

## II SAMUEL 1-3

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to II Samuel chapter 1 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

Now keep in mind that in the earliest Hebrew manuscripts there was no division between I and II Samuel, it was all one book that was simply called “*Samuel*.”

But when the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek, in the Septuagint version, they were the first to divide this book into two and this division continues on today, even in the Hebrew printed Bibles.

Keep in mind that in I Samuel we saw Israel move from a period of the Judges to the period of the Kings, from a theocracy under Samuel, the last Judge, to a monarchy under King Saul, the first King in Israel. Keep in mind that the people wanted a King like the rest of the nations had, this is what they wanted and not necessarily what God wanted.

And now, as we move into II Samuel, we will see the focus shift to David who will become the King in Israel just as God had said.

As we have seen in the closing studies of I Samuel, the Philistine army came after the children of Israel, and since the Lord was not speaking to Saul, he consults a medium so that he can talk with Samuel, who is dead to see what he should do.

And like I said, I don’t believe this was Samuel but a demon that was speaking to this medium and this demon told Saul that he was going to die in battle along with his sons.

And that is exactly what happened. Saul was severely wounded by the Philistines, and he asks his armorbearer to kill him, but he refuses, and Saul falls on his own sword and is presumably dead.

When his armorbearer sees that their King was dead, or so he thinks, he kills himself.

And as you will see as we pick up in II Samuel this evening, we are going to get some more details about what happened to Saul at the end of his life, a man who had great potential to be used by God but fell far short because he refused to come to God and obey what God was telling him to do.

Remember what Saul said, and it did come to pass, “**I have sinned . . . I have played the fool and erred exceedingly.**” I Samuel 26:21.

That was the story of his life!

Now before we get to our text this evening, how many of you remember Paul Harvey?

He would tell a story and then, as you are listening and wondering where this is going, he would tell you and blow your mind, and with those words he would say, “***And now for the rest of the story.***”

Let me share this with you.

You know what the news is. In a minute you’re going to hear The Rest of the Story.

His name was Walter Elias, a city boy by birth, the son of a building contractor.

Before Walter was five, his parents moved from Chicago to a farm near Marceline, Missouri. And it was there on the farm that Walter would have his first encounter with death.

Walter was only seven that particular lazy summer afternoon not much different from other afternoons. Dad was tending to farm chores; Mother was in the house. It was the perfect day for a young fellow to go exploring.

Now just beyond a grove of graceful willows was an apple orchard. There Walter could make-believe to his heart’s content: that he was lost, which he never was, or that he had captured a wild animal, which he never had.

But today was different. Directly in front of him, about thirty feet away, perched in the low-drooping branch of an apple tree and apparently sound asleep was an owl.

The boy froze.

He remembered his father telling him that owls rested during the day so they could hunt by night. What a wonderful pet that funny little bird would make. If only Walter could approach it without awakening it, and snatch it from the tree.

With each step, the lad winced to hear dry leaves and twigs crackle beneath his feet. The owl did not stir.

Closer and closer and at last young Walter was standing under the limb just within range of his quarry.

Slowly he reached up with one hand and grabbed the bird by its legs. He had captured it!

But the owl, waking suddenly, came alive like no other animal Walter had ever seen! In a flurry of beating wings, wild eyes and frightened cries it struggled against the boy's grasp. Walter, stunned, held on.

Now it's difficult to imagine how what happened next, happened. Perhaps the response was sparked by gouging talons or by fear itself. But at some point the terrified boy, still clinging to the terrified bird, flung it to the ground and stomped it to death.

When it was over, a disbelieving Walter gazed down at the broken heap of bronze feathers and blood. And he cried.

Walter ran from the orchard but later returned to bury the owl, the little pet he would never know. Each shovelful of earth from the shallow grave was moistened with tears of deep regret. And for months thereafter, the owl visited Walter's dreams.

Ashamed, he would tell no one of the incident until many years later. By then, the world forgave him.

For that sad and lonely summer's day in the early spring of Walter Elias brought with it an awakening of the meaning of life.

Walter never, ever again killed a living creature.

Although all the boyhood promises could not bring that one little owl back to life, through its death a whole world of animals came into being.

For it was then that a grieving seven-year-old boy attempting to atone for a thoughtless misdeed, first sought to possess the animals of the forest while allowing them to run free by drawing them.

Now the boy too is gone, but his drawings live on in the incomparable, undying art of Walter Elias Disney.

Walt Disney.

And now you know, *The Rest of the Story*.

- Paul Harvey

And that is what we will see in our study this evening, the rest of the story.

You see, back in I Samuel 31:4-6 we are told, **“Then Saul said to his armorbearer, ‘Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised men come and thrust me through and abuse me.’ But his armorbearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword and fell on it. And when his armorbearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword, and died with him. So Saul, his three sons, his armorbearer, and all his men died together that same day.”**

And now for the rest of the story.

With that said, let's begin reading in II Samuel chapter 1, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

## **II SAMUEL 1**

### **VERSES 1-4**

Remember back in I Samuel chapter 30 David slaughtered the Amalekites because they had gone and taken his family and the families of his men captive.

Now, after that victory and getting his people back, they return home to Ziklag.

And we see that some three days have passed by, and word comes to David about the battle between the children of Israel and the Philistines.

David sees a man running towards him, and as David looked at this man, he knew that the news was not good. The man that came into their city from this area had his clothes torn and dust on his head, which was a sign of mourning.

And news comes to David that not only was Israel defeated, but King Saul and Jonathan, his son, was also killed in this battle. And, as we are told in I Samuel 31;1-8, Saul's three sons were killed in this battle!

It was a sad and tragic ending of a man who could have done great things for God but instead, played the fool!

## VERSES 5-10

So David asks a good question. He wants to know how this young man knows that Saul and Jonathan are dead!

And in verse 6 the man shares ***“the rest of the story.”***

And let me say this. What is taking place here is another controversial portion of Scripture because it seems to contradict what we were told back in I Samuel chapter 31, that Saul fell on his sword and died and yet here, this Amalekite said that he killed Saul.

I do believe that King Saul and his sons died on the same day but not at the same time!

Who is right and if one is wrong, is there a contradiction to the Scriptures?

First of all, there are many great Bible teachers who feel that this Amalekite is lying to David to try and get some points with the new King.

Clarke makes that point as he tells us, ***“The whole account which this young man gives is a fabrication: in many of the particulars it is grossly self-contradictory. There is no fact in the case but the bringing of the crown, or diadem, and bracelets of Saul; which, as he appears to have been a plunderer of the slain, he found on the field of battle; and he brought them to David, and told the lie of having dispatched Saul merely to ingratiate himself with David.”***

As much as I do respect those that feel that this Amalekite is lying, I have to disagree.

Here’s what I believe happened. The Philistines wounded Saul, and he was dying, and he knew if he were left alive when the Philistines got to him, they would torture him.

Thus, since his armorbearer refused to kill him, he fell on his own sword but still did not die; it was a futile attempt at suicide.

And yes, his armor bearer thought King Saul was dead and thus, he kills himself, but I don’t believe he was dead yet.

And what often happened in these battles is the Amalekites would come on the scene while the Philistines or whatever invading army was in hot pursuit of their enemy, and strip the dead of their clothes, armor, whatever they could get their hands on.

And when this Amalekite came upon Saul, he recognized him as the King of Israel by what he was wearing and Saul was still alive, barely!

And I believe Saul asked this man to kill him and he did.

Also, Josephus, in *The Antiquities of The Jews*, writes regarding Saul the following. *“As for he himself he fought with great bravery, and when he had received so many wounds that he was not able to bear up, nor to oppose any longer, and yet was not able to kill himself . . . [he] asked a certain young man that stood by, who he was, and when he understood that he was an Amalekite, he desired him to force the sword through him, because he was not able to do it with his own hands, and thereby to procure him such a death as he desired. This young man did accordingly . . .”* (Josephus, The Antiquities of The Jews, book 6, 370-372)

Now, in I Samuel we are told that Saul died that day, and I believe he did, but not by his own sword but by the hands of this Amalekite!

And, as we will see as we read on, this Amalekite does not deny the fact that he did this deed even when his life is on the line.

You can agree with me or not, but I don't believe he was lying.

Let me ask you this. Who killed King Saul?

An Amalekite!

Think about that for a minute. First of all, remember the sin that caused God to withdraw the Holy Spirit from Saul and anoint David as King!

*It was Saul's failure to kill all the Amalekites.*

How ironic that it's an Amalekite who finishes off Saul.

Here's the thing. Partial obedience to God always ends up coming back to bite us!

In the short term we may not feel its teeth – but years later we can reap its results.

Also, the Amalekites are a type of the flesh and if you don't put to death the flesh, if you don't crucify the flesh, it will eventually kill you. Maybe not physically, but with relationships, marriages, jobs, health and then like!

Saul was killed by the flesh, his refusal to crucify it!

Now, after this young man, this Amalekite killed Saul, after he did this deed, he brought to David the news, and showed David the crown and bracelet of the King to verify what he had done.

Why did he do that?

I think he was looking for a reward from David.

And yes, he will be rewarded for his deeds, but not the way he thinks.

### VERSES 11-12

If your enemy, who for years has been on you to kill you or harm you, is now found dead, how would you respond?

I think for many of us we would say, ***"Praise the LORD!"***

But that was not David's response here. He is mourning over the death of Saul, of Jonathan and the loss for the nation of Israel itself!

That is the heart of David, and it is the heart of God!

Imagine, some 20 years earlier or so David was told that he was to be King and most of the time after that he was on the run from King Saul, who wanted David dead!



Now the throne was his and yet, we see his focus is not upon himself as Meyer tells us, ***“His generous soul, oblivious to itself, poured out a flood of the noblest tears man ever shed for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Israel, because they were fallen by the sword.”***

What an example for us!

Here’s the thing. We can let bitterness, hatred, and unforgiveness control our lives but make no mistake about it, this is a choice. It is not something that is imposed or forced upon us.

You can let these things make you bitter or better and for David, he used it to make him better and for Saul, he used it to make him bitter!

It is as Paul said in Ephesians 4:31-32, **“Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”**

That is the way we need to look at situations and make the right choice in the way we will respond in situations as we allow the Holy Spirit to work in us so that He can work through us.

We do not want to grieve the Holy Spirit and put a halt to the work He wants to do in us and through us!

You see, perspective is everything!

### VERSES 13-16

This is not exactly what this Amalekite had in mind.

The young man expected a *reward*, but got a *sword*!

He thought when he brought the Kings crown and bracelet to David that he would be promoted in his kingdom or get some kind of reward, but instead, he was put to death for what he did!

David refused to touch Saul because the Lord had placed him as King, but this man had no respect for the position Saul had and he paid dearly for it with his life!

We have touched on this a little already, but this is important for us to understand.

You see, another reason I believe that this Amalekite killed Saul is because of the picture the Lord is painting for us here.

You see, the Amalekites are a type of the flesh, which God instructed Saul to utterly destroy back in I Samuel chapter 15, but he didn't.

And in the end, it was the flesh that caused Saul to be killed. His failure to deal with the flesh also caused him to be removed from the ministry. God is not going to use anyone who makes a treaty with his flesh.

Remember what Paul said to those in Corinth, **“But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”**  
I Corinthians 9:27.

You must crucify the flesh, put it to death, or it will rise-up and destroy you, it will remove you from the ministry.

Let me share some Scriptures with you in regard to what the Amalekites do in our lives, or what the flesh, that carnal nature does to us.

You see, we need to be on guard, or it will destroy us!

- Deuteronomy 25:17-18 tells us, **“Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt, how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you were tired and weary; and he did not fear God.”** In other words, the Amalekites, like our flesh nature, attack the tired, the weak because they are easy prey. Be on guard!
- Again, in Deuteronomy 25, verse 18 we are told, **“... and he did not fear God.”** The Amalekites did not fear God and our flesh nature does not fear God, it does as it pleases!
- In Exodus 17:16 we are told, **“for he said, ‘Because the Lord has sworn: the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.’”** In other words, God said that there would be a permanent state of war with the Amalekites just as there is a permanent state of war with the flesh; it will not end till we go to be with the Lord!
- We are told in Exodus 17:11, **“And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.”** In other words, the Amalekites were defeated through prayer and that is true with our flesh nature, it will not be won by our own efforts but by our surrender to God and prayer!
- I like this verse here in Exodus 17:14 that tells us, **“Then the Lord said to Moses, Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.”** I like that because it tells me that like with the Amalekites, God will wipe out any remembrance of this flesh nature and that will happen when we go to be with Him!
- Notice what Exodus 17:13 tells us, **“So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.”** Who defeated the Amalekites? It was Joshua and our Joshua; Jesus is the One who gives us the victory over the flesh! And it is also with the sword or the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God that gives to us the victory!
- In Numbers 24:20 we are told, **“Then he looked on Amalek, and he took up his oracle and said: ‘Amalek was first among the nations, But shall be last until he perishes.’”** Yes, the Amalekites may have been first at one time but no longer and yes, that flesh nature may be in control in this world but one day righteousness will flow throughout this land and that flesh nature will perish!

What a powerful lesson for us to learn, that the flesh must be crucified, we are not to play with it, entertain it, but put it to death or it will destroy our lives as Saul found out!

VERSES 17-18

David's sorrow was sincere and deeply felt. He crafted a song to express the depth of his feelings. And this song was placed in the *Book of Jasher* or the *Book of the Upright!*

The book of Jasher, also spoken of in Joshua 10:13, may be a collection of songs and poetry to the various war heroes.

This book is lost today, but this is one of the songs that was placed in this book.

The title of this song is, *"The Song of the Bow."*

One writer said this of the song that David wrote, *"(It) stands out as the genuine outpouring of a noble heart, a heart too great to harbor one selfish thought in this dark hour of his country's humiliation."*

David is absorbed with the nation's loss - not his gain.

VERSES 19-20

Look at the love that David had not only for Jonathan, but also for Saul even though Saul was trying to kill him for many years.

And in their death, he is mourning.

Gath and Ashkelon are two of the five main Philistine cities located along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. And David rightly recognizes that once the enemies have heard what has happened to Israel, to their King, they will rejoice over it!

How true that is even today. The enemies of God stand in wait for us to fail, to succumb to the flesh and they are ready to rejoice over it. Instead of letting them rejoice over our failures, may they see the victory we have in Christ and be drawn to Him!

VERSE 21

Now this is interesting to me. Saul and his men were slaughtered on Mount Gilboa, and here David pronounces a curse on this area.

He calls for it to be a rocky, barren mountain, which it is to this day.

The areas around Mount Gilboa are beautiful and throughout Israel millions of trees have been planted by the Jews, but not on Mount Gilboa, just as David said.

And for Saul, his shield was not anointed with oil, and the implication was that he was not prepared for battle. You see, they would place oil on their shields to help deflect the arrows!

But Saul was missing more than that. He was missing the oil of the Holy Spirit and without God he was not going to prosper, and he didn't!

VERSE 22

David is saying that Saul and Jonathan fought valiantly.

In fact, Josephus tells us, “. . . *Saul the king of Israel, and his sons fought courageously . . . So they brought upon themselves the whole power of the enemy, till they were encompassed round and slain, but not before they had killed many of the Philistines.*”

(Josephus, The Antiquities of The Jews, book 6, 368-369)

VERSE 23

With all of Saul's irrational behavior, Jonathan, Saul's son, still loved him.

That is unconditional love, *AGAPE love*.

It is the kind of love we need to have for others, even our enemies. And it is a love that does not come from within; it comes from above and flows into our lives and then through our lives!

#### VERSE 24

David wants them to remember some of the prosperity that Saul brought to the nation, but now the Philistines have taken that away from them.

#### VERSES 25-27

David and Jonathan had a love for each other, one that was based in the Lord, it was a brotherly love and not a sexual love, like some try to make it!

Now, as we close this chapter out, things are not looking good for the children of Israel.

The Philistines have successfully driven a wedge between the northern most tribes and the central area of Ephraim and Benjamin.

The area east of the Jordan River was basically untouched, but the picture that is being painted is one of fragmentation and uncertainty. Israel had lost its King, and without a commander to lead the people, the people are scattered. They needed someone who could unite the country back together and lead the people.

That is the basic idea that is flowing as we move into chapter 2 in our study of II Samuel.

They don't need a *"Yes we can!"* man but a *"Yes, the Lord can!"*

## **II SAMUEL 2**

### **VERSES 1-3**

David was in Ziklag, after the death of Saul and Jonathan, and he knows he is not to remain in Philistine country, so he inquires of the Lord! David could have just left Ziklag, but where was he to go and that is what he wants the Lord to tell him, to direct his life and that is always the best way to go!

Remember what we are told in Proverbs 16:25, “**There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.**” That is why we are to seek direction from the Lord and then walk accordingly!

David wanted to be right in line with what the Lord had for his life! And the Lord tells David to go to Hebron, which will become his base of operations for the next several years.

Hebron was located in the mountains of Judah, between Beersheba and Jerusalem, about 20 miles from each.

It was also named Kirjath Arba in Genesis 23:2 and Joshua 14:15, 15:13.

So David obeys the Lord and takes his family and his men and their families to Hebron and he will be there for 7½ years and it is here that he will be anointed King over Israel, at least part of Israel, the tribe of Judah.

He will reign over the entire nation for 33 years, 40 years including those years over Judah!

Hebron was also one of the six cities of refuge that are mentioned in Joshua chapter 20.

There were three cities of refuge located on the east side of the Jordan River and three cities located on the west side of the Jordan River, spread out from north to south throughout the land of Israel.

They were established as a place of safety for those who accidentally murdered someone. It was a place of protection from the avenger of blood.

But once you entered the city you could not leave it until the death of the High Priest. If you did you would be no longer safe from the avenger of blood.

#### VERSES 4-7

It has been some 20 years or so since Samuel whispered in David's ear, ***"Daviyd, you are the next King in Israel"*** and now it has come to pass.

Yes, there has been a lot of testing and growing in David's life in those years, but it was what David needed and now, what God has promised, He has brought to pass!

Also note that David honors the men of Jabesh Gilead because they risked their lives to get the bodies of Saul and Jonathan and Saul's other two sons and bring them back for a decent burial. He blesses them for the respect they showed to their King and his sons!

#### VERSES 8-11

We know that three of Saul's sons were killed in battle and we are not sure why this son, Ishbosheth was not with them.

It is possible that he was an illegitimate son for his name means, ***"a man of shame"*** and that could be the reason he was not with Saul. We really don't know for sure.



But this is what we do know. Ishbosheth, Saul's youngest and only surviving son, has been established as King by Abner, who was the commander of Saul's army.

And Ishbosheth was only a puppet King; the power behind his kingdom was Abner. And Ishbosheth reigned over 11 of the 12 tribes in Israel, and his base of operations was Mahanaim, on the east side of the Jordan River.

Why didn't David just gather his men and take over the throne from Ishbosheth?

Because David was not going to force himself into this position, God had brought him this far and it would be God who would raise him up over the entire nation.

#### VERSES 12-14

So here we see two military leaders coming together with their men. Abner was Ishbosheth's commander. Joab was the commander of David's men and they both were ruthless and lose cannons, you might say.

Joab had two brothers, Abishai and Asahel and they were related to David, they were his nephews, the sons of David's sister Zeruiah. (See I Chronicles 2:16)

And as they gather across from each other they come up with this plan that 12 of their men would face off with each other in battle to see who would win.

Keep in mind that they are not at war with each other, not yet. They are just making their rounds, you might say, and as they were at this watering hole, they come up with this plan.

Why was this so important?

For their own egos and nothing more. Life was not important to these men and thus, they basically say, ***"Let's get ready to rumble!"***

VERSES 15-17

Okay, there was no war between them, but now, with this foolish plan, they are at war!

This little match between these men is short lived as these 24 men kill each other, and what started out as a competitive skirmish, ended in a battle to the death.

We see that 24 men die for nothing, and it escalated into a free for all as both sides start to fight and David's men triumph over Ishbosheth's.

Notice that there is no mention of seeking the Lord, seeing what the Lord wants these men to do, but it was the flesh that was fed and that only leads to death and destruction as we see here!

And when Abner sees that David's men are winning, he tries to escape.

VERSES 18-23

As Abner's men are defeated, Abner is on the run, trying to get away and Joab, his brothers Abishai and Asahel are in hot pursuit after him.

But Asahel was much faster or as we are told, "**as fleet of foot as a wild gazelle.**"

Thus, Asahel catches up to Abner and Abner tells Asahel, "***Son, if you know what is good for you, then turn and fight someone else, but don't come after me for you will be sorry if you do.***"

He warns Asahel to leave him alone and amazingly, Asahel is not even prepared to fight, he is unarmed. What a mistake.

And Asahel refuses to heed the warning and Abner tells him, "***This is your last warning son. Don't continue after me or you will regret it!***"

Abner gives Asahel a fair warning, but he again does not heed it. And really, there was no reason for him to go after Abner, David did not tell him to do this, but Joab, the commander encouraged this encounter and many lost their lives because of it, including Asahel!

I think I can safely say that Asahel got the point!

Now we are told that Abner killed Asahel with the blunt side of his spear, which seems impossible to do.

Please understand that they would sharpen the blunted end of their spear so they could stick it in the ground when they were not using it.

You would not want to stick the spear end, the blade, into the ground because that would dull it.

And keep in mind that Asahel was very fast and picture in your mind what is going on here. He is running full blast and all of a sudden Abner stops dead in his tracks, turns around, and the blunt end of Abner's spear goes right through Asahel and kills him!

What a sad situation this is, and it is not over yet because Joab will want to avenge the death of his brother!

#### VERSES 24-28

As we can see, David's men continue in pursuit of Abner and his troops. And Abner's men have enough time to re-gather and regroup as they station themselves on the top of a hill and are waiting for Joab and his men to come and get them!

And Abner calls for peace and we see Joab respond to Abner's plea for calmness in this situation.

They are brethren fighting against each other. And if Abner's call for sanity would have gone unanswered, then more bloodshed would have been spilt and the only victor in this battle would have been the enemies of Israel.

And Joab heeds the call for peace; they did not pursue the armies of Abner any longer.

Here's the thing. The flesh wants to fight, it wants to win, but in winning the battle you might lose the war. It is much better to make peace with the brethren than to fight against them.

As the saying goes, ***"A bulldog can whip a skunk, but is it really worth the effort."***

And yes, there are things we need to fight for, but many things we get in battles for and they are nothing more than selfish reasons and we should not be doing these things.

I am not saying that if there is heresy being taught or sin is flaunted that you ignore it, but again, sometimes we fight over things that are meaningless, and the only victor are the enemies of God!

#### VERSES 29-32

What, no celebration of this great victory?

Joab only lost 20 men, but they were able to kill 360 of Abner's men!

I think that there was no celebration because these were brethren and thus, both lost, there were no winners like I have said.

Now some say that Joab should not have made peace with Abner because he was the enemy, and you can't serve the enemy!

I understand what they are saying, but again, I see no praying, no seeking the Lord in this battle and thus, I don't think this is what God wanted. Also, they were brethren and they should not have been fighting each other!

Do you think God has the power to raise up David to be King over the entire nation?

Of course He does and thus, as David was doing, just letting God work and he did not want to get in the way. He did not have to take the kingdom by force!

Did that work?

Look at the next chapter and you tell me!

Before we get to that let me say this. Joab buried his brother, Asahel, but he doesn't forget who murdered him. And a lethal bitterness begins to brew in the heart of Joab toward Abner. And in the end, it will not be good!

## **II SAMUEL 3**

### **VERSES 1-5**

God was raising David up; he did not have to try and gain this position on his own.

And what God was doing in David the people were seeing, and they were aligning themselves under his authority.

On the other hand, we see the power Ishbosheth continue to grow weak because his power was accomplished by the works of his hands and not by the power of God! And even that power was nothing, and it was getting even weaker! Abner was the power behind the throne!

It is as Paul said in Philippians chapter 4, **“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me . . . And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”** Philippians 4:13, 19.

We also see the weakness of David here, women!

He is multiplying wives unto himself, which God forbid him to do. God said in Deuteronomy 17:17, in speaking to those who would be King in Israel, “**Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away . . .**”

They also were not to multiply riches and horses to themselves. David only broke one of the three, but his son Solomon did all three and it did affect his walk with God.

We are going to see over the next several weeks that David was also affected by his actions. His household will be involved in rape, murder, sibling rivalry, dishonor towards David and trying to usurp the kingdom from David, and-so-on.

Look at what transpired with these six sons who were born to his six wives.

Amnon raped his half-sister and was murdered by his half-brother.

Chileab is also known as Daniel in 1 Chronicles 3:1. The few mentions of this son indicate that perhaps he died young or that he was an ungodly, unworthy man.

Absalom murdered his half-brother and led a civil war against his father David, attempting to murder David.

Adonijah tried to seize the throne from David and David’s appointed successor - then he tried to take one of David’s concubines and was executed for his arrogance.

We can fairly assume that Shephatiah and Ithream either died young or were ungodly and unworthy men, mentioned only once again in the Scriptures - in a generic listing of David’s sons. (1 Chronicles 3:1-4)

Why did this happen?

It happened because David did not obey the commands of God’s.

VERSES 6-7

Like I have said, the real power behind Ishbosheth's kingdom is Abner. He really was the one in charge, and Ishbosheth was a weak and powerless figurehead.

And now please understand that to take the wife or concubine of the late King was to appropriate his property and to make a bid for the throne.

We will see this with Absalom in II Samuel 16:22, as he usurps the throne from David, his father.

Now we don't know if Abner went through with this, but he probably did. He figured since he was running the show he wanted some of the fringe benefits and so he took Rizpah, Saul's concubine, to himself.

VERSES 8-11

Abner knew all along that God had anointed David as King over Saul and his descendants, but Abner was trying to fight against the will of God.

But now that Ishbosheth accused him of this action, he sides with David and says that David's kingdom will extend from Dan to Beersheba, or from the north to the south.

Not only that but Ishbosheth could do nothing to Abner because he feared this military man.

Isn't it interesting that he knew the truth and yet fought against it and then when he saw that he really could not win, he joined forces with David!

That is not the right heart that God is looking for!

VERSES 12-16

We see here that Abner wants to make this peace deal with David, but David wants something in return, his wife Michal.

And what a sad picture this is, and I don't believe that what David was doing was right.

You see, there was a problem. Her father Saul gave Michal to Paltiel, while David was running from Saul. And Paltiel loved Michal very much, but David was doing it more for a political move, I don't think he really loved her.

David had several wives and now he is going to take Michal away from her husband who loves her very much.

And as she is being taken away, her husband is in tears over what is taking place. He is broken hearted over the situation.

And Abner, the sensitive man that he was, tells him to just go home and stop his whining.

And this man heads home alone, while David adds to the number of wives he has.

VERSES 17-19

Keep in mind that David was King only over the tribe of Judah and thus, Abner, now that he has made this treaty with David, is endorsing David as the King over all of Israel. He is telling the leaders, the people that God has anointed David to be King and thus, make him King if you want your enemies to be defeated!

Interesting how fast Abner changed sides from Ishbosheth to David when it benefited him!



VERSES 20-21

Abner and some of his men come to David and David has a feast for them and as Abner is leaving, he tells David that he will let the people know that you are the man, you are the King of Israel!

He thinks that he is the one who gathered all Israel before David, which is interesting because he won't, but the Lord will!

Don't take credit for what God is doing, or you will be humbled!

VERSES 22-25

As Abner left David, in came Joab and he finds out that the one who killed his brother, the one who sided with Ishbosheth was in town, sitting with David and David let him go!

He can't believe what he is hearing because he thinks Abner is a double agent and that Ishbosheth is looking for a way to destroy David.

Think about that for a minute. If Abner wanted David dead, he would have killed him at this meeting. So obviously that was not the case, but Joab saw things differently, probably because he wanted to avenge the death of his brother by the hands of Abner! And we will see that as we get to II Samuel 3:30.

VERSES 26-27

Make no mistake about it, Joab was a loose cannon and did what he wanted and not always what the King wanted.

David was looking for peace and now Joab was thinking about himself.

I have had people like that in the ministry, they want to do their own thing, and I am sorry, I am not the King, but I am the pastor, and I am responsible and accountable before God for what takes place in this church.

Even my wife has to run everything by me that she is doing with women's ministry, and I am sorry, loose cannons will cause problems like we see here with Joab!

He kills Abner and Abner is killed just outside the gate of the city of refuge, Hebron!

It truly was against the Law for Joab to do this, but he did what he wanted to do and look at the destruction it brought!

In the end, Joab will pay for his actions!

#### VERSES 28-30

David, upon hearing what Joab did places a curse upon him and his house. Now here's the problem. David did not discipline Joab for what he did, and his inaction was going to be trouble for David as he does not discipline those who needed it!

Joab, I am sure thought he was doing the right thing, but he was wrong. He let his emotions get the better of him and we need to be careful because it is easy for us to do the same.

Spurgeon reminds us, ***"We may even deceive ourselves into the belief that we are honoring our Lord and Master when we are, all the while, bringing disgrace upon his name."***

That is what Joab did with his King, David!

And for David, he washed his hands of this because he was unaware of what Joab did and thus, he placed this at the feet of Joab!

So we see here that Joab got his revenge.

But for David, he has a political crisis on his hands.

What do I mean by that?

When word spreads in Israel that Abner tried to defect, but was killed – nobody will be willing to trust David as their King.

What will he do?

How will he handle this?

Let's read on and see.

#### VERSES 31-34

Now some commentators believe that since Abner left Hebron, which was a city of refuge, that he was no longer under the protection of the city.

Thus, Joab had every right to kill him.

The only problem with that is Asahel was killed in wartime, and thus Abner was not guilty of premeditated murder, but justified in his actions.

We see here David lamenting the death of Abner, this great man of war, who died as a fool, at the hands of a wicked man, Joab.

He did not die as a war hero, but a fool.

Also, David called Joab to mourn and yes, he may have been mourning on the outside but inside, I think he was happy in what he did to Abner.

It is as one writer said,

Joab was smiling on the inside, but David made him join in a display of public mourning.

***“And King David followed the coffin.”***

It reminds me of the casket that slipped from the hands of the pallbearers, and slid down a grassy hill. It jumped the curb, and headed right for the town pharmacy. The casket crashed through the plate glass window and stopped at the counter.

The funeral director chased the casket into the drug store, cleared his throat, and said to the pharmacist, ***“Wow, I want to thank you for stopping my coffin!”***

David mourned the loss of Abner just as you’re mourning this joke.

- Sandy Adams, II Samuel 1-4

### VERSES 35-37

Notice the wisdom and the compassion and the heart of David here. He could have just ignored what happened to Abner or say that he got what he deserved. But he didn’t! He did not let his emotions drive him and thus, he lamented for this man who was murdered, and the people saw the heart of David and respected him for that!

This murder could have driven a bigger wedge within this nation but instead it will draw them together!

May we as Christians be peacemakers, at least may it be the passion of our hearts even though it may not always be received that way!

### VERSES 38-39

Joab was a great man of war, but he also was uncontrollable. Even David could not control him. He was a loose cannon ready to explode and he did whatever he wanted.

One of David’s last charges to his son Solomon was to kill Joab for his wicked behavior. And that is what Solomon will do in I Kings chapter 2.

I don't know about you, but I don't like messes but as much as I don't like them, they are part of life!

Solomon reminds us in Proverbs 14:4, **“Where no oxen are, the trough is clean; But much increase comes by the strength of an ox.”**

Or as The Living Bible puts it, **“An empty stable stays clean-but there is no income from an empty stable.”**

In other words, if there are no oxen in the barns of course the stalls will be clean.

What Solomon is saying is that to have any type of meaningful results in your life it is going to take the investment of your time, it will take work, and it may even get messy. Thus, do not give up but keep on working knowing that there will be messes from time to time!

As I close this evening, keep in mind that David is growing stronger and stronger before the people and will unite the 12 tribes of Israel into one kingdom shortly.

On the other end of the spectrum, Ishbosheth is getting weaker and weaker as the one who was the power behind the throne, Abner, was murdered. Now Ishbosheth is on his own and it will not turn out well!

And we will see that as we move on in our studies of II Samuel!

David was not a perfect man but a man who loved the Lord and was willing to surrender to His authority.

He was a man after God's own heart!

