



The Kingdom United: David Crowned King Over All Israel (2 Sam 5-6)

Notes: Week Three

***Scripture divisions used in our series and various commentaries differ from each other. This is the reason for the occasional discrepancy between the verse range listed in our series and the commentary notes provided in our Scripture Studies.*

New American Commentary¹

4. All the Tribes of Israel Anoint David King at Hebron

[5:1–2](#) Credible opposition to David’s claim to kingship over all Israel died with Abner and Ish-Bosheth. Making David Israel’s next monarch thus became Israel’s only rational alternative. This conclusion was strengthened by four factors: David’s impressive record of military successes while in service to Saul (cf. [1 Sam 18:13–14, 30–31](#)), prophetic revelations regarding David’s destiny as Israel’s leader (cf. [1 Sam 16:1](#); [2 Sam 3:9, 18](#)), Abner’s endorsement of him (cf. [3:9–10, 17–18](#)), and his respectful treatment of the slain leaders of the Saulide dynasty ([3:28–35](#); [4:12](#)).

Israel’s elders were aware of a word from the Lord revealing that David would “shepherd my people Israel” (v. [2](#)). The text of the prophecy avoided calling David Israel’s king; instead, it termed him a “ruler” (Hb. *nāgîd*), a term previously used to refer to Saul in his role as Israel’s divinely appointed leader (cf. [1 Sam 9:16](#)). Though the prophetic revelation regarding David in v. [2](#) was not presented in the preceding narratives, it is consistent with other biblical claims relating to him (cf. [1 Sam 13:14](#); [25:30](#); [Ps 78:71](#)).

The Lord’s words must have been reassuring to the elders of Israel. First of all, the oracle affirmed that Israel was the Lord’s possession—literally, “my people”; no earthly king could own them. Second, it stated that David’s assigned role was that of “shepherd,” that is, one appointed to defend, lead, and tend to the needs of those for whom he was responsible. The king-as-shepherd image has paternalistic overtones; shepherds are responsible for sheep, not sheep for the shepherd.

[5:3](#) For these reasons and perhaps more, “all the elders of Israel” journeyed to David’s capital city of Hebron to install him as their new king. There in the city of his royal residence David “made a compact” (lit., “cut a covenant”) with these official representatives of all the tribes. The ceremony was carried out “before the LORD,” suggesting that the ceremony was as religious in nature as it was political; in such a case, members of the Aaronic priesthood residing in Hebron would have played a significant role in the event. Following the ratification of the formal agreement, David was “anointed ... king over Israel,” an act probably performed by an authorized religious leader.

[5:4–5](#) A formulaic insertion reflective of those of other kings (cf. [1 Sam 13:1](#); [2 Sam 2:10](#)) notes that David came to occupy the Israelites’ most powerful political position when he “was thirty years old” (v. [4](#)). The total number of years he functioned as king over any part of Israel was “forty years.” Seven and a half of those years David was king “over Judah” while he was “in Hebron” (v. [5](#)). The balance of the time, “thirty-three years,” was spent “in Jerusalem,” from which David “reigned over all Israel and Judah.” The proleptic mention of David reigning as king in Jerusalem anticipates the narrative of vv. [6–](#)

1. Robert D. Bergen, *New American Commentary – Volume 7: 1, 2 Samuel*, (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1996), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 317-333.

9. It also reinforces the impression that David's first act as king over all Israel was the establishment of a capital city in northern territory.

5. The Lord Blesses David

This section of 1, 2 Samuel presents the apex of David's career. Here David conquers Jerusalem, the crown jewel of the Promised Land. Here also David establishes an effective administrative system and leads Israel to victory over all their enemies. David's virtue is also showcased as he fulfills his commitment to Jonathan by caring for his fallen comrade's only son, Mephibosheth. Most significantly, in a passage that has major implications for the Christian community, the Lord establishes an eternal covenant with David's family line.

In these chapters David is furthermore portrayed as the founder of the long-ago- prophesied worship center where the Lord would cause his name to dwell (cf. [Deut 12:5](#)). It is in this section also that David brings the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem and initiates the practice of offering blood sacrifices to the Lord there.

(1) David Conquers Jerusalem [5:6-8](#)

[5:6-8](#) As presented by the writer, David's first recorded act as king over united Israel was to establish a capital city that reflected the emerging national identity. Though Hebron, a city located deep within Judahite territory, had served David well for seven and a half years, maintaining it as the capital of all Israel would have implied a governmental bias for Judah that would have alienated the other tribes from their king and made a truly united nation much more difficult to achieve. Wisely, David chose to make Jerusalem, a city that bordered Judah but was technically in the territorial inheritance of the northern tribe of Benjamin (cf. [Josh 18:28](#)), his capital city. David's selection of a northern city for the national capital would have appeared to the non-Judahite tribes as a significant concession on his part and would have ingratiated the peoples to him.

Of course, David's decision concerning Jerusalem was not without its challenges: this city in the south-central highlands of Israel was inhabited by Jebusites, a banned Canaanite group (cf. [Exod 23:23](#); [33:2](#); [34:11](#); [Deut 7:1-2](#); [20:17](#)) whom Israelites of previous generations had unsuccessfully attempted to eradicate (cf. [Josh 15:63](#); [Judg 1:21](#)). Thus, for David to make Jerusalem Israel's capital he first had to conquer it. Mustering his troops, "the king and his men marched to Jerusalem to attack the Jebusites who lived there" (v. [6](#)).

But there was a second, even more important reason for David to choose Jerusalem as his capital. For the Former Prophets, the standard for evaluating a king's reign was his obedience to the Lord (cf. [1 Kgs 15:3](#), [11](#), [26](#); [16:2](#), etc.). By David making his first recorded act as Israel's king that of fulfilling the long-neglected Torah command to dispossess the Jebusites and of reinitiating the crusade to eradicate them from the land (cf. [Exod 23:23-24](#); [Deut 7:1-2](#); [20:17](#)), he was demonstrating his continuity with Moses and establishing himself as a king devoted to the Lord's demands (cf. [Deut 17:19](#)). David's courageous and immediate attention to this detail of the Torah reinforces the writer's thesis that David was indeed a man after God's own heart (cf. [1 Sam 13:14](#); [1 Kgs 11:4](#); also [Acts 13:22](#)). Jerusalem would become a trophy of obedience to the Lord for David and his descendants.

David's conquest of the Jebusites required him to deal with some daunting geographic obstacles. The relatively small walled city was located atop the southeastern promontory of a steep, finger-shaped hill and was surrounded on three sides by valleys. It was located adjacent to a perennial spring (the Gihon) and was so well-protected by both natural and man-made defenses that the Jebusites taunted David by saying that "even the blind and the lame can ward you off." However, their derisive words proved

premature because “David captured the fortress of Zion” (v. [7](#)). “Zion” (meaning unknown) was apparently the Jebusite name for the hill and thus the walled portion of the hilltop Jebusite settlement. The narrative’s lack of detail regarding Jerusalem’s defeat—surprising for an event of such monumental significance—focuses the reader’s attention on one fact: “David captured the fortress of Zion.”

David’s conquest of the city was considered a military marvel; his strategy is apparently delineated in v. [8](#). The NIV suggests that after examining the city’s defenses, David concluded that “anyone who conquers the Jebusites will have to use the water shaft” (v. [8](#)). The Hebrew text of this verse is fraught with difficulties, the major one being the meaning of *šinnôr*; suggested translations include “water shaft” (NIV), “grappling-iron” (NEB), “dagger” (LXX), “trident,” “joint,” “neck,” and “windpipe.” Of all possibilities the NIV’s rendering is the most popular today (cf. NASB, NRSV, NKJV, NLT) and apparently is corroborated by archaeological evidence.

If “water shaft” is the correct translation, then the reference may be to “Warren’s tunnel,” a narrow vertical shaft forty-nine feet long dug through rock, providing residents of the Zion fortress access to waters from the Gihon spring during times of siege. Though difficult to climb, it proved to be the Achilles heel of the Jebusite fortress. Once key members of David’s strike force had successfully entered the city by means of the shaft and secured this passageway, others would have poured into the heart of the city and brought about its subjugation.

In insulting David, the Jebusites had implicitly compared themselves to “the blind and the lame” (v. [6](#)). David appears to have taken this as a Jebusite self-designation and used it to mock them in his statements found in v. [8](#); it is the “lame and blind who are David’s enemies” (lit., “the hated ones of David’s soul”). Furthermore, though not all Jebusites were killed in battle (cf. [24:16–24](#)), the survivors were denied entry to “the house” (NIV, “palace”). The “house” may refer either to David’s royal residence, that is, the entirety of the former Jebusite fortress, or perhaps a Yahwistic sanctuary. Especially in view of the context of this statement and because of his treatment of the lame Mephibosheth (cf. [9:3–13](#)), this verse cannot mean that David had contempt for physically challenged individuals.

(2) The Lord Blesses David as King in Jerusalem [5:9–16](#)

[5:9–10](#) In renaming the conquered city after himself, David was following an Israelite practice first evidenced in the Torah (cf. [Num 32:41–42](#); also [2 Sam 12:28](#)).

David’s decision to make Jerusalem the central administrative city for all Israel would mean that the twelve-acre site enclosed by the original Jebusite walls would not suffice for the buildings and population that would be needed. As a consequence, “he built up the area around” the fortress area, “from the *millô*’ inward.” The Hebrew term translates literally as “the filling” (NIV, “supporting terraces”) and suggests that part of David’s project included bringing dirt and rock to the hilltop and depositing these inside massive cliffside retaining walls in order to create a larger, more level surface on which Jerusalem could be constructed.

David’s unbroken string of successes both politically and militarily meant that he was becoming “more and more powerful” (v. [10](#)). Yet the source of the king’s success was not his personal competence or ingenuity. As both he (cf. [Ps 23:4](#)) and the narrator were careful to note, it was “because the LORD God Almighty was with him” (cf. also [1 Sam 18:12](#), [14](#), [28](#)).

[5:11–12](#) One measure of David’s growing reputation is the fact that a regional monarch, “Hiram king of Tyre, sent” an ambassadorial delegation (Hb. *mal’ākîm*) to David at Jerusalem (v. [11](#)). Accompanying this official party was a group of skilled “carpenters and stonemasons,” as well as a supply of “cedar

logs.” These human and material resources were used to build “a house [NIV, “palace”] for David” in the expanding city.

Hiram’s generous gifts to David, coming as they were from one of the historically most powerful city-states of the eastern Mediterranean seaboard, helped David to know that the Lord “had exalted his kingdom.” But David also understood that he had not received this unparalleled success so that he might experience personal aggrandizement; rather it was “for the sake of his [= the Lord’s] people Israel.” Some scholars believe that Hiram’s gift may have come to David as many as twenty-five years after he had become Israel’s king.

5:13–16 A further evidence of David’s increasing power, success, and divine blessing was the growth of the royal family. Probably in an effort to cement relationships with leading families of the various Israelite tribes, “David took more concubines and wives in Jerusalem” (v. [13](#)). By marrying into the various families and then bringing the newly acquired wives to Jerusalem, he was giving the most influential families throughout the nation a stake in his success: the king’s success was their success.

In order for David’s strategy to succeed, it was necessary that each new wife and concubine be treated properly. This meant that each member of his harem be given a proper residence in the city of David—hence the need for a new palace and additional buildings—but also that each one have the privilege of giving birth to a royal son or daughter.

Elsewhere in Scripture ([1 Chr 3:5](#)) Shammua (or Shimea), Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon were noted to be sons of Bathsheba. No indication is given here or elsewhere in Scripture about the names of the women who bore the remaining children.

The list provided here is the shortest of three canonical lists of children born to David while he was in Jerusalem (cf. also [1 Chr 3:5–9](#); [14:4–6](#)). Added to one or both of the other lists are Nogah and a second Eliphelet/Elpelet. In [1 Chr 3:6](#) Elishua is called Elishama; in [14:6](#) Eliada is called Beeliada.

The large number of children, particularly sons, born to David while he was in Jerusalem—five more than were mentioned in connection with Hebron— suggests that the Lord blessed David richly in this location and that the divine blessings bestowed at Jerusalem exceeded those given at Hebron. This is in keeping with the Torah teaching that productive wombs are a blessing resulting from obedience to the Lord’s commands (cf. [Lev 26:9](#); [Deut 28:11](#)); David’s obedience in dispossessing the Jebusites resulted in increased numbers of offspring. The fact that David’s successor (Solomon) was among those born in Jerusalem adds to the impression that the writer is using David’s descendant list here to emphasize the divine blessing associated with the conquest of Jerusalem. At the same time, one cannot fail to hear in this passage—especially in the phrase “David took more concubines and wives” (v. [13](#))—another, more troubling message. True to Samuel’s prophetic words, David had become a king who took the nation’s daughters ([1 Sam 8:13](#)). In his acquisitions he came perilously close to violating the Torah’s prohibition against taking many wives ([Deut 17:17](#)). In fact, it was his unauthorized acquisition of a wife that shattered his regency and took away still greater blessings that could have been his.

(3) David Defeats the Philistines Twice [5:17–25](#)

5:17 At an early but unspecified time after David was anointed king over all Israel— prior to the building of David’s palace in Jerusalem, “the Philistines” learned of David’s change in status. During his seven years at Hebron they had considered him something of an ally, since he technically was at war with Israel’s dynastic family. But when Ish-Bosheth died and David became Israel’s king, the Philistine perception of him changed dramatically.

Now the focus of the Philistine military resources became eliminating David. As a result, “they went up in full force to search for him.” Therefore “David heard about it and went down to the stronghold,” probably the recently captured Jebusite fortress located within Jerusalem.

[5:18–21](#) The Philistines “spread out in the Valley of Rephaim,” a steep-walled canyon less than a mile southwest of David’s new home. The writer carefully notes that David “inquired of the Lord” (v. [19](#)) before making the decision to attack the Philistines. Unlike Saul, he was careful to determine the Lord’s will concerning any offensive action. David’s inquiry into the divine will implicitly occurred with the assistance of an Aaronic priest (cf. [1 Sam 22:15](#); [23:2–6](#); [30:8](#)), at least this is how David did it in every other recorded instance after Abiathar’s entrance into David’s ranks.

Thus the writer effectively credits David with the first employment of an Aaronic priest for sacerdotal activities in Jerusalem. This latter fact would doubtless have been of significance to the writer, who was careful to portray David as the human agent responsible for establishing Jerusalem as the dwelling place for the Lord’s name.

The Lord responded favorably to David’s questions, commanding David to “go” and assuring him of victory over the Philistines. Accordingly, David went to a site of unknown provenance in the vicinity of the Valley of Rephaim, where he defeated the Philistines handily. David’s attack was so successful and the enemy’s retreat so hurried that “the Philistines abandoned their idols” [*‘āšabbêhem*, lit., “their grievous things”] there” (v. [21](#)), a counterpoint to what the Israelites had done in a battle against the Philistines in a former generation (cf. [1 Sam 4:11](#)). Following the battle, David named the location of the hostilities “Baal Perazim” (lit., “Lord of the breakings forth”) because “the LORD has broken out against my enemies before me.” The king and his men also removed the idols from the territory, in keeping with the Torah command to rid the Promised Land of such offensive objects (cf. [Num 33:52](#); [Deut 7:5](#), [25](#); [12:3](#)). Though no mention is made of what David and his men did with the idols, it seems safe to assume they destroyed them.

[5:22–25](#) Not to be deterred from their efforts to remove David as a threat to Philistine domination in the region, the Philistines gathered once again in the same place. David’s first response to the renewed Philistine aggression was to inquire again of the Lord, no doubt with the aid of an Aaronic priest. The Lord affirmed David’s inclination to fight the Philistines; in fact, he provided David with a strategy for victory as well as the promise of a miraculous intervention that would result in a resounding victory for Israel.

The Lord ordered David to use a tactic that maximized the element of surprise while at the same time cutting off the Philistines’ only avenue of retreat. Israel’s army was to “circle around behind” (v. [23](#)) the Philistines and then “attack them in front of the balsam trees” (*bēkā’im*). There they were to delay the attack, however, until they heard “the sound of marching in the tops” of the vegetation (v. [24](#)). This phenomenon, somewhat reminiscent of God’s timely provision of thunder prior to another Israelite attack against the Philistines ([1 Sam 7:10](#)), may have been accomplished through an unusually strong gust of wind or through some more spectacular divine intervention in the natural order. Regardless, it was to be understood as a definite sign that the Lord had “gone out in front of” (v. [24](#)) his earthly forces “to strike the Philistine army.”

In language reflecting descriptions of the obedient heroes of the Torah (e.g., Noah, [Gen 7:9](#), [16](#); Abraham, [Gen 21:4](#); and Moses, [Exod 7:6](#)), “David did as the LORD commanded him” (v. [25](#)). The results of David’s obedience were spectacular: he and his forces “struck down the Philistines all the way from Geba [NIV, “Gibeon”] to Gezer,” a westward trek of more than twenty miles.

Especially significant in this event is that David deferred his attack until the Lord had gone out in front of Israel. In so doing, he was charting a course for the nation that differed fundamentally from the one the people had proposed during the days of Samuel. Previously the Israelites had asked to “be like all the other nations,” with an earthly “king to lead us and to go out before us to fight our battles” ([1 Sam 8:20](#)). Under David’s leadership (as under Moses’ and Joshua’s before him), the Lord—not a mortal king—would go out before the nation to fight their battles.

(4) David Brings the Ark of God to Jerusalem [6:1-23](#)

[6:1–2](#) David’s twin victories against the Philistines guaranteed that Israel’s enemy would be motivated to return and fight another day. David was especially aware that his decision to dispose of the Philistine gods (cf. [5:21](#)) would invite reprisals, perhaps even a second Philistine attempt to take possession of the ark of the covenant (cf. [1 Sam 4:11](#); [5:1](#)). An attack against Israel to acquire and destroy the ark would have been particularly attractive due to the fact that the ark was located only a few miles from their own territory. In an apparent effort to forestall any such undertaking by the Philistines, “David brought together out of Israel” (v. [1](#)) a comparatively large force of “thirty thousand chosen men”—an elite force that was truly national (cf. [1 Chr 13:5](#)), not merely tribal, in nature—“to bring up ... the ark of God” (v. [2](#)) and remove it to a safer location. Since the days of Samuel’s childhood, the ark was kept in a private residence in a small village in the northwestern regions of Judahite territory (cf. [1 Sam 7:1–2](#)). Accordingly, David assembled the troops at “Baalah of Judah,” otherwise known as Kiriath Jearim, the Israelite settlement in which the ark was situated ([1 Sam 6:21–7:2](#)).

David was especially concerned to prevent the ark from falling into enemy hands because of its significance for Israel’s religion. The ark was the object most closely associated with Israel’s God, a truth expressed by the writer’s notation that the “Name—the name of Yahweh of Armies, He who is seated on the cherubim—is called upon it.” The ark contained the written agreement between Israel and the Lord (cf. [Exod 25:16](#); [40:20](#); [Deut 10:5](#); [1 Kgs 8:9](#)), was a place of divine revelation ([Exod 25:22](#); [Num 7:89](#)), and was in fact the Lord’s throne (cf. [1 Sam 4:4](#); [2 Kgs 19:15](#); [Pss 80:1](#); [99:1](#); [Isa 37:16](#)). An object of such overwhelming significance would certainly make a valuable prize for the Philistines and was worthy of the massive protective force called up by David.

[6:3–5](#) David had the men “set the ark of God on a new cart” (v. [3](#)), the employment of a new cart being a sign of respect for the holy object. As respectful and well-intended as David’s effort was, however, it violated Torah guidelines regarding the transport of the ark (cf. [Num 4:15](#); [7:9](#)). In fact, David’s actions in this matter were more like those of the spiritually ignorant Philistines (cf. [1 Sam 6:7](#), [10](#)).

Celebrating was accompanied by “songs” and by harps, lyres, tambourines, sistrams and cymbals” (v. [5](#)). The musical instruments included both stringed (harp and lyre) and percussion instruments (tambourine, sistrum [a type of rattle], and cymbal). Leading the procession was Ahio, one of the “sons of Abinadab” (v. [4](#)), with his brother Uzzah “guiding the cart” from behind. The passage implicitly assumes that Ahio and Uzzah were Levites from the clan of Kohath (cf. [Num 4:4–20](#)).

[6:6–7](#) As the oxcart was being pulled down the hill, an unforeseen tragedy occurred, as “the oxen stumbled” (NASB, “the oxen nearly upset *it*”). Instinctively, the levitical priest Uzzah reached out and “took hold of the ark of God” to stabilize and protect it. However, in so doing he committed a capital offense established in the Torah (cf. [Num 4:15](#)). Since he was not an Aaronic priest, he was prohibited from touching this holiest object in the Yahwistic faith. Uzzah’s conscientious effort to protect the ark actually defiled it; accordingly, “the LORD’s anger burned against Uzzah” (v. [7](#)). Uzzah’s act violated a divinely established taboo and was therefore “irreverent”; appropriately, “God”—not some impersonal force—“struck him down and he died there beside the ark of God.” For the third time in the books of Samuel (cf. [1 Sam 5:3–12](#); [6:19–20](#)), the Lord had demonstrated that he was capable of defending the

ark. As on the second occasion, the threat was not from a Philistine but from Israelites who disobeyed Torah guidelines regarding proper treatment of the Lord's throne.

6:8–12 David, who had acted with noble intentions in the matter of moving the ark, was angry. The stated reason for David's emotional storm was "because the LORD had broken out against Uzzah" (v. [8](#))—a clause that could either mean that David was mad at God for killing Uzzah (unlikely, since God was merely enforcing the Torah) or that he was upset that Uzzah had acted in such a way as to cause God to bring fatal judgment to bear (more likely). An Israelite tragedy was exactly what he attempted to avoid, and when Uzzah died, the king memorialized the event by renaming the accident site "Perez Uzzah" (= "Uzzah's Breach"/"The Outburst against Uzzah").

Having witnessed a dramatic demonstration of the Lord's zeal to protect his holiness, David became "afraid of the LORD that day" (v. [9](#)). His deepened respect for the Lord's power and for his willingness to use it against anyone who would violate the Torah caused David to ask, "How can the ark of the LORD ever come to me?" Brueggemann notes the fear generated by this event was positive, for "when people are no longer awed, respectful, or fearful of God's holiness, the community is put at risk."

David's intention had been to move the ark "to be with him in the City of David" (v. [10](#)). There in the former Jebusite fortress the ark would have been protected from any Philistine reprisals. Once in Jerusalem, it would have played a useful role in increasing the prestige of the newly established national capital by locating the divine throne in the same city as David's. However, the recent turn of events had changed David's plans, perhaps because he feared that some further transgression would cause the Lord's judgment to destroy the new capital.

Accordingly, David ordered that the ark be taken to the house of a Levite (cf. [1 Chr 15:16–18](#)), Obed-Edom the Gittite" (v. [11](#)). He was associated with a location of uncertain identity that had an olive or wine press (*Hb. gat*). Perhaps Obed-Edom's residence was the closest levitical residence to the disaster; at that site, they hoped, further catastrophes could be avoided. The plan worked well; during the "three months" it was there, blessings—not curses—attended Obed-Edom and everything around him (v. [12](#); cf. [1 Chr 26:5](#)). The blessing on Obed-Edom's household seemingly took the form of fertility (cf. [1 Chr 26:8](#)).

When David learned that a proper levitical household might experience blessings "because of the ark of God," he concluded that Jerusalem, too, could benefit from the presence of the ark. So David completed his plans to bring the ark to the City of David. As in the first attempt three months prior, the ark's pilgrimage to Jerusalem was carried out "with rejoicing."

6:13–15 But there was one significant difference between the two attempts to transport the sacred throne; this time Levites carried it by hand (v. [13](#); cf. [Num 4:15](#)), not transporting it on a cart (cf. v. [3](#)). Costly fellowship offerings consisting of "a bull and a fattened calf" were offered to the Lord after the Levites "had taken six steps." This ritual pause after six steps suggests a symbolic significance, perhaps a sort of Sabbath rest, suggesting a consecration of the entire journey.

For the occasion of this almost ten-mile journey, David had prepared both his capital city and himself. First, he had erected a special tent in Jerusalem that would house the ark (cf. v. [17](#)). According to [1 Chr 16:39–40](#), this was done without removing the tent in Gibeon, which was still used to house the remainder of the sacred tabernacle furnishings. Second, he prepared and wore special ritual garments: "a linen ephod" (v. [14](#)), a piece of clothing otherwise reserved in Israelite society for priests and Levites (cf. [Exod 28:6](#); [1 Sam 2:18](#); [22:18](#)), and, according to [1 Chr 15:27](#), a "robe of fine linen."

David's use of the ephod suggests that he possessed the credentials of a priest. How David attained sacerdotal status is not described in the Bible, but the acquisition of priestly status "in the order of Melchizedek" by the Davidic family line is hinted at in [Ps 110:4](#). If indeed this title applied to David as well as one of his descendants (cf. [Heb 7:14–21](#)), he most likely acquired it by right of conquest: having conquered Jerusalem, he became possessor of all the titles and honors traditionally accorded to the king of the city. Melchizedek having been Salem's/Jerusalem's priest-king of God Most High (cf. [Gen 14:18](#); [Heb 7:1](#))—that is, of Yahweh (cf. [Gen 14:22](#)), David as king of Jerusalem would have become a priest of Yahweh. However, as a Yahwistic priest in the order of Melchizedek, David would have been prohibited from performing his duties explicitly reserved for the Aaronic priesthood (cf. comments on vv. [17–18](#)). His status as a Melchizedekian priest would not have restricted him from leading in certain aspects of worship, and this he did with vigor: David "danced [lit., "was dancing"] before the LORD with all his might." His actions were accompanied by "shouts and the sound of trumpets" (v. [15](#)). Trumpets—ones blown by Levitical priests—had also been sounded during a movement of the ark in the days of Joshua (cf. [Josh 6:4–20](#)).

[6:16–19](#) Missing from the procession bringing the ark to Jerusalem was "Michal daughter of Saul" (v. [16](#)), who viewed the festivities from a palace window. It is unclear why Michal was absent from the event, since other women were permitted to be present (cf. v. [19](#)), but the tone of the passage suggests that it was due to her jaded attitude toward the Lord and his anointed; previously she had been connected with the use of a teraphim, an object considered an abomination to the Lord (cf. [1 Sam 15:23](#); [19:13](#)). Michal could have resented David for forcing her to leave Paltiel as well (cf. [3:14–16](#)). During the triumphal moments when the ark passed through the streets of the royal fortress, David's unbounded enthusiasm for his God expressed itself in "leaping and dancing before the LORD" (v. [16](#)). His enthusiasm was not appreciated by Michal. In her attitudes and actions she was truly a "daughter of Saul" (vv. [20](#), [23](#)) and not a wife of David.

Meanwhile, the celebrative group set the ark in its place of honor (v. [17](#); cf. [Ps 76:2](#) [[Hb.](#) v. [3](#)]). Then David, once again acting sacerdotally, "sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowships before the LORD." It is unclear from the text whether David actually officiated at these sacrifices or merely directed Levites to perform these tasks. If he did perform the sacrifices himself, he may have been acting in accordance with a precedent set by Melchizedek.

Priestly parallels certainly exist between David and Melchizedek in two other matters: pronouncing a blessing upon the Lord's people and providing a food gift for those who had received the blessing (cf. [Gen 14:18–19](#)). As David "blessed the people in [[Hb.](#) "by"] the name of the LORD Almighty" (v. [18](#)), Melchizedek blessed "Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth" ([Gen 14:19](#)). Also Melchizedek brought Abram and his men "bread and wine" ([Gen 14:18](#)); David "gave a loaf of bread, a cake of dates and a cake of raisins to each person in the whole crowd of Israelites" (v. [19](#)).

Both men and women participated in the climactic events of sacrifice and gift-giving as the ark came to rest in its new home. After the participants each had received a blessing and a token food gift from the Lord's royal priest, they "went to their homes."

[6:20–23](#) Following the conclusion of his public duties, David would not neglect his own household on this day of blessing (v. [20](#)). But even before he could pronounce a word of blessing, Michal, daughter of Saul, began to berate him. She first accused him of "disrobing in the sight of the slave girls of his servants"—thus exposing his nakedness. Second, she equated him with a "vulgar fellow" [[Hb.](#) *rēqîm*; "empty/worthless one"; cf. [Judg 9:4](#); [11:3](#); [2 Chr 13:7](#)]. Implicitly she suggested that immoral sexual urges, not zeal for the Lord, had motivated his enthusiastic activities in the festivities of the day.

David rejected Michal's slanderous accusations; "it was before the LORD" (v. [21](#))—not the young women—that David was celebrating. Furthermore, his actions were appropriate for one who had been "appointed" by the Lord as "ruler over the LORD's people Israel." David's celebratory acts earlier in the day expressed the king's unbridled joy in having been selected by the Lord for such significant service. Besides, assuming he was dressed as a properly outfitted Yahwistic priest, David's energetic dancing could not have exposed his nakedness and so violated the Torah's requirements (cf. [Exod 20:26](#)) since he was wearing a linen undergarment. In rejecting David, Michal was also rejecting the Lord because it was he who "chose" David in preference to Michal's "father or anyone from his house" to lead Israel. More probably, Michal's rejection of David actually was symptomatic of an underlying problem in her relationship with God.

Though David's pious actions might have resulted in some embarrassing moments, David was willing to "become even more undignified" (v. [22](#)), if necessary, to honor the Lord. He would even allow himself to be "humiliated" (Hb. *šāpal*) in his own eyes for the Lord's sake. Elsewhere in the Old Testament (cf. [Prov 29:23](#)) *šāpal* is understood as a virtue signifying proper humility before the Lord. People of true faith, such as "these slave girls" who attended the Yahwistic celebration, would interpret David's actions for what they were—expressions of unrestrained, authentic faith; thus the king would "be held in honor" by people of faith. Like the people of profound faith throughout the ages, David was willing to risk being misunderstood and humiliated as he pursued a deeper relationship with God (cf. [1 Cor 3:18](#); [4:10](#)).

As a result of this incident "Michal daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death" (v. [23](#)). In the Torah a blessing associated with obedience to the Lord is a fruitful womb (cf. [Exod 23:26](#); [Deut 7:14](#); [28:11](#)). To an audience knowledgeable of the Torah, Michal's unproductive womb would have been interpreted as a curse sent against a disobedient wife—not as evidence of a husband's neglect of a marital duty. Michal's lack of faith would mean that the house of Saul would be forever separate from Israel's eternal royal dynasty.