

2 Samuel Chapter 2 Commentary

2Sa 2:1 ¶ "And it came to pass after this, that David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the LORD said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hebron. 2 So David went up thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelite, and Abigail Nabal's wife the Carmelite. 3 And his men that were with him did David bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron. 4 And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, That the men of Jabeshgilead were they that buried Saul."

A couple of chapters earlier, we saw that David got back on the right track and began to inquire of God what to do again. God used the capture of the women and children of David, and his men, to humble David's heart, which got him back into a praying posture.

Knowing that king Saul is now perished, David begins this chapter by asking God what to do and where to go. God tells David to get himself back among his brethren in land possessed by Israel. God tells David to go to Hebron and he does, bringing his wives Abigail and Ahinoam with him. In Hebron David is anointed king over the tribe of Judah.

So far there is no mention of David having any children. However, we are told that while David is living here he will have children, seen in: **2Sa 3:2-5; 2 And unto David were sons born in Hebron: and his firstborn was Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelite; 3 And his second, Chileab, of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third, Absalom the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; 4 And the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital; 5 And the sixth, Ithream, by Eglah David's wife. These were born to David in Hebron.**" There is a prophetic picture in these verses, but we will wait until we get there to enlarge upon it.

Hebron is noted to be one of the richest parts of Judah, it is a city of the priests, and a city of refuge. We can say the same thing of the church of Jesus Christ. It is the richest part of the world, it is a city of priest, and it is a city of refuge for the repentant sinner to seek deliverance from death for sins.

David's men now settle in the cities of Hebron. They are staying close to their king and living in the same city he is in. Our King, Jesus, has provided us a better situation than David's men got. We are given citizenship in the city of our King, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Granted, here on earth in time, we are scattered throughout the world, but we have the promise of being in the great eternal city of God forever in the presence of our King. Also, every assembly of God's people is portion of the city where our King dwells.

Now, we see a portion of God's promise to David, that he would be king over Israel, being fulfilled. We shall see David come to rule over all Israel, slowly, over time. We are reminded by this thought: God told Israel he would not drive out all the inhabitants of the land of promise at one time, lest the land be overrun with the beast of the earth, to the detriment of Israel. David shall be brought to reign over Israel, as God removes each opponent who stands in the way. It will not happen quickly, but it will surely happen. We believe this is God's way of keeping David's heart humble, and keeping his heart and mind focused upon God.

Eventually, David will be king over all Israel, and God will give him rest from all his enemies. A prophetic picture seen here is that King Jesus began his reign, here in time, over just a few. To his eternal kingdom there is being added, throughout time, all those for whom he died upon the cross. His reign over the entire kingdom of God will be fully manifested as complete in the eternal kingdom. With the eternal resurrection of the dead in Christ, and the change of those who are alive and remain at his return, when all of God's people will be assembled in one body, and all will bow before King Jesus upon his eternal throne. In this time to come we will have rest from all our enemies. What a day that will be!

4 "And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, That the men of Jabeshgilead were they that buried Saul. 5 And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabeshgilead, and said unto them, Blessed be ye of the LORD, that ye have shewed this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him. 6 And now the LORD shew kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing. 7 Therefore now let your hands be strengthened, and be ye valiant: for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them."

The men of Judah tell David that it was the men of Jabeshgilead were those who buried Saul. David sends a message of blessing to them, for this valiant work, and tells them that he will reward them for this action. He extols them to be strengthened in the Lord. David hopes to turn the men of Jabeshgilead to himself, and from the house of Saul, with the promise of his blessing upon them. David tells them that Judah has anointed him to be king over them. David is hoping they will join Judah and honor his kingship.

8 ¶ "But Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, took Ishbosheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim; 9 And made him king over Gilead, and over the Ashurites, and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel. 10 Ishbosheth Saul's son was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and reigned two years. But the house of Judah followed David."

Abner, who was captain over Israel's armies under Saul, takes another of Saul's sons and makes him king over Israel. Abner brought him to "**Mahanaim**" which means double standard. Simply put, Abner is not willing to relinquish the power he has as the commander of the armies of Israel. We learn that all of Saul's sons were not killed in the battle with the Philistines. Abner's action of making Ishbosheth king over Israel keeps the rest of Israel under the reign of the house of Saul.

We point out that David is now acting under the direction of God, while the rest of Israel is not ready to submit to the rule of God in their lives again. They have long lived doing as they please, without God, and they are content to be like the heathen people of the world.

We are reminded, since the time when God anointed David to be king over Israel, nothing has come easily to David. He has spent many years fleeing for his life from Saul. Now that God has removed Saul and opened the way for David to be king over Israel, we see another obstacle placed in his path. Foolish Israel, even after being defeated by the Philistines, is still not willing to humble themselves and turn back to serving God.

The lesson for us: in the life of a Christian, you can expect that there are going to be ongoing obstacles, in the pathway of the life of each Christian. What we must remember is that though these obstacles arise, this does not remove the promise of God. God's promise to us is still secure, that we have been given eternal life and eternal remission of sins, through the finished work of Jesus Christ. God will bring it to pass in his own time and way, as seen in: **Heb 13:20-21; 20 "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."**

Another lesson we can learn: David's heart has been humbled, and he is now serving under God's direction once again. This is how it should be in our lives as Christians. We should always be humbly willing to serve God. Else, God will send some dire circumstance into our lives, as he did with David, and thus direct us back to our faithful service to God.

Just as David has the promise of God that he will be king over all Israel, so, we have the promise of God that we will be with him in the eternal day. This was manifested to us when God anointed us to be a child of God. This alone is enough to keep us looking for the prize of the high calling in Jesus Christ, but we also have the written testimony of God that it is true, found in the bible, the written word of God.

David being anointed as king over Judah brings our minds to Jacob's prophesy and the blessing he bestowed upon each of his children in: **Ge 49:8-12; 8 ¶ "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. 9 Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? 10 The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. 11 Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: 12 His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk."** We see Jacob's prophesy beginning to be fulfilled with David being anointed king of Judah.

11 "And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months. 12 And Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon. 13 And Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David, went out, and met together by the pool of

Gibeon: and they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool. 14 And Abner said to Joab, Let the young men now arise, and play before us. And Joab said, Let them arise. 15 Then there arose and went over by number twelve of Benjamin, which pertained to Ishbosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David. 16 And they caught everyone his fellow by the head, and thrust his sword in his fellow's side; so, they fell down together: wherefore that place was called Helkathhazzurim, which is in Gibeon. 17 And there was a very sore battle that day; and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David."

David was king for seven and one-half years in Judah, and Abner, who is captain over the armies of Ishbosheth, goes to a predetermined place to meet Joab, the captain of David's army. Abner begins a contest between the armies, expecting to overcome David's army and consolidate all Israel under the reign of Ishbosheth.

Each army sends twelve men, and they slay each other, then the battle begins because there is no clear winner of the contest. We are not told if David knows about this meeting or not. However, if David does know, his men would have been under orders to fight only in defense. Because David would not have his men attack their own brethren. God has already fulfilled part of his promise, that David would be king over Israel, in giving him reign over Judah. Wherefore, as David would not fight Saul, so David will not fight Israel, except in defense. God blesses David's army to prevail over Abner and his army, because it is God's will for David to be king over all Israel.

We see a great picture of how things are going here in: ***Ps 2:1-6; 1 "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, 3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. 4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. 5 Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. 6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.***" Ishbosheth is made king by Abner, a man. Israel, and Abner, knows that David is God's chosen man to be king over Israel, yet they persist in trying to overthrow God's will. It is a prophetic picture of Jesus, who will overcome all the enemies of God, and sitting on the throne of God, and Jesus will rule over all of God's people.

18 ¶ "And there were three sons of Zeruiah there, Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel: and Asahel was as light of foot as a wild roe. 19 And Asahel pursued after Abner; and in going he turned not to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner. 20 Then Abner looked behind him, and said, Art thou Asahel? And he answered, I am. 21 And Abner said to him, Turn thee aside to thy right hand or to thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee his armour. But Asahel would not turn aside from following of him. 22 And Abner said again to Asahel, Turn thee aside from following me: wherefore should I smite thee to the ground? how then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother? 23 Howbeit he refused to turn aside: wherefore Abner with the hinder end of the spear smote him under the fifth rib, that the spear came out behind him; and he fell down there, and died in the same place: and it came to pass, that as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood still."

Joab, Abishai, and Asahel, were with David's army. Asahel pursued Abner only, as Abner's army fled from David's. Asahel intended to kill Abner and take his armor, which is why Abner told him to turn aside and take other armor. If Asahel kills Abner and takes his armor, this will give him great stature in the army of David. Abner tells Asahel to stop chasing him twice or he will die. Asahel does not listen, because he is fleet of foot, he also believes he is superior to Abner, which is not true. Abner proves that he is the better fighter and kills him on the spot. Everyone who came to this place where Asahel died stopped and left off chasing Abner and his army.

24 "Joab also and Abishai pursued after Abner: and the sun went down when they were come to the hill of Ammah, that lieth before Giah by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon. 25 ¶ And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together after Abner, and became one troop, and stood on the top of an hill. 26 Then Abner called to Joab, and said, Shall the sword devour forever? knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end? how long shall it be then, ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren? 27 And Joab said, As God liveth, unless thou hadst spoken, surely then in the morning the people had gone up everyone from following his brother."

Joab and Abishai also pursued after Abner, but the sun went down, and they must stop. The children of Benjamin gather around Abner, and they stand upon a hilltop. Abner, who started the battle, now realizes that he is beaten. He calls to Joab requesting that the battle cease. Abner, who is losing the battle, seems to be trying to shift the blame for the battle to Joab, by asking him "how long shall it be then, ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren?" Joab tells Abner, if you had not requested the battle to stop, in the morning it would have continued. We point out that Israel is now doing what God has told them not to do. They have been commanded not to fight against one another.

We remind the readers: this action was instigated by Abner, who also set up Ishbosheth as king over Israel, not God. We believe that Abner is an egoist, who wants to have control over all Israel, and eventually take the kingship to himself. Why would we believe this? All of Israel already knows that God has anointed David to be king over Israel, however, long left off obeying God, they are willing to follow a man, in defiance of God's already known announcement. This action, of the majority of Israel, manifest that they are living according to the ways of the world and not by "**thus saith the Lord.**" Secondly, we saw in: **2Sa 2:10 "Ishbosheth Saul's son was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and reigned two years. But the house of Judah followed David."** We are told that Ishbosheth reigned for two years, but it has been seven and a half years since he began to reign, if he was anointed about the same time as David was anointed king over Judah, which we believe is right. This tells us that Ishbosheth reigned for two years, and then Abner usurped the power from Ishbosheth, and began acting as king in his stead, so Ishbosheth was king as a figurehead only.

What lesson can we learn from this to apply to our lives today? We are not to be warring against one another. If we are fulfilling the great commandment and the second commandment given by Jesus, seen in: **Mt 22:36-39; 36 "Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."** we will not have infighting in our churches. Here we see two forces at work: David and his men are under the direction of God and living by "**thus saith the Lord.**" Abner and the rest of Israel, who are still in rejection of God.

A secondary lesson is that the principle of men wanting positions to use them for power over others is as real in the church as it is in life. We have seen this happen firsthand and know that it is real. We also know that it should not be so in the church of Jesus Christ. Remember what Jesus said in: **Mt 20:25-28; 25 "But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. 26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; 27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: 28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."** No church office should be used to exercise dominion over another.

28 "So Joab blew a trumpet, and all the people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more, neither fought they anymore. 29 And Abner and his men walked all that night through the plain, and passed over Jordan, and went through all Bithron, and they came to Mahanaim. 30 And Joab returned from following Abner: and when he had gathered all the people together, there lacked of David's servants nineteen men and Asahel. 31 But the servants of David had smitten of Benjamin, and of Abner's men, so that three hundred and threescore men died. 32 And they took up Asahel, and buried him in the sepulcher of his father, which was in Bethlehem. And Joab and his men went all night, and they came to Hebron at break of day."

Joab blows the trumpet that ends the battle. Abner and his men gather and go home with a loss of three hundred sixty men. Joab and his army gather and return home with a loss of twenty men.

Notice where Abner and the army of Israel return to. Mahanaim which means **double camp.** What has that got to do with anything? It shows the standard under which Israel is living. They want to be known as God's chosen nation Israel, and they want to live by the standards of the world. They are flying a double standard.

Notice, Joab and the men of Judah return to Hebron, which means **the seat of association.** Here we see the picture of a people who are focused upon God, and thereby they are associated with, and can claim the title of Children of God.

Now, let us make an application of this to our own lives as Christians. Are we flying the flag of double standards? Or are we truly associated with God in a personal way, and serving him in faithfulness? Are we

proclaiming, like Israel, that we are God's people, yet our lives show forth that we are living like the world lives without God? Or are we living like Judah, who is gathered to, and living under the command of the God given King? How careful we should be, in all our actions in life. If we are going to proclaim that we are Christians; we need God to help us fly the banner, of the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and protect us from flying a double banner.

Israel is still choosing to live like the world. Judah is still trying to live according to the will of God, under the reign of the God given king, David. Lord God, help us to lift the banner of Jesus Christ high in our lives, we pray in his holy name, Amen!