

2nd Samuel Chapter 3

V: 1 This “long war” lasted approximately 7 ½ years – previously Saul resisted the fact that David was God’s anointed king over all Israel, trying to thwart God’s plans. Now it appears that there are others with the same intent, not wanting to give up their own ambitions, namely Abner and the vassal Ish-bosheth.

- After the death of Saul, Ish-bosheth is established as the king of Israel, the other 11 tribes, he is ruling from the area of Jabesh Gilead, or Trans-Jordan.
- David is established as the king over Judah, or the Southern kingdom, and there is war between them.
- David waxed stronger and Saul’s house waxed weaker, which should be no surprise:

1 Samuel 16:13 “Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward...”

V: 2-5 David engages in polygamy, collecting multiple wives, which is contrary to the word of God: this is a practice that he would pass onto his son, Solomon who would take it to extremes. They both missed God’s ideal for marriage.

Genesis 2:24 “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife (singular): and they shall be one flesh.”

- Jesus affirmed this:

Mark 10:7-8 “⁷For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; ⁸and they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.”

1. **Amnon** born of Ahinoam, the Jezreelitess. Amnon, sadly he doesn’t live up to his name which means “trustworthy” – “faithful”, he would later rape his ½ sister Tamar and be murdered by her brother Absalom, marking the decline of his family.
2. **Chileab**, born of Abigail. Chileab = “Like his Father”, in 1 Chronicles he is referred to as “Daniel” – he disappears from history, nothing else is known of him, he dies early, leaving Absalom as the oldest, which is why he tries to usurp the throne.
3. **Absalom**, born of Maacah, princess of Geshur. Absalom = “Father of peace”, violent, and resentful. Killed his ½ brother over the rape of his sister, tried to usurp the throne, caused a civil war.

- David marries this daughter of a Canaanite king whose son causes lots of problems later in life.
- David wasn’t ignorant of God’s word:

Deuteronomy 7:2-4 “²And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: ³neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. ⁴For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.”

2 Corinthians 6:14 “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers...”

4. **Adonijah**, born of Haggith (Festive). Adonijah = “Yah is Lord”, tried to usurp his father’s throne upon his impending death, but was foiled by Bathsheba and Nathan who helped secure the ascendance of Solomon to the throne. Adonijah tried again by deception to gain the throne after Solomon’s coronation and was put to death by Solomon.
5. **Shephatiah** born of Abital. Shephatiah = “Jehovah has judged”
6. **Ithream**, born of Eglah (Heifer). Ithream = “Remnant of the People” – “Profit of the People”.
 - David added to this number when he moved the throne and capital to Jerusalem. Sibling rivalry can be intense when the throne is at stake, and much more so when there are so many children from different wives.
 - David is being disobedient.

Moses records the law related to a king:

Deuteronomy 17:17 “Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away...”

- Oftentimes kings would cement treaties with the exchange of daughters, being now related – part of the family, they would be less likely to go to war, the risk was that they brought their pagan practices with them – which would turn their hearts away from the true and living God. Solomon was a sad example of this.
- One of the many good things about the Bible is it’s honesty: David is certainly a hero of the Bible, but he was also a sinful man – who in this case was disobedient to the word of God.
- Men will fail us, that is why we keep our eyes on Jesus!

V: 6-11 Ish-bosheth, Saul’s son is a weak leader his name means “son of my shame”, Abner is setting himself up, taking care of his own interests, seeing the outcome of things, which leads him to consort with one of Saul’s concubines, Rizpah (Glowing Coals / hot!).

- This is an affront because he is assuming, or usurping the authority of the king, it’s a pretty arrogant act.
- Abner was essentially laying claim to the throne.

- When Ish-bosheth “man’s up” and confronts Abner, Abner declares that he is ⁹going to do the Lord’s will and turn the kingdom over David – which silences Ish-bosheth.

V: 12 Abner then turns to make good on his word; opening negotiations with David.

- Who’s is the land? Could be Abner referring to his ability to deliver the remainder of the kingdom to David, or that the land & kingdom rightly belongs to David.
- In either event Abner is telling David that if they can come to an agreement; Abner will deliver the remaining tribes to David.

V: 13-16 David responds both to Abner and to Ish-bosheth.

- David’s requirement before there can be any deal or peaceful transfer is that they return his wife – whom king Saul had given to another.
- Like David needs another wife; why would David care about Michal?
 1. **Love:** “... is it a small thing to be son in law to the king?” She expressed her love for him; he fought to demonstrate his love for her.
 2. **Ego:** His possession, insisting her return out of spite.
 3. **Politics:** his marriage to Saul’s daughter possibly influencing the remnant of Saul’s kingdom.

- In any event Ish-bosheth sends for Michal.

Deuteronomy 24:4 “Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the Lord:...”

- Michal’s current husband sadly follows behind his wife until he’s told to go home.

V: 17-21 Abner begins to convince the elders of Israel, the other tribes to have David be their king, as they had once desired in the past – Abner relates that the Lord had spoken that it would be through David that their people would be delivered from the Philistines.

- David was a strong king, Judah lived in relative safety from the Philistines because of David’s leadership. The other tribes under Ish-bosheth were still plagued by the Philistines due to Ish-bosheth’s weak leadership.
- Having come to that understanding with them, Abner then approaches David, most likely with Michal in tow.
- Abner is received by David with his retinue and treated to a feast.

- Abner refers to David as his “lord and king”, swearing his allegiance to David, and leaves to gather the rest of Israel to David.
- Thus far we haven’t seen David make any attempt to take the kingdom, or the remainder of it. He is seemingly biding his time and now seeing that perhaps this is God’s way of bring it to pass through this process involving Abner, but David doesn’t initiate it.

V: 22-27 As Abner leaves to complete the task of bringing the rest of Israel to David it is emphasized that Abner went away in peace, they had made peace.

- As Abner leaves, Joab arrives back from battle with a great spoil.
- Joab is told of Abner’s coming and going, and he confronts David.
- Neither Joab nor Abner are “good guys”, they are both warriors with character flaws, they are both treacherous men.
- Joab is more than suspicious, he’s looking for revenge.
- Joab goes behind David’s back and lures Abner back to Hebron where he murders him in cold blood.

“... **under the 5th rib...**” A frequently used phrase to mean stabbed him in the heart.
([illustration](#))

- Our text indicates that Joab killed Abner in revenge for his brother Asahel, not in an attempt to protect David or his kingdom.

Romans 12:19 “Dearly beloved, **avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.**”

V: 28-30 When David heard about what had happened, he declared his innocence, separating himself and his kingdom from complicity – allowing the responsibility to fall completely upon Joab.

- Some have suggested that David afraid of Joab, certainly not!
- Knowing that the murder of Abner was a dishonorable act, David pronounces a curse upon Joab’s household – there will always be one that is diseased, a leper, that suffers violence and poverty within Joab’s household.
- Everything about the murder of Abner was wrong:
 1. Joab & Abishai knew what David wanted, yet they deliberately put their own interests ahead of his.
 2. Asahel had been pursuing Abner on the battlefield making him a casualty of war; but the death of Abner was murder out right.

3. Hebron was a “city of refuge” where an accused killer could get a fair trial.
4. Abner killed Asahel in self defense, after warning him – but Joab and Abishai’s killing of Abner was pure revenge – done without warning.
5. Asahel’s death occurred in broad daylight where everybody could see and witness, but Abner was deceived and led into the shadows.

V: 31-34 David commands Joab and all the people to tear their clothes and mourn for Abner, David himself followed the coffin as they buried Abner.

- David was demonstrating that he truly didn’t want Abner to die, that he really was innocent of his blood.
- David testified that Abner wasn’t conquered in battle, taken captive – but that he was murdered.

V: 35-38 David would not eat, another sign of grieving – and the people took note of David’s behavior and it pleased them.

- We see God’s continuing upon David who gives him favor with the people, God’s blessing was still upon David.
- All Israel knew and understood that it was not in David’s heart to kill Abner, that he was a man of better character than that.

V: 39 David says that he’s weak, or weary, tired and the Joab and his brother Abishai are too hard, too tough for him.

1 Samuel 13:14 “... the Lord hath sought Him a man after His own heart.”

- David is saying that God will deal with Joab, God will deal with him according to his wicked deeds.
- Later when David was near death and passing the kingdom to Solomon; David told Solomon not to let Joab’s gray head go down to his grave in peace, but that he should be executed for all the problems he caused David, and for his treachery. Solomon did as his father directed and had Joab slain as one of the first acts of his reign.

2nd Samuel Chapter 4

V: 1-3 When Ish-bosheth heard that Abner was dead, he and all the other tribes with him were “feeble” – weakened and scared.

- This is why in Chapter 3 when they heard that it was the act of Joab, and that David had not wanted this to happen, that David mourned and grieved for Abner

– that the rest of Israel was comforted, there would not be a new war, revenge killings, etc – because David had no ill will towards them.

- Two of Ish-bosheth's captains are named: Baanah and Rechab, both Benjamites – the same family as king Saul, known for their fierceness in battle, and their cruelty.
- The Beerothites were a faction of the tribe of Benjamin, they went into self imposed exile when it appeared that David would be king over all Israel.

V: 4 Jonathan has a surviving son, Mephibosheth who is about 12 years old, but lame / unable to walk.

- Mephibosheth: "Shame Destroyer", "Image Breaker", Exterminating the Idol."
- David would later look to show kindness to any of Saul & Jonathans sons, more than likely including Ish-bosheth if they would just trust the king.

V: 5-8 The two previously mentioned captains of Ish-bosheth sneak into his bed chamber and murder Ish-bosheth in cold blood in a misguided attempt to curry favor with David.

"... *and the Lord hath avenged...*" No! God wouldn't use murder and deceit to raise David up to the throne, that is the very reason David didn't kill Saul.

V: 9-12 Rechab and Ba-a-nah take Ish-bosheth's head to David thinking this will somehow please David.

- David begins to respond with the phrase: "as the Lord liveth, who hath redeemed my soul our of all adversity..."
- This speaks of David's faith and understanding that God has indeed delivered him out of his adversities, and has learned to wait on the Lord, not to take things into his own hands – as these two have.

Psalm 37:9 "For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth."

- They have seriously mis-judged David's character – this does not please him at all, and results in their own deaths.
- David has their hands and feet cut off, then their bodies put on display – again showing Israel that he did not support or condone their dastardly deed, the murder of Ish-bosheth.
- David then gave Ish-bosheth an honorable burial with Abner in Hebron.

Summary: Common thread through each of the character in these chapters; none of them knew the heart of the king. This includes David who did not know the heart of his heavenly king.

1. David: Adding his wives, failing to heed the word of God.
 2. Abner: Saw the tide turning towards David, was angry at Ish-bosheth and decided to do the will of God out of spite rather than the love of the king.
 3. Joab: Questioned the king, didn't trust his judgment, then deliberately went against the will of the king.
 4. Ish-bosheth / Israel: feared the king for the wrong reasons, became feeble and troubled thinking the king would judge them harshly and kill them when there were no such thoughts in the heart of the king.
 5. Beerothites: Placed themselves into self imposed exile, fearing the vengeance of the king, which did not exist.
 6. Mephibosheth / nurse: Is mentioned – how did he become lame? When his nurse heard that Saul & Jonathan were dead, she scooped up Mephibosheth to flee for their lives, only their lives were never in danger – David sought only to bless them.
 - Because he didn't know the king's heart, he never walked rightly.
 7. Baanah & Rechab: They thought that by committing cold blooded murder they could please the king, that somehow their sin could give them favor with the king – they didn't know the heart of the king.
 8. Michal / the bride: The king still wanted the bride for himself, even though she was defiled – just like us!
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How can we know the heart of our king?

Romans 12:2 “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”

2 Peter 1 :2-3 “²Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, ³according as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue.”

Hebrews 1:1-2 “¹God, who had sundry times and in divers manners spake in the past unto the fathers by the prophets, ²hath in these last days spoken unto us by His son...”