You want to love Him back. Therefore the thief on the cross is one of the most successful human beings of all history. He's one of that remnant, that billion or so from all history, of the ten or twenty billion people who have ever lived. He's one of the very small remnant of the human race that accepted the free love of God in the most embryonic way, but he did bring forth that beginning bud of love in his heart back to God. He steps over the line of physical death, awakens in paradise, and understands that he's a king. He says, "No one ever told me that I was a king and a bride. I'm a queen as well." He's over all the angels; he's crowned in glory before God forever and forever. He said yes to the love of God and yes to becoming a lover of God in the most embryonic way. He gazed at the beauty of the Lord and in a small way responded to the out-working of that beauty in his own life. That's what makes us successful.

### **DAVID WILL NEVER BE A SAFE KING UNTIL HIS IDENTITY IS IN THE LORD**

The Lord knows that David will never be a safe king, a safe leader until his identity is in the Lord and not in what he does. We're going to find throughout his life the most remarkable thing: David derives his meaning and value by how God feels about him, the truth of God and what he looks like to God. What God feels about him, what he looks like to God, and how he responds to God—that's where he's going to derive the essence of what his life is about. His whole kingdom is being threatened and taken away from him in the treachery of his son Absalom. He says, "I don't care. Let him have it. I'm the Lord's. I didn't really want to be king. That really wasn't what I signed up for. I gazed on the beauty of the Lord. I began a journey in my youth gazing at the stars in Psalm 19 as a young shepherd boy. I was captured by the beauty of creation, the beauty of the Word of God, the little that I knew, and I said, 'That's what I am and that's what I want more of.'" All the days of his life that's what he has sought. That's what he wanted in the past and in the present (Ps. 27:4).

### **ENTHRALLING DAVID'S HEART EARLY ON WITH THE RAVISHING BEAUTY OF GOD**

In the Bethlehem days, there are a number of things that happened in those first seasons. The Lord is working on David and revealing the beauty of the Lord to David, revealing David's beauty and David's loveliness back to God; capturing David's heart, entralling David with God and with understanding. David began to understand that God was enthralled with him. David had a sense of well-being and fulfillment on the inside of himself before anything ever happened. He was already successful before he began any of the seasons. That's what the Lord's plan was.

### **LEARNING TO BE FAITHFUL IN THE DAY OF SMALL BEGINNINGS**

In those early days, there are a number of things the Lord puts in front of you. One thing that happens: He tests you. He wants you to be faithful in the midst of the mundane. People all imagine being faithful when they stand before thousands or administrate millions. They somehow imagine that one day they'll wake up faithful before thousands of people and overseeing millions of dollars and great influence, but between now and then all this other stuff is boring and besides, no one is looking anyway. What does it matter? The Lord wants us to derive our identity, our pleasure in life, from being loved and a lover so that the mundane doesn't break us; so that the mundane doesn't cause us to lose our way before the Lord, because we actually have pleasure. We actually have pleasure. The greatest way you can do the mundane without complaint overtaking your heart is when you're doing it for Him, with Him, and unto Him. That's what the great servants of the Lord have all found through history: the ability to commune with God in the mundanity of life, the boring things that no one gives them any credit or attention for doing. No one ever notices them and they don't care because their reward is already pulsating through their heart. They're feeling the reward day by day. David was out taking care of the sheep. You know what? Those who took care of the sheep were the very lowest on the scale. The servants took care of the sheep, because you had to be out in the elements. It got cold, hot, and wet, and you were stuck out there all by yourself. Wild animals came up and, "Well, we lost that guy when the animals came." The main guys didn't do the shepherding stuff. They didn't go out there with the sheep, because the elements were too intense. Imagine someone saying, "You're in charge of the lawn, but you're going to stay outside for seven years." Literally, that's what the shepherds did. This is a very, very powerful thing. David was so low on the economy of his family. This isn't a joke. This is real. We might look at some of this next week as well.

### **DAVID IS CHOSEN FROM AMONG THE SHEEPFOLD TO RULE HIS BRETHREN**

When Samuel the prophet comes to little Bethlehem, there are only 300 people in the town. Samuel is the man of God; in fact, the most famous man of God in the known world at that time was Samuel. He was known all over Israel and even in the nations beyond. He spoke and earthquakes came. Storms came at his word. The mystique around Samuel was amazing. He was the most famous spiritual leader, the man closest to God. The man closest to Moses in that generation comes to visit their house. He says, "I want all your sons here. The Lord has sent me."

Jesse, the father, won't even let David come. The seven brothers come and David is the eighth and he's not invited. Samuel the prophet looks at each of the seven brothers and wants to anoint one of them king. As most of you know the story in 1 Samuel 16, he plans to anoint the first one and the Lord says, "No." So he goes to the second, and the Lord says, "No." Likewise with the third one. Samuel says, "Do you have any other sons?"

Jesse says, "Well, technically yes, but I mean, it's David."

They all roll their eyes. "No, you're Samuel; this is David."

Samuel says, "Well, bring the kid in here."

David stands before him and the Lord says, "That's the one."

When Samuel looks into David's eyes, he's not looking at a man longing for a destiny. He's looking into the eyes of the only man in that whole group who actually enjoys where he is; the only one who's settled and at peace, and that's the man he anoints to be king. He said, "You're the only one who doesn't care about it, because you're already lost in something else. You're the one that God has chosen. You know a little of what God looks like. You know a little of what you look like to God. Therefore you can tend sheep with a psalm in your heart, because the sheep aren't what you're doing. You're singing when you're out there. You're interacting with the God of the universe, the God of Psalm 19." I believe he wrote Psalm 19 at that season of his life.

### **THERE'S NO CIRCUMSTANCE THAT CAN SATISFY THE CRAVING OF YOUR HEART**

Being faithful in the mundane. Do you know why the mundane crucifies us? Because there's no pleasure in it. We can't find God in the present tense, so we have to find God in novelty: more money, more power, more cool people, more exciting circumstances, and finally that craving for rest and pleasure and peace. The Lord says, "You know what? You're not going to find it in any of those things. You're going to find it in Me." That's technically what Moses describes in Psalm 90:1: "The Lord is my dwelling place" (paraphrased). David was the only one who, when Samuel looked into his eyes, was actually at rest. He was the only one actually enjoying the Lord, the only one who actually had a song in his heart, and he had the most difficult circumstances of anyone. Everyone else was looking for some novelty to prop them up to take the pain away from the boredom and the mundanity of their life, which was really an indication of their spiritual boredom. Our boredom in life is spiritual boredom. We think our boredom in life means we need to meet some more cool people, have some more money to spend or oversee, have more anointing to work with. But our boredom at its very core is spiritual. It's with God. When the man or woman is enthralled with God, the issue before them isn't the big issue. That's what's going on in David's life: He's faithful in the mundane, enjoying the Lord in the mundane; therefore the mundane isn't a burden to him. I've had times in my life where I touched this and lose this and touched this and lose this. I've had times in the mundane where I could so enjoy the Lord, and then other times where even the exciting was tormenting, because I couldn't connect with the Lord in the way that I did even in the other seasons. There's no circumstance that can satisfy the craving of your heart made for God. We're always looking. Most people in the Church think it's in the ministry somewhere. It's in the anointed people thinking something good and anointed about you. That's really never going to take away the cry of your heart. I know x amount of anointed men out there. Some of them are the most spiritually bored, absolutely broken inside, discontented, angry people. I'm talking about some famous people. I know there's only one place that God does this in David's life. He finds the song in the secret place. It doesn't matter what he's doing.

### **THE TIME OF THE GIVING OF PROPHETIC PROMISES**

The second aspect of the Bethlehem season is that this is the time when the prophetic promises were given. It's the time when the prophetic promises were given. Faithfulness was required in the mundane, or the ability to enjoy God in the mundane is a better way to say it. Samuel comes in and says, "You're going to have this impact, but God doesn't want your identity to rest in that promise. You're not going to be successful and happy because of these promises of being king. If you're not already successful and not already happy, being king will torment you and it will torment the nation." That's what the Lord was telling David. That's the essence of it when you put the various psalms together. Like I said, it's amazing. David is approximately seventeen years

old. He's not king over all Israel. He won't be king for twenty more years. David didn't know that. No one knew that.

### **ESTABLISH YOUR IDENTITY NOW IN BEING LOVED AND A LOVER**

Season number one: Establish your identity in being loved and a lover, and in the ability to enjoy God in the mundane. When the promises come, those promises can torment you, not just excite you. I've been tormented by promises at times and not empowered with hope. How many of you know that hope deferred makes the heart sick? I've had some hopes where it ended up that the expectations weren't right. I didn't steward it right in the understanding of it, and my heart was in one direction and I ended up with a sick heart. The Lord says through that sickness of heart, "I allowed you to be sick of heart because I want you to see that your enjoyment is in what you're going to do one day and not in Me, and I want it in Me, not in what you think you're going to do one day. Mike, I want you to enjoy Me regardless of what you do. That's the key. I let you be heartsick because I want you to discover the greatest thing in life: I'm enjoyable right now if you want Me to be."

"Oh, but Lord, when the revival..."

The Lord says, "That revival is really not going to satisfy you like you think it is. I'll satisfy you today as much as I can; then give yourself to Me. See My beauty in creation and see My beauty in My Word." The natural revelation of creation and in the spiritual revelation of the Word of God, the beauty of the Lord (Ps. 19), is what I believe God gave David in that season. Again, we'll look at that next week.

### **PROPHETIC SEASON TWO: THE GIBEAH YEARS**

City number two: Gibeah. Gibeah is the capital at that time. It's where Saul, the president of the nation, lives. It's where the prime minister lives. Gibeah; it's Washington, D.C. in our context. Gibeah: David's identity is strengthened and tested and tested by early promotion. We know what happens in 1 Samuel 17, and we'll look at it in a lot more detail. David stands before Goliath. We know that Goliath is a children's church story but beloved, it's more than a children's church story. It's one of the most dramatic military crises answered in a miraculous way in the history of the world, in all human history. Israel is going to be annihilated. Their national existence is in the balance. This is for real. This is like Israel right now and all the Arab nations. They're going to be annihilated. Things aren't going well under Saul. He's already been rebuked on two separate occasions. The favor of the Lord has left him and a demon is on him right now. Saul is demonized. The nation is in trouble. A nation led by a demonized leader is in big trouble, and that's where most of the nations of the earth are. It's trouble. They don't think rightly under pressure. They think crazy thoughts that wreck people's lives when they get under pressure and they have demons leaning on them. Israel is in trouble and Saul is absolutely scared to death. Saul has lost all the courage that was given him by the Spirit in the early years. The Philistines line up on one side of the valley, and the Israeli army lines up on the other side. The army of Israel is convinced they're going to lose, and they are going to lose. Here's what the Philistines will do: The Philistines have an accumulated rage against Israel that you can't imagine. They're going to kill the men; they're going to rape the women and enslave the children for life after this battle. This is serious. This isn't a small thing.

### **GOD ALLOWS YOU TO KILL THE LION AND THE BEAR BEFORE YOU FACE THE GIANT**

David comes there to visit his older brothers who are in the military and to bring them some bread and food. He hears this Goliath taunting the army of Israel. The Spirit of the Lord has been on David since Samuel anointed him, and a number of great things have happened. The Spirit of the Lord has been on him. It's not that David suddenly got an emotion of courage; the Spirit of the Lord was on him. This was a divine opportunity, a divine

setup. This was a sovereign setup. This wasn't just his natural, everyday courage. This was a Spirit-empowered act of courage. As he says in 1 Samuel 17, he killed the lion and the bear two other times. This is after the anointing is on him. A lion comes up and grabs a little lamb. David walks up to the lion as a sixteen- or seventeen-year-old young man and kills it. The Spirit of God is on this young man. This is after the anointing. Then a bear comes and he takes the bear out. The reason this happened is that God was building confidence, which is a spiritual principle. I don't want to go on a bunny trail, but God allowed you to kill the lion and the bear before you faced the giant. God says, "I'm going to give you a few little confidence boosters in the Spirit before you face Goliath and the extermination of the nation of Israel." This isn't just a children's church story. This is a serious political and military crisis in the history of Israel.

### **NATIONWIDE ADULATION IS DAVID'S FOR SLAYING THE PHILISTINE GIANT**

David stands there and says, "Guys, the same Spirit is on me." He didn't say it that way, but that's what we understand is happening. He says, "It's here, guys. The Lord is with me. The Lord is with me. I'm not afraid of that man at all."

Some of his brothers rebuke him; they say, "David, you're just an arrogant, insolent, proud young man because Samuel prayed for you and you're just filled with pride."

He says, "Well, I don't know about all that, but I'm going after that giant."

I'm getting to the story ahead of time. Here's the point. Let's skip the story. He defeats the giant. The nation is so overwhelmed with joy that the calamity is over. It was a stunning supernatural victory. In the streets they were literally singing songs about David. He was on the front cover of *USA Today*. He moved to Washington, D.C. He moved to Gibeah. He moved to the king's court. He literally moved to the White House in our context. He was a seventeen-year-old boy. It says all the young virgins of Israel were singing songs about David. Imagine how it would go to the head of an eighteen-year old man when all the girls in the land were singing songs about him. He moves in with the president; he's over all his brothers. He's one of the main commanders in the army. He's over a thousand now and he's only eighteen years old. He's over 1,000 soldiers who have been in the army for years. The king loves him. The king sees no wrong in David. The king says, "I would love you to marry my daughter." David's identity is being tested through early promotion.

### **GOD GRANTS YOU EARLY PROMOTIONS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR IDENTITY**

Here is what David didn't know, and this is absolutely the pattern of God in the Scripture. God gives early promotions to strengthen your identity and He's going to take that sphere of promotion away to strengthen you again. There's a verse in Proverbs that says, "A man is tested according to the praise that is given to him" (Prov. 27:21). In other words, there's a season in your life where everyone says you're incredible. "You're incredible. You're incredible!" The Lord says, "I am testing your heart right now, because if you get your identity, your sense of value, importance and meaning from those statements, you're going to end up corrupted in a few years."

Boy, I tell you, the girls were singing, there were over a thousand soldiers under him, the national calamity was averted, and David says, "This is all fun, but I love the Lord. I'm not into this. I don't mind doing it, because it's the will of God, but I'm loved and I'm a lover; that's why I'm successful. I'm enjoying something that's bigger than headlines. Headlines aren't what's driving me right now. The headlines will come, the headlines will go." David had no idea they would go so soon. It lasted about four or five years.

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## **FORGING YOUR IDENTITY LIKE IRON IN PREPARATION FOR THE DAY OF ADVERSITY**

I've met so many people in ministry. I've had this experience to some degree in my own ministry where the Lord has given a season of promotion, a season of prosperity. We always think this because we're Westerners; we always think that more is better. We always think that when the curve goes up, it goes up until the end if God likes us. God really liked David and the curve took a sharp downward turn. Westerners only have one comprehension of increase. John the Baptist said, "I must decrease." That's a completely non-Western concept, to decrease with joy in the grace of God. We only think increase is good. But God is interested in David's heart as a voluntary lover increasing. He's interested in his identity becoming fiery and strong like iron in him so that in the future he can be a blessing to the nation. His eighteen to twenty-three seems like David's whole life, but God says, "No, David, you have lots of years ahead of you."

## **GOD CHOSE DAVID FOR THE SAKE OF HIS PEOPLE ISRAEL**

I can't remember where this is, but we'll run by it a number of times because it's prominent in my thinking. But whoever it was, whether it was David or Solomon, said that God chose David for the sake of His people Israel (Ps. 78:70-71). We think God chooses us for us. No, God chooses us for salvation for us and for Him, but He gives us a ministry for others. Most people want this ministry so badly because they want to be happy. God's calling on David was never about David's happiness. God's love affair with David, not his ministry, was about David's happiness. We're pained over our ministry decreasing and excited over it increasing because we imagine, though we never put words to it, that an increased ministry is about our personal happiness. God told David, "Me calling you into the sphere of kingship was never about you. It was about the blessing I would give to people with a man like you in the right place. As a matter of fact, David, I'm going to beat the tar out of you between now and then to get you to a place where I can trust you, because it's about the nation that I care about." We imagine, "The anointing comes so I'll be greater. I'm going to be rich and famous. Finally my mom will know I mattered, I amounted to something! It's going to be great."

The Lord says, "No. You've got the wrong, totally wrong idea about why I just told you I'm going to anoint you."

Ah! It's Proverbs 27:21: "God tests a man according to his praise" (paraphrased). Thank you, I was counting on you. In Gibeah, David finds out he's got prosperity everywhere, but it's only for a moment. How many men and women of God had a moment in the light and started strutting? They started finding that their sense of feeling joy and enjoyment was related to the hour of blessing. The Lord says, "That's never how it was supposed to be."

## **THE ADULLAM YEARS: STRENGTHENED AND TESTED BY ADVERSITY**

David passed the test of early promotion. Suddenly, the Adullam years began. Adullam is a city. There's a cave outside the city called the cave of Adullam. David is operating out of the cave of Adullam for approximately seven years. We don't know exactly if he's twenty-three. That's an approximation. It's close, though.

Here is a man on the cover of *USA Today*, all the girls are singing about him, he lives in the king's house, and now he's being chased from cave to cave for seven years. Beloved, I'm not talking about losing their jobs for three months. We're talking seven years with no income. For seven years, 3,000 of the choice soldiers of Israel were given one commission: "Forget fighting the enemies of Israel. Let the other hundred thousand fight them. You 3,000, you assassinate David. That's your only mission, 3,000 against 1. Go for it. The nation isn't that big. It's only about a hundred miles by thirty. Go for it. Kill him, anywhere. Go for it. I'll pay you extra." So for

seven years, 3,000 men are chasing David. We look at some of David's compromises, and I mean, my goodness, the man has some serious pressure. In the Adullam years, David's identity is strengthened and tested by adversity. It's a very different thing.

### **COMFORT IN THE MIDST OF ADVERSITY: REALIGNING YOUR MIND WITH ONE TRUTH**

Prosperity and adversity are very, very different. Mundanity is very different from early promotion. Early promotion is very different from adversity. Three completely different kinds of wind are blowing over his garden, if you will. The only way David can obtain comfort is to realign his heart. He has to say before the Lord, "Lord this pain is intense. Everyone is against me." I mean, his brothers, his family; it was intense on every level. They were still in Saul's army. David was mocked. He tells us in Psalm 69, "I have become a reproach to my family and all my friends because of my zeal for God" (Ps. 68:8-9, paraphrased). "My love for God has driven me to the place where my friends and family have completely written me off as being a fool and filled with pride," he says, "but I know it's real." David only got into trouble because he was doing the will of God with zeal, guilelessly doing the will of God. The only place you can find comfort in adversity is through realigning your mind with one truth.

Here is what adversity is: "Oh, I have all this pain; I've got to get it fixed," whether it's relational, economic, physical, whether it's your anointing, whether it's your loss of favor. Your heart is saying, "Ouch, pain, pain." You say, "How can I recover the enjoyment of the early years?" Then you ask the big question; you have to go to the big picture: "Why am I living on planet earth? What is life about?" The uncreated, transcendent God, a God filled with beauty, loves me. He likes me. He is ravished for me. I love Him and it feels so right to love Him. I'm loved and I'm a lover, therefore I'm successful." In adversity he aligns himself, and that becomes like iron forged within his soul. Because of that reality, his identity is being strengthened like iron in him. It's like the fire being melted together, God's heart and his heart under the fire. David comes to adversity. Yes, he blows it a number of times, but he always comes back to that center, every time he has the chance to obtain his identity by some other definition of success apart from the fact of enjoying the Lord.

### **PROPHETIC SEASON FOUR: THE INTERMEDIARY HEBRON YEARS**

The Hebron years; this is even more difficult than the others. They're all so different. That's why they're so significant, the Hebron years. After seven years of wandering in the wilderness, Adullam—he's not always in the cave; he's in Ziklag for sixteen months; I'm just using the cave of Adullam as a center point of that season—but can you imagine how tired you would be after seven years of doing this? I mean, you were in the palace for five years. You've been running for seven. The promises are wearing on him day and night. He's thinking, "You know, Lord, it's not really about being king. It's about being Yours. All the days of my life I have sought the beauty of the Lord." He said, "This thing I've done." He did it in the past and he set his heart to continue in the future in the beauty of the Lord. Finally, Saul dies when he's thirty. This is the most amazing story, which we'll look at in more detail. Saul dies. David now has 600 soldiers and their families that have joined themselves to David—600 of them. They've heard the promises for years. David is going to be king over all twelve tribes, and by the power of God he's going to defeat all the nations. It all really happens. These 600 men really get their identity from David's promises. They're not really connecting to the Lord in the same way David is. Some of them do, because some of them become mighty men of David, mighty men in the Lord, but a good handful of them, under the pressure of testing, on two separate occasions when Saul was at the end of David's spear, said, "David, kill him. The prophecy said God would deliver you. What do you want? This is the prophecy. Kill the man."

David said, "I can't kill him. He's the anointed of the Lord."

"He's demonized. God brought you there."

He says, "No. God will have to kill him. I won't kill him. I won't kill him."

His men were quoting all the prophecies. "Kill him. Kill him. This is the hour of your deliverance."

We'll go through those stories in some detail. Finally, God kills Saul. That's what the Scripture says. God killed him. Yes it was in a battle, the Battle of Mount Gilboa, but it's God who killed him. God said, "Finally, your seminary is over. I have trained you in the most skillful, effective way. Under a demonized man I have trained you deliberately. Now it's over. You've graduated."

Now the men say, "Well, you're king. Let's do it."

### **DAVID BECOMES KING OVER ONE-TWELFTH OF THE LAND FOR A SEASON**

I can see it now in 2 Samuel. Let's look at it: 2 Samuel 2:1. David asks the great question. They're all saying, "This is it. Saul's funeral has happened. No one is left." Saul has four sons, by the way. Saul's three sons died in battle. Saul had one other son named Ish-Bosheth, the son of shame. Do you know what Ish-Bosheth's problem was? He didn't like war. He didn't want to go to battle. He said, "Dad, that makes my stomach feel weird when people stick each other with swords. I don't like it." So the three sons went to war and died with the father. The only obstacle for David being king of all Israel is this young man who hates war. He says, "I'm not really made for that kind of stuff." David is the mighty warrior king of Israel and the only obstacle is a man who can't stand blood, seriously.

But the top general, Abner, comes to David. He knew David back in the early days, back in Gibeah. This kind of makes you mad, but it's just how life works. Abner comes to David after Saul gets killed and says, "You know when Samuel prophesied over you?"

David says, "Yes."

He says, "We all believed it the whole time. We know you're the man."

David says, "Well, Abner, that's good, but why were your men trying to kill me?"

He says, "Well, we would lose our jobs if we didn't try to kill you. It wasn't personal. Saul was a really angry man. David, you know he would have killed us! David, we knew you were the anointed of the Lord." They always knew he was the anointed of the Lord. That's an interesting concept, isn't it? Abner told him that at the end, when he was bargaining with him. He says, "We always knew." It was clear to everyone. Ish-Bosheth is the only obstacle and everyone in the twelve tribes knows David is the anointed one, so there's absolutely nothing between him and being king over Israel, nothing, zero. The men are so excited. They say, "David, this is it! This is it!"

David says, "Well, wait a second, guys, you don't understand. I don't really want to be king. I'll be king if I have to be king, but that's not really what I'm about. I'm a poet and I'm a lover. I love the Word of God. I'm

going to die in a few days.” That’s what he says in Psalm 39. He says, “My life is a vapor. I’m going to be gone in a moment. I’m going to be before the God of the universe. I’m lost in love. I’ll be king if I have to be king, but that’s not really what I’m about.”

They say, “David, what are you talking about?”

He says, “Well, I’ll tell you what I’m going to do. I’m going to go have a prayer meeting.”

They say, “Oh no, no, don’t do those prayer meetings, David. Don’t do a prayer meeting.”

David has a prayer meeting and in 2 Samuel 2:1 he asks the Lord, “Should I go up?”

The men say, “Don’t ask that question. What if God says no?”

God says, “Yes, go up. Only go up over one-twelfth, only over Hebron, not over the whole twelve tribes, but only one; take only one tribe, Judah. I don’t want to give you the other eleven tribes right now.”

He comes out of the prayer meeting and says, “Guys, guess what? We’re going up.”

They say, “Oh, praise God.”

He says, “Just over Judah; we’re not going to take the other eleven.”

They say, “But if Ish-Bosheth is the problem, we can take him out today.”

“No, no, that’s not the point. I don’t want to be over the other eleven.”

Abner says, “They already know you’re the anointed. They’ll go with you. They’re political. They’ll buy in, in a minute.”

“No, no, guys, you don’t understand. That’s not what I do. I’m a lover. That’s who I am. I love God. That’s what I’m about. I’m just going to Hebron.”

For seven years he’s only king over one-twelfth of Israel. He’s spent seven years in the desert, seven years being chased. He’s believed these prophecies for fourteen years, and now he has seven more years to go. It sounds like Jacob, doesn’t it? Jacob labored for fourteen years. It sounds like Joseph. “You’re going to be over your brothers!” Then he’s in the pit. Then he’s over Potiphar’s house and then he’s in the pit again. It just keeps going up and down. God is building an identity in His people.

These men say, “For seven years we were with you in Adullam, and we’ve been with you in Hebron for seven years. David, it’s been twenty years now. You’re going to be old one of these days. You’ve got to enter in to your promises.”

David said, "I'm not worried about the promises. God found me in Bethlehem. He had my address then. He can get hold of me in Hebron a lot easier than in Bethlehem. I'm not about being king; I'm about gazing on the beauty of the Lord and seeking the face of God." Psalm 27 is the statement of David's life.

### **PROPHETIC SEASON FIVE: JERUSALEM AT LAST**

Finally Ish-Bosheth dies. Seven years later, David is 37, and at last he goes to Jerusalem. Twenty years have passed since his journey began. He goes to Jerusalem as a man whose identity is in being loved and a lover, a man that's gazing, a man that's captured. He's one of the only safe kings in the whole history of the world, because he knew where his joy was. He knew where his power was. Yes, we know the grievous sin. He wasn't sinless there. But from age thirty-seven to seventy, those thirty-three years, the glory of the Lord touched that nation in victory after victory and strength. People loved the Lord. The tabernacle of David was built and the worship of God filled the land. David couldn't get distracted from it in a major way. Yes, he committed some sins. He counted Israel at the very end in pride, but it wasn't the rule of his life. David wasn't sinless because of this identity, but David was safe as a leader before God's people. He could lead people into this before the Lord, and that's what the book of Psalms is all about. People talk about David being the greatest military leader in history. David was the greatest lover of history; that's what he was. Look at the book of Psalms. The military is fine. But he was a lover of God. That's going to live forever in the heart of God.

Amen. Let's stand.

### **MINISTRY TIME**

Lord, we love You. The Lord wants some of you to get lost in the beauty of the Lord. Again, we're going to look at a number of these psalms one by one and open up some the most glorious things that David saw. I trust that the Lord will touch our hearts with them. They're glorious as they're written in the Psalms.

Lord, we are Yours. God, we want to be a man or a woman with a heart like Yours.

What season are you in right now? Are you in Gibeah? Are you in a time when things are going well? Are you in Hebron, where it's kind of good but not as good as it's supposed to be? Are you in the Adullam years right now, or are you in the Bethlehem years where the promises are just coming and the Lord is just romancing you for the first time? Where are you at? Wherever you're at, I know what the will of God is: that you would find your identity and enjoyment in being loved and being a lover.