

Title: Expanding the borders of the Kingdom
Text: 2 Samuel 8
Theme: The victorious warrior/king
Series: 2 Samuel
Prop Stmtnt: Our King fights for us which means he defeats our enemies.

Read Text:

God made a promise of land to Abraham in Genesis 12.2-3. *"I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."* As part of that promise, God promised land to Abraham and told him in Genesis 15 that the boundaries of this land extend "from the river Egypt to the great river, the river of Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Gergashites and the Jebusites." Some of those nations were replaced by other nations by David's time, but we are familiar with the Jebusites who occupied Jerusalem until David's reign. God promised Abraham that his people of promise would have this land that stretched from the Nile River all the way to the Euphrates River (south to north) and from the Mediterranean Sea to the desert east of the Jordan Valley.

Do you remember how much of that land Abraham actually owned? He only owned a tiny plot he purchased from the Hittites where he buried his wife, Sara. Later Abraham was buried there. His son Isaac and his son Jacob were sojourners and they never quite settled in the land and owned it. In fact, toward the end of Jacob's life, he and his sons and all of his descendants left the land and went to Egypt, where he died and where the children of Israel lived for over 400 years. But the promise was not forgotten. After the exodus from Egypt, the children of Israel eventually made it back to the land of promise, but even then, they did not fully occupy the land. The land promise was partially fulfilled. But God does not partially fulfill his promises. He keeps them completely.

This chapter is a summary of David's successes as a Warrior-King. But, while his battlefield exploits are historic and impressive, this account is both a fulfillment of the promise that God made to Abraham 1,000 years before and it is a preview of the promise that God has made to establish a kingdom for David's greater Son, Jesus who will rule over the entire world as king.

Think of it like this. Israel was the Old Testament display of the Kingdom of God that previewed the Church. The Church is the New Testament display of the Kingdom of God that previews the Kingdom of God that is coming. We are linked with the past even as we point to the future. Already we enjoy an aspect of life as citizens of the Kingdom of Christ that far exceeds what believers in the OT experienced. But not yet do we experience the full manifestation of what is to come. OT was more shadow than substance. The NT is more substance than shadow. The return of Christ will fulfill all of the substance. Faith will be made sight.

What is the kingdom of Christ (kingdom of God)? It has three aspects: 1) a king (Jesus – the King) 2) a dom – people who are defined as his people (in their hearts) who happily live under his rule and 3) a dom – land that is defined. That is why there is a sense in which the kingdom of God is here and it is coming. We have a king who reigns and we are the defined people who are under his reign. But, not yet do we have the land. Therefore, as the New Covenant, (New Testament) people of God, we are in this world, but not of it. We are citizens of the country we live in, but ultimately, we are eternal citizens of the Jesus nation and view our role here as ambassadors for the eternal Kingdom and our congregation as an embassy. We do not have an army, nor weapons and do not fight like that. However, we are in a war. It is not over land, but over who will be the king.

We should understand the OT as pointing to the NT and to beyond. We learn so much about who we are and where we have come from as we study the OT and we can see some things that are similar that help us have a better understanding of our life now. Just as they pointed to the Christ who would come, we point to the Christ who came and is coming again. There are some things that are similar, such as:

1. **The enemies of God hate God and his people.** (8.1-13)

This text records many of David's military victories that took place perhaps over a long period of time. If that is the case then we are to understand this as a summary of those wars. It is also possible that having secured the kingdom and organized and trained his army that David determined to spread the borders of the nation and secure them. That is the plain reading of the account. (MAP) Look at the areas mentioned. Philistines (west) Moab (east), Zobah (north), Syrians (northeast), Edom (southeast). We know in the case of the Philistines that they initiated the war and attacked Israel. I am inclined to believe that these other nations probably attempted to attack Israel to defeat David simply because Satan hates God. He hates God's people and he hates God's plan. He is going to do whatever he can do to incite the enemies of God to seek to destroy what God is doing. That happened then and that is going on now.

a. **We are in a war.**

Jesus said that, "*In the world you will have tribulation.*" (John 16.33a)

These battles were not slam dunks for Israel. Each battle was fraught with difficulty and setbacks and likely times of panic. Psalm 60 was written in response to some of these events where we read of David's anguish at what looks like his entire army was threatened with defeat. This is war and it is hard. In Ephesians 6, we are admonished to put on the entire armor of God because we are in a battle. Paul says that it is not a battle against flesh and blood, but against Satanic schemes, ranks of dark spiritual forces that work through things in this world. Our enemy is not an army from another country, but lies and denials that seek to undermine our belief in God and/or our belief in his goodness. Beloved, at the very least, we have to know that this world is not safe place for our faith. Think about what that means for you. Identify when you are most vulnerable to discouragement, doubt or outright disobedience. Is it when you are

disappointed? Is it when you feeling a little smug and entitled? Is it when you are tired and run down? Lock arms with a brother and sister. Let them know when you are most vulnerable to your internal prosecutor or doubter. Pray for one another and stay connected. We are in a war and our responsibility as members of this church is to look out for one another and we do that by praying for, encouraging one another and sharing God's promises with each other. What is also true...

b. We are surrounded and outnumbered.

Look at the countries that surrounded Israel. Egypt was at a low point as well as some of the other major powers like Assyria. Babylon hadn't come of age yet and wouldn't for a few hundred years. But Israel had a lot of enemies around her. Philistia, Moab, Edom, Ammon, Zobah, and Syria. It looks rather ominous for Israel, but the size of the enemy has never been an issue for God. And David of all people knows this. Chapters 7 and 8 go together. David fights against the enemies of God's people. David experiences victory and wants to make a statement to the world about the greatness of God in the form of a major temple. The temple will be the signature focal point that showcases the dwelling of God with his people. While David does not end up building this, he does begin to accumulate incredible amounts of wealth for the construction of this temple. There is a lot that I could say and have said about this theme. But I want you to see this. David is unstoppable on the world stage. This will be repeated in chapter 10. The only thing that threatens God's people is God's people. David could not be defeated by his enemies, but he almost destroyed himself.

We have to be mindful of that. The biggest threat we face is not from outside of us, but from within. I have a bigger enemy in my heart than from anything else. Being on guard means to be aware of my own weaknesses and not taking myself too seriously by being prideful or entitled. Do you see that you are your own biggest threat? Sad to say, this will become a dominant theme in the last half of this book.

2. Our King fights for us and wins. (8.1-5; 13)

a. Our King takes back what belongs to him.

Metheg-ammah is not a known place. In the 1 Chronicles account that is a sister text, David is said to have captured Gath. This makes sense to me because Metheg-ammah means "the bridle of the mother city." Some of these other countries would become vassal states that would have to pay taxes to David. The Philistines appeared to be under his direct authority. He captured their primary city! Moab's situation was even worse, it appears. Two-thirds of the Moabite army was killed and the rest were permitted to live but had to bring tribute and were made servants.

When we read accounts like this, there are a couple of things to keep in mind. We do not have the entire picture. I cannot tell you if David was justified in this or if he was being hateful and vengeful. There are times, like next week, where David points beautifully to Christ. Then there are times like chapter 11, where David is in such need of grace like any of us. I do not assume

that David is being cruel here. When I read of what happens at the return of Christ to this world (Revelation 19), the time for mercy on the enemies of God will be long gone. And the description in Deuteronomy 4.24 of God being a consuming fire will be on full display. I am inclined to think that David acted with justice here. David seems to get in trouble when he does not obey. Perhaps not in every instance, but if this were a sinful act of David, he would probably face the music for it. I know this. Christ is going to return and he is going to take back by violence that which belongs to him and his response of war will destroy his enemies. Perhaps this account is a warning and a preview of that. The Moabites have for centuries been the enemies of God's people. God is patient, but not forever.

Hadadezer was the king of a powerful kingdom called Zobah. We will encounter him again in chapter 10. Zobah was north of Israel a good distance. Hadad was the name of pagan god who was thought to be the storm-god and Hadad means, "the one who smashes." Hadadezer meant, Hadad is [my] help. The storm-god who smashes is my help. Well, Hadad did not prove to be too helpful to Hadadezer whose army could not stand before David. But we know why. Twice in this chapter (vs. 6, 14) we are told that it was the LORD who gave victory to David.

There is a little note here about David sparing about 100 horses for chariots. Chariots were often used against Israel. The Egyptians chariot army was famously drowned in the Red Sea. But they were a weapon of choice for hundreds and hundreds of years. David himself and some of the OT prophets talked about the choice the people had in trusting in God or trusting in chariots. Anyway, this seems to be the introduction of chariots into the life of Israel. Absalom uses them, Solomon even more so and from then on, they are part of the life of Israel and Judah until Josiah, who in leading the people back to God, burns the chariots. So, I am not sure what to make of this statement. It could be an initial step in the wrong direction, or something that was ok, at least in moderation, but later opened to the door to relying upon strength and weapons instead of God.

b. Our King shares the spoils of war.

Nations then and now glory in their wealth. Hadadezer was so wealthy that he had shields made out of gold. He was clearly trying to make a statement. David takes these shields in victory along with other wealth and brings it back to Jerusalem where he certainly uses it to build the capital city and other things in Israel. But he also begins storing up resources to be used for the construction of the temple that will be built during Solomon's reign. Verses 11-12 are clear that David dedicates this wealth to the LORD. This is wealth is not for his glory, but the Lord's.

There is another aspect to this that I want you to see. When a king and his army returned home from waging a successful war, the army would generally be received by the people in the capital city with a parade. The soldiers would be bringing back the spoils of war, much of which they would get for themselves by taking them from the soldiers they killed or who surrendered. Remember, it was very common for many of the armies to have a sizeable portion of that army be mercenaries. These were soldiers for hire and carried their wealth with them. So, when they died, the aftermath of the battle included the victories soldiers taking that wealth from those

soldiers and keeping it for themselves. War could be a very lucrative career if one lived long enough. So, when the army was received in parade, the victorious soldiers would throw some of the coins and loot to the parade attenders, like people on floats throw candy today. They shared the spoils of war. In many cases, the prisoners of war were displayed in these parades and subjected to the abuse of the crowds. This is against our Geneva Convention, but we have seen this still taking place in certain cases to this day.

Turn to Ephesians 4. But here is what is fascinating. David's reign and wars as king previews the reign of Christ. We see this again and again. Christ wins the ultimate victory through his death and resurrection. In Ephesians 4, Christ is said to have ascended back to heaven. The imagery is that he returned, like a successful king from battle victorious over his enemy. Christ fulfilled Psalm 68.18 that David wrote, except that instead of receiving gifts as the King, he gave gifts as the benevolent King. And the gifts that Christ gives are leaders to the church for the purpose of building up the people of God in the gospel so that the fame of God and his church goes out and the maturity and joy of his people is built up. Good leaders are gifts from God to his church as part of the spoils of Christ's victory over death. That is humbling and sobering for the pastors-teachers. It should also help us esteem and treasure that role in our churches. Good leaders and healthy flock are an amazing gift not only to one another, but to the spreading of the gospel and the advancement of the kingdom borders to every tribe, language and nation.

3. **Our King makes peace with all those who recognize his reign.** (8.9-12)

Toi was the king of Hamath. Hamath was the kingdom that was north of Zobah and Toi had been engaged in war against Hadadezer for a long time. So, when David defeated Hadadezer Toi was thrilled. He did what all of these other kingdoms should have done. He made peace with David. He acknowledged David's reign, power and authority and brought gifts to David, which David dedicated to the Lord. David wasn't bloodthirsty. He recognized Toi and his kingdom and they secured a peace with one another. No one has to be at war against God's king and people. Toi is a picture of what all of us should do. Go to the king, recognize his authority and make peace with him. He would delight in this, and it would be the best thing you could do. And of course, I am referring to Christ. He offers terms of peace that he secured by his death for us on the cross. You will not find a better king than he.

4. **Our King reigns with justice and equity.** (8.15-18)

This chapter is a summary. There are thousands of stories that occurred in these accounts that are not recorded here. The Egyptian Empire has faded. The Assyrian, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian and Roman Empires are yet to come. For a season, the tiny, formerly slaves called Israelites, have been formed into a nation that is one of, if not the most powerful empire on the earth at this time. David brought it about. He reigned over all Israel (v.15). He was victorious. And these battles were fairly large scale even by today's standards. 22,000 men of the Syrians and 18,000 Edomites were slain. Those are pretty big numbers. But, the most amazing statement in this chapter is this: "*David administered justice and equity to all his people.*"

The history of kings and many in leadership is how success sets the stage for failure and how a leader stops serving his people but instead starts taking from them. David had failures and we won't ignore them. But this is the view of Scripture. David administered justice and equity to all his people. What he does imperfectly, Christ does perfectly. What David did in his life, Christ will do forever.

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.