

2nd Samuel Ch 2-3

Vs 1

We read here at the beginning of this vs, “It happened after this”, after what? Well we remember that Ch 1 signaled the death of a dynasty, the dynasty of Saul, and dawns the beginning of another, the dynasty of David. And so chapter 2 begins by calling our attention to that fact, and drawing our remembrance to the fact that Saul had died, as had 3 of his 4 sons. And David called for a time of mourning over Saul and Jonathon, considering them a great loss for the nation. And we drew attention to the incredible work of forgiveness that had transpired in David’s heart towards Saul, and how we could see that to be true by the words of this lamentation, this song that he wrote to commemorate their lives. Because there’s no vindictive overtones, or hints of bitterness woven through these words. There’s no sigh of relief in David’s words as if to say, “Ah, I can finally get back to my life, Saul has robbed some 15 yrs or so of my life, took my 20’s right out from under me and he finally got what he had coming to him.” Last week I believe I mentioned that Saul took David’s 30’s from him as well, but he’s 30 when he takes the throne in Judah (so forgive me for confusing my facts), but the majority of David’s youth Saul took from him, years that David would never get back, yet David didn’t hold it against Saul. He called Saul the beauty of Israel, mighty, and a weapon of war, those aren’t words of bitterness, those are words of honor, that’s how we know that David truly, from his heart held nothing against Saul, because Jesus said, *“Those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart.”* Matt 15:18. And the words of David’s mouth regarding Saul were those of love and forgiveness, now did he condone, or commend Saul for his sin? No, but he didn’t hold it personally against him, why? Because David knew the mercy that God had shown him, how he’d been forgiven though he didn’t deserve it. What’s the lesson for you and me? *“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 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.”* Eph 4:29-32 You see, having been forgiven, David forgave, what an important lesson for us all. Something else that Wiersbe points out regarding the tribute David paid to Saul is the example he set in paying loving tribute to those who have died in battle to protect their country, another important observation to be made there.

And so it was after *these* things, Saul’s death, David’s mourning and tribute to Saul and Jonathon that David *inquired* of the Lord. And this verse reveals to us a big secret when it came to David’s success, gives us real insight as to how and why it was that he was so effective in his service to the Lord. And it was because of that very reason, “David inquired of the Lord.” He sought God’s direction for his life, he’s learned how it goes when he doesn’t inquire of the Lord, it cost him over a year in one of the biggest backslides of his life because he decided to do something of his own initiative with out seeking the counsel of God in regards to it. (And that’s something worth pointing out.)

David made some huge mistakes in his life, but he always learned from them, you're going to make mistakes, I make mistakes constantly, but the question is, how many times are we repeat offenders before we learn our lesson? Making mistakes is part of life, David made a mistake when he said in his heart that Saul was going to kill him and so he was just going to seek refuge in Philistine country where Saul wouldn't pursue him. That was a mistake, God wouldn't have had him go that direction, God would have been his refuge and his hiding place, not Philistine country, not the world.

That was a mistake, and it cost David big time, some of the results of that experience would follow him throughout his entire life. But he's learned his lesson, and before he just assumes something in his heart, he inquires of the Lord, or to put it in our modern vernacular, "He prayed", "He sought the Lord for direction in life." The bible tells us, "*Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.*" Prov 3:5-6 Not, "He might" direct your paths, or "If He has time for you" He'll direct your paths, "He will" God will direct your life, and ordain your very footsteps if you invite His direction into your life. And David is renown for his seeking of the Lord for his every direction.

You see the question isn't as simple as it sounds. David has been in Philistine country all this time, enemy territory, still is, and now that Saul is dead he doesn't want to simply appear as a political opportunist coming back to Israel just because Saul is dead and now we can get this show on the road. So though we're not to necessarily overly concern ourselves with what others think, there's a real balance in not wanting to show blatant disregard either, but that as the bible says we remain blameless in a given situation. The way we appear in a certain situation can be critical, and we do well to be sensitive to that reality.

So 1st of all we see here that David sought the Lord for general instruction, is it time to make this sort of move or not? And the Lord says, "It's time." Now that David knows it's time (2^{ndly}) he asks for the specifics of the mission, "Where shall I go up?" And the reason that I draw your attention to the flow of that, and how this passage unveils itself is for 2 reasons. #1 God will never force you beyond your will, if you just want God's general direction for your life, He'll give you that. He'll take you as far as you want to go with Him, but He desires to be invited in on the details of our lives, to have an ongoing communion with us. And I believe that because of that God can be a bit vague with us at times, it's not because God is a poor communicator. He could've said, "Go up, and when you go up, go to Hebron." And taken care of all of it in one fell swoop, but #1 God won't force the issue upon you, but then also #2 I believe that God will be at times vague with us because He wants to commune with us. You see if God just lays the whole thing out before me from the Alpha to the Omega then odds are (at least with me, and I assume as human beings we're similar) that I will rarely if ever inquire of the Lord again. I've got my marching orders and I'm off, however if God gives me one aspect of the plan, but then leaves some ambiguity there, I'm prone to get back on my knees, spend time seeking Him, enjoying fellowship with Him, and gaining further more detailed information.

And because God knows the tendencies of man, He'll be vague, because we have need to be on our faces before Him, and He loves to commune with us. And so my encouragement to you is that you learn the lesson of David, that I begin receive this insight into my life, that I inquire of the Lord for direction, and invite God into the details of my life as I spend time *with Him, before Him* in prayer and in His Word.

Vs 2-3

Only one quick thing I want to point out here. And that is that even as these men suffered with David, was mistreated and in many ways rejected all those years because of their association with David, now that David is ascending to the throne; the ones who suffered with him will be the ones who reign with him, the ones who endured all those years will be the ones to reign with him now. What does the bible say? *“For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. If we endure, We shall also reign with Him.”* 2 Tim 2:11-12 The Lord will repay your faithfulness to Him. He who endures to the end will be saved.

Vs 4-7

Now the men of Jabesh Gilead weren't with in the boundaries of Judah, and so what David is basically doing here is inviting them to swear their allegiance to him now even as they had done with Saul. “You've showed kindness and honor to Saul your king, but now he's dead and the men of Judah have anointed me as their king, so now be strong and valiant for me”, is the basic thrust here. And again it's worth pointing out the fact that the men of Judah approached David, he didn't assume a position before them, he let God do the whole work in raising him up. And we can draw from the fact that they anointed him again even after Samuel had anointed him so many years before the fact that we need a fresh anointing of God upon our lives if we're to accomplish His purpose and plans for our lives. We can't depend upon where we were at with God 10-12 years ago, we need God's Holy Spirit poured out fresh upon us (I believe) daily, if we're to walk in the power thereof and fulfill God's will for our lives. And so David stepping into the position that God has called him to (though limited to Judah at this time) receives a fresh anointing upon his life.

Vs8-11

Now you recall that Abner is the fella that David mocked when he went into Saul's camp and got his jug of water and spear. Because as the chief general of Saul's army he was personally responsible for Saul's safety, and as you study the scriptures you learn that Abner was Saul's cousin. And so rather than submit to God's will for David, (when David came to Judah that was the signal for Israel to get behind him as the men of Judah did) he protected his own interests in grabbing Saul's only living son and making him king over the rest of Israel. And rather than follow David, he's opting to fight him, and this will be the beginning of a long civil war in Israel, and of course anytime we refuse to submit ourselves to the will of God it's going to invite problems and pains into our lives. And because of their affections towards Saul the men of Jabesh Gilead turned down David's invitation to be loyal to him, to get behind Saul's son. And they had a good motive, but they made a bad decision, how often we allow our emotions to overrule the will of God for our lives.

And we follow after that person, or that opportunity, not because God has directed us to, or because there's an anointing on their lives that God is calling us to get behind, but because we have some sort of affection, or emotional tie to the situation. And these guys put other people before God's anointed king, and all it did was create division and multiplied problems for the people of God. Beware of placing people or positions, or places above Jesus Christ in your life, it will create a division in your heart, and multiplied problems for the people of God in your life.

Vs12-14

Now allow me to clarify this a bit and then we'll read it through. A quick side note, Zeruah was David's sister making Joab David's nephew. But Saul's general and David's general met at this pool there in Gibeon and even as when Goliath would go out before the Israelites everyday and challenge them to decide the war, that's sort of what's happening here. Abner gets this bright idea, lets just have some of the young men go for it out here before us all in a competition and whoever wins, wins. Joab said, "Fine, let's do it." And apparently it was some type of ancient game of chicken or something so that the young men went out with swords but no armor, but we'll find that none of them were prepared to flinch. They had each purposed that they were going to be the one's who won, you know the bible says, "*The beginning of strife is like releasing water; Therefore stop contention before a quarrel starts.*" Prov 17:14. And again, "*It is honorable for a man to stop striving, Since any fool can start a quarrel.*" Prov 20:4. And what we're witnessing here is the releasing of water, the starting of a quarrel, and it wasn't wise.

Vs15-28

So what started out as some sort of sport escalated into all out civil war, in vs 17 everyone jumped into it and Abner began to be driven back. And Asahel, Joab's brother was a radically fast runner, the kind that makes Carl Lewis look like a sloth or something. And he had Abner in his sights with no intentions of letting him go, probably partially seeking the glory of Abner's death for himself. And possibly knowing that if Abner died the rest of Israel would fall in line because as we'll see it was apparent that Ishbosheth was merely a puppet and Abner was the real power behind the throne. And but Abner was a radically skilled war veteran, notice he lived through that epic battle between Israel and the Philistines, and Asahel was no match for him and he knew it. And so as he's retreating he looks back, sees Asahel on his heels and he says, "Hey, you better just look for your fight somewhere else. Grab one of those young guys and take his armor." The armor of a fella you killed was like a trophy, and Abner says, "I don't want to kill you boy, so find your fight somewhere else." And in vs 23 we read where because he refused to, Abner just sort of put on the brakes, whipped around and jabbed him with the blunt end of his spear. Why the blunt end? I believe that it's possible that Abner had no real intention of killing him, but just wanted to put the hurt on him, knock him down and just end the situation. But Asahel was coming at him so fast that when he jabbed him even with the blunt end of his spear, Asahel just impaled himself upon it.

Your KJV says under the 5th rib or basically right through his heart, or thereabouts and it just came right out of his back and killed him there on the spot. And when those who were behind him came up where he was they just stopped there no doubt in shock and out of respect for Asahel.

But then as Joab and his troops pursued Abner along with Joab's other brother as Abner approached the horizon the men of Benjamin gathered around him as fresh reinforcements, and now they were prepared to start advancing back the other way. And so Abner cries out in vs 26 and says, "Hey why can't we just all get along?" "Shall the sword devour forever?" A bit of a different tune from, "Let these guys compete before us" now that's it's coming upon him. But he says, "This has gone far enough. We're biting and devouring one another and we're going to consume one another and it's going to turn out to be a bad ol deal if this doesn't stop." And then in verse 27 Joab says, "Hey, you're the one who's instigated this whole thing, if you hadn't prompted the 'sport' in the 1st place this wouldn't have escalated into all out civil war." But in vs 28 he goes ahead and calls off his men.

Vs29-32

Ch 3

Vs1

Couple of things to draw your attention to here briefly, as you know the house of Saul serves to illustrate the things of the flesh, as to where the house of David, the things of the Spirit. And I want you to notice that the war between the 2 was long, because in your being there are 2 houses at war, the house of Saul, and the house of David, the flesh and the Spirit, and that war will be a long time coming. What you will do you won't do and at times what you will not do, that you'll do. But take heart here because what was true in scenario will be true for you as well if you'll but remain faithful to Jesus Christ, prayer, the Word of God. Keeping a relationship with the Lord as the priority of your life, "David grew stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker." It may seem like a long hard fought battle, but little by little the Spirit will begin to prevail in your life and David will become stronger and stronger as the house of Saul becomes weaker and weaker. Or to put it in the NT vernacular, "*He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.*" Phil 1:6

Vs2-5

Now I'm not going to justify David here, he's in definite error; the kings weren't to multiply wives unto themselves. Maybe he justified himself by saying he wasn't "multiplying" them, just "adding 1 or 2 here and there" to himself. But be that as it may, believe me it'll snap back to haunt him and God will not honor this. Especially in regards to this daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur. Because he's unequally yoked there, that was the daughter of a pagan king, and we notice that Absalom came from that relationship, now David had invaded the Geshurites and no doubt that's when he noticed this king's daughter whom he probably took captive after killing her dad and everyone else in that providence.

And as you know Absalom is going incite civil war against his dad and murder his ½ brother, there's just all kinds of problems with David's family life that could've been avoided if he'd have just heeded the Word of God, he who has ears to hear let him hear. How many problems we could avoid in life, in our marriages, if we would just heed the Word of God.

Vs 6-11

The taking of a king's concubine was the same as saying, I'm taking the king's place, I'm now in his position. So this was a radically serious indictment here, one that Abner denies. He's saying, "I'm the one who's established you here, and now you're going to accuse me of treason." And so he says in essence, "I'm the one who gave you this position, and I'm going to be the one who takes it from you." And Ishbosheth couldn't really say anything because a bad dude, he was to be feared and his backside was able to cash the checks that his mouth wrote (so to speak).

But we see here where what God had promised David was widely known, and so Abner, though doing what he should've done years ago, knew that he was kicking against God's will. And problems was the price, civil war, divisions in God's people and all the rest. But now since the house of Saul is growing weaker and Abner thinks he doesn't have to put up with Ishbosheth's accusations he just ascribes to the old adage, "If you can't beat-em, join-em."

Vs12-16

To me this seems like David is proving a point here and really isn't something admirable (he really doesn't need another wife), though no doubt it was a strong political move. He was saying he had nothing against the house of Saul and was going to keep his commitment to Saul's daughter even though Saul had given her to another man after David fled. And then we have this sad sort of scene here where the guy who she was married to obviously loved her and wept as she was being taken away, but he was sort of a wuss in that he wasn't willing to fight for her and make a stand for her, he just cried over her and when Abner said, "Get out of here" he just said, "Ok." You just didn't mess with Abner.

Vs17-30

You see Joab was blinded by the bitterness he had toward Abner because he killed his brother, the difference is that Abner tried to avoid confrontation with Asahel and trusted Joab here because he believed them to be on the same side. And as to where one dealt with warfare, this was just cold blooded murder, and in vs 27 where it reads he took him aside in the gate, it's more literally "out from the gate" and that's an important detail. And as you may gather by reading that, Joab stabbed Abner in the same place that Abner's spear went through Asahel, so this was just pure vengeance, revenge. And David wasn't about that at all, and so he pronounces this curse on Joab's family and then makes him mourn for Abner publicly, notice vs 31.

Vs 31-39

These guys are just too much, they're a thorn, but God will deal with them in His way, and in His time.

Why does it say that Abner died as a fool, he wasn't a prisoner of war, or on trial for war crimes or anything like that, he was just murdered in cold blood. You see; the reason we noted Joab taking Abner outside the city gate was because as you may know Hebron was one of the 6 cities established as a city of refuge. And the city of refuge was a safety net for any accidental death that you may be guilty of so that you were free from harms way in that city from the next of kin's avenger of blood as long as you were in it. Now if you stepped out of the city you were fair game, and even though Asahel's death wasn't murder, it was an act of war. Joab couldn't get past it, but he knew that inside that city he couldn't touch Abner, so he takes advantage of Abner's trust and says, "Let's step outside these gates, we need to finish up some details in this negotiation." And Abner says, "OK" and when he steps outside the city of refuge (which was a foolish thing to do) Joab stabbed right where his brother had been speared and Abner died.

What's the point, Jesus Christ is our city of refuge and as long as we remain there we'll be safe from the penalty of death, free from harms way in that respect. But to leave the safety zone of Jesus Christ is foolishness and only invites the penalty of our sin upon us. Abide in Christ, don't leave your refuge, because anyone who dies outside of Christ (and I wish I could say it more tactfully) they die the fools death. Because forgiveness has been waiting for them, atonement could've been theirs, but they died outside the gates, never entering the refuge of Jesus Christ