Question:

Did David truly hate the lame and the blind, as it appears in 2 Samuel 5:6–9? What is the proper theological understanding of this passage?

Passage (2 Samuel 5:6–9, ESV):

> *6 And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who said to David, “You will not come in here, but the blind and the lame will ward you off”—thinking, “David cannot come in here.”*
> *7 Nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion, that is, the city of David.*
> *8 And David said on that day, “Whoever would strike the Jebusites, let him get up the water shaft to attack ‘the lame and the blind,’ who are hated by David’s soul.” Therefore it is said, “The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.”*
> *9 And David lived in the stronghold and called it the city of David. And David built the city all around from the Millo inward.*

The Context and Meaning

This event occurred during David’s conquest of Jerusalem. The city, occupied by the Jebusites, had never been captured by the Israelites, and the Jebusites were confident in their defenses. They taunted David by saying even the “blind and lame” could defend the city against him (v.6). This was mockery, not a literal military strategy. The Jebusites were mocking David’s strength and possibly recalling his humble past as a shepherd.

When David conquered the fortress of Zion (later called the City of David), he responded to their insult by calling the Jebusites “the blind and the lame”—a sarcastic reference to their earlier taunt. The phrase “whom David’s soul hates” (v.8) is not a general statement of hatred toward disabled people, but rather a figurative expression tied to the mocking context.

Theological Clarification

To conclude that David hated the disabled would contradict his later actions and the spirit of God’s law. Scripture reveals David as a man of compassion and justice, especially toward the weak and marginalized:

In 2 Samuel 9:1–13, David shows great kindness to Mephibosheth, the crippled son of Jonathan. He restores Saul's land to him and has him eat at the king's table "like one of the king's sons" (v.11, NIV).

The Torah commands care for the disabled:

> "Do not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block in front of the blind, but fear your God. I am the Lord." *(Leviticus 19:14, NIV)*

Therefore, 2 Samuel 5:8 must be interpreted in context—David is not issuing a divine law or expressing true hatred, but repeating the enemy's sarcasm and turning their mockery back on them after victory.

"The Blind and the Lame Shall Not Enter the House" – Misunderstood Saying

The phrase

> *in verse 8,* “The blind and the lame shall not come into the house,”

became a proverb, but it wasn’t a legal or religious command. It arose from the sarcastic context of David’s conquest. Some ancient interpreters or later generations may have misapplied it, just as the disciples misunderstood Jesus’ words about John in:

> “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?” *(John 21:22, ESV).*
> “Because of this, the rumor spread among the believers that this disciple would not die…” *(John 21:23, NIV)*

People sometimes take symbolic or figurative statements literally just as many misunderstood David’s statement.

What Can We Learn from This?

Theologically, this account highlights a few key truths:

1. God uses the underestimated – David, newly crowned and mocked as weak, prevails because God is with him (1 Samuel 17:45–47).

2. Spiritual opposition often begins with mockery and discouragement – just like the enemies who ridiculed Nehemiah (Nehemiah 4:1–3) before the wall was rebuilt.

3. Victory often follows ridicule – the enemy uses discouragement as a last line of defense before defeat.

As believers, we must not let mockery, rejection, or misjudgment cause us to doubt our calling or mission. Instead, like David, we must remember that our strength comes from God.

> “With God we will gain the victory, and he will trample down our enemies.” *(Psalm 60:12, NIV)*

Conclusion

David’s statement in 2 Samuel 5:6–9 is not a condemnation of the physically disabled, but a response to a mocking insult from the Jebusites. His later kindness to Mephibosheth confirms this. As Christians, we are called to interpret Scripture carefully, recognizing context, metaphor, and the consistent character of God’s mercy and justice.

May the Lord bless you as you seek to understand His Word more deeply.
Feel free to share this truth with others to bring clarity and encouragement.

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