

## DAVID, PART II

### STUDY #9

TEXT: 2 Samuel 1:1-2:32

- v. 1 After the death of Saul, David returned from defeating the Amalekites and stayed in Ziklag two days.
- v. 2 on the third day a man arrived from Saul's camp, with his clothes torn and with dust on his head. When he came to David, he fell to the ground to pay him honor.
- v. 3 "Where have you come from?" David asked him. He answered, "I have escaped from the Israelite camp."
- v. 4 "What happened?" David asked. "Tell me." He said, "The men fled from the battle. Many of them fell and died. And Saul and his son Jonathan are dead."
- v. 5 The David said to the young man who brought him the report, "How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?"
- v. 6 "I happened to be on Mount Gilboa," the young man said, "and there was Saul, leaning on his spear, with the chariots and riders almost upon him.
- v. 7 When he turned around and saw me, he called out to me, and I said, 'What can I do?'
- v. 8 "He asked me, 'Who are you?' 'An Amalekite,' I answered.
- v. 9 "Then he said to me, 'Stand over me and kill me! I am in the throes of death, but I'm still alive.'
- v. 10 "So I stood over him and killed him, because I knew that after he had fallen he could not survive. And I took the crown that was on his head and the band on his arm and have brought them here to my lord."
- v. 11 Then David and all the men with him took hold of their clothes and torn them.
- v. 12 They mourned and wept and fasted till evening for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the army of the Lord and the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.
- v. 13 David said to the young man who brought him the report, "Where are you from?" "I am the son of an alien, an Amalekite," he answered.
- v. 14 David asked him, "Why were you not afraid to lift your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?"
- v. 15 Then David called one of his men and said, "Go, strike him down!" So he struck him down, and he died.

- v. 16 For David had said to him, “Your blood be on your own head. Your own mouth testified against you when you said, ‘I killed the Lord’s anointed.’”
- v. 17 David took up this lament concerning Saul and his son Jonathan,
- v. 18 and ordered that the men of Judah be taught this lament of the bow (it is written in the Book of Jashar):
- v. 19 “Your glory, O Israel, lies slain on your heights. How the mighty have fallen
- v. 20 “Tell it not in Gath, proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines be glad, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised rejoice.
- v. 21 “O mountains of Gilboa, may you have neither dew nor rain, nor fields that yield offerings of grain. For there the shield of the mighty was defiles, the shield of Saul—no longer rubbed with oil.
- v. 22 From the blood of the slain, from the flesh of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan did not turn back, the sword of Saul did not return unsatisfied.
- v. 23 Saul and Jonathan—in life they were loved and gracious, and in death they were not parted. They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.
- v. 24 “O daughters of Israel, weep for Saul, who clothed you in scarlet and finery, who adorned your garments with ornaments of gold.
- v. 25 “How the mighty have fallen in battle! Jonathan lies slain on your heights.
- v. 26 I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women.
- v. 27 “How the mighty have fallen! The weapons of war have perished!”
- 2:v.1 In the course of time, David inquired of the Lord. “Shall I go up to the towns of Judah?” he asked. The Lord said, “Go up.” David asked, “Where shall I go?” “To Hebron,” the Lord answered.
- v. 2 So David went up there with his two wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel.
- v. 3 David also took the men who were with him, each with his family, and they settled in Hebron and its towns.
- v. 4 Then the men of Judah came to Hebron and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. When David was told that it was the men of Jabesh Gilead who had buried Saul,
- v. 5 he sent messengers to the men of Jabesh Gilead to say to them, “The Lord bless you for showing this kindness to Saul your master by burying him.
- v. 6 May the Lord now show you kindness and faithfulness, and I too will show you the same favor because you have done this.
- v. 7 Now then, be strong and brave, for Saul your master is dead, and the house of Judah has anointed me king over them.”
- v. 8 Meanwhile, Abner son of Ner, the commander of Saul’s army, had taken Ish-Bosheth son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim.

- v. 9 He made him king over Gilead, Ashuri and Jezreel, and also over Ephraim, Benjamin and all Israel.
- v. 10 Ish-Bosheth son of Saul was forty years old when he became king of Israel, and he reigned two years. The house of Judah, however, followed David.
- v. 11 The length of time David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.
- v. 12 Abner son of Ner, together with the men of Ish-Bosheth son of Saul, left Mahanaim and went to Gibeon.
- v. 13 Joab son of Zeruah and David's men went out and met them at the pool of Gibeon. One group sat down on one side of the pool and one group on the other side.
- v. 14 Then Abner said to Joab, "Let's have some of the young men get up and fight hand to hand in front of us." "All right, let them do it." Joab said.
- v. 15 So they stood up and were counted off—twelve men for Benjamin and Ish-Bosheth son of Saul, and twelve for David.
- v. 16 Then each man grabbed his opponent by the head and thrust his dagger into his opponent's side, and they fell down together. So that place in Gibeon was called Helkath Hazzurim.
- v. 17 The battle that day was very fierce, and Abner and the men of Israel were defeated by David's men.
- v. 18 The three sons of Zeruah were there: Joab, Abishai and Asahel. Now Asahel was as fleet-footed as a wild gazelle.
- v. 19 He chased Abner, turning neither to the right nor to the left as he pursued him.
- v. 20 Abner looked behind him and asked, "Is that you, Asahel?" "It is," he answered.
- v. 21 Then Abner said to him, "Turn aside to the right or to the left; take on one of the young men and strip him of his weapons." But Asahel would not stop chasing him.
- v. 22 Again Abner warned Asahel, "Stop chasing me! Why should I strike you down? How could I look your brother Joab in the face?"
- v. 23 But Asahel refused to give up the pursuit; so Abner thrust the butt of his spear into Asahel's stomach, and the spear came out through his back. He fell there and died on the spot. And every man stopped when he came to the place where Asahel had fallen and died.
- v. 24 But Joab and Abishai pursued Abner, and as the sun was setting, they came to the hill of Ammah, near Giah on the way to the wasteland of Gibeon.
- v. 25 Then the men of Benjamin rallied behind Abner. They formed themselves into a group and took their stand on top of a hill.
- v. 26 Abner called out to Joab, "Must the sword devour forever? Don't you realize that this will end in bitterness? How long before you order your men to stop pursuing their brothers?"

- v. 27 Joab answered, “As surely as God lives, if you had not spoken, the men would have continued the pursuit of their brothers until morning.”
- v. 28 So Joab blew the trumpet, and all the men came to a halt; they no longer pursued Israel, nor did they fight anymore.
- v. 29 All that night Abner and his men marched through the Arabah. They crossed the Jordan, continued through the whole Bithron and came to Mahanaim.
- v. 30 Then Joab returned from pursuing Abner and assembled all his men. Besides Asahel, nineteen of David’s men were found missing.
- v. 31 But David’s men had killed three hundred and sixty Benjamites who were with Abner.
- v. 32 They took Asahel and buried him in his father’s tomb at Bethlehem. Then Joab and his men marched all night and arrived at Hebron by daybreak.

INTRODUCTION:

Ann Kiemel Anderson in her book Taste of Tears; Touch of God quotes from Paul Billheimer's book Don't Waste Your Sorrows:

“I will not doubt, though all my ships at sea come drifting home  
with

broken masts and sails.

I will believe that hand which never fails from seeming evil  
worketh

good for me,

And though I weep because those sails are tattered,

Still will I cry,

While my best hopes lie shattered,

I trust in Thee...

“I will not doubt, tho' sorrows fall like rain,

And troubles swarm like bees about a hive,

I will believe the heights for which I strive,

Are only reached by anguish and by pain.

And though I groan and writhe beneath my crosses,

I yet shall see through my severest losses,

The greater gain.

No chance hath brought this ill to me,

'Tis God's own hand; so let it be.

He seeth what I cannot see.

There is a need-be for each pain.

Thou art the workman; I the frame.

Lord, for the glory of thy name,

Perfect thine image in the same.”

Ann goes in to say, “There was a choice—to make sorrow my friend or my enemy. To walk with it and let it teach me, and scorn it and become bitter.”

George Watson says, “God uses for his glory those people and things which are most perfectly broken—

those who are broken in wealth  
 broken in self-will  
 broken in their ambitions  
 broken in their beautiful ideals  
 broken in worldly reputations  
 broken oftentimes in health—

These are the ones the Holy Spirit is seizing upon and using.”

Andrae Crouch “Through It All”

“I began to sing softly. “I have had many joys and sorrows; questions about tomorrow. Sometimes I feel so all alone. But in every situation, He gives blessed consolation, that the sorrows come to only make me strong.”

To love is to be vulnerable; to open one’s life and let God take out or put in anything he wants.

Henry Ward Beecher said, “Measure thy life by loss and not by gain; not by the wine drunk but by the wine poured forth. For love’s strength standeth in love’s sacrifice; and he who suffers most, has most to give.”

In the Velveteen Rabbit there is a conversation between the rabbit and the skin horse:

What is real?" asked the rabbit one day when they were lying side-by-side near the nursery fender, before Nanna came to tidy the room.

"Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?"

"Real is not how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with but really loves you, then you become real."

"Does it hurt?" asked the rabbit.

"Sometimes," said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful.

"When you are real, you do not mind being hurt."

"Does it happen all at once, like being wound up?" he asked, "or bit by bit?"

"It does not happen all at once," said the Skin Horse. "You BECOME. It takes a long time. That is why it does not often happen to people who break easily or who have sharp edges, or have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes dropout, and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But things do not matter at all, because you are real, you cannot be ugly, except to people who do not understand."

Paula D'Arcy in her book Where the Wind Begins points out, "Someone once said that when grief picks us up, it never put us down again in the same spot. We move; we change. We are all that we were before, plus the experience which has hurt us, plus the new individual who emerges to cope and to move on. And so our neat and predictable little lives become our past, and our present is always expanding in new directions. I might have predicted that I, overanxious, fearing another loss, would smother Beth. But I have found that I am freer with her than I ever was with her sister Sarah. I learned something very important through the death of my husband and first child. Nothing in life can ultimately be controlled by me. All is free. And when life is held lightly, as intended, it grows in beauty and fascination."

Ronald Dunn in his book The Faith Crisis says, “I remember kneeling one day in my study and praying earnestly that God would teach me to live by faith. I guess I thought God would wave a wand over my head, put a holy zap on me, and suddenly I would be a giant of faith, waiting for a vacancy in Hebrews 11. Instead, everything came unglued. Financial problems, ministerial difficulties, family crisis—somebody was definitely out to get me! I went to my knees, begging God to help me, asking what was happening and why. “I’m just answering your prayer, He seemed to say.’ ‘Prayer? What prayer? I don’t remember praying for disaster.’ ‘Your prayer for faith,’ he said. Later I came across this place by an unknown author:

“The Lord’s Way”

I asked the Lord that I might grow  
In faith and love and every grace;  
Might more of His salvation know,  
And seek more earnestly His face.

‘Twas He who taught me thus to pray,  
And He, I trust, has answered prayer.  
But it has been in such a way,  
As almost drove me to despair.

I hope that in some favored hour  
At once He’d answer my request.  
And by His love’s consuming power  
Subdue my sins and give me rest.

Instead of this He made me feel  
The hidden evils of my heart,  
And let the angry powers of hell  
Assault my soul in every part.

Yes, more with His own hand He seemed  
Intent to aggravate my woe,  
Crossed all the fair designs I schemed,  
Blasted my gourds and laid them low.

Lord, why is this? I trembling cried.  
Wilt thou pursue thy worm to death?  
‘Tis in this way the Lord replied,  
I answer prayer for grace and faith.

These inward trials I employ



From self and pride to set thee free,  
 And break the schemes of earthly joy,  
 That thou mayest seek thy all in me.

God's greatest and toughest task is teaching us to trust Him for "without faith, it is impossible to please him." And he will do whatever is necessary to enroll us in that school from which there is no graduation.

Paula D'Archy in Where the Wind Begins says, "Maybe some wisdom lies in the words I remember hurling at God during a moment of hurt and despair. I angrily told him, 'Now I have no one to lean on but you,' and He said, 'EXACTLY!'"

#### A SUMMARY OF THE 8 PREVIOUS EPISODES:

- #1 THE ANOINTING BY SAMUEL & THE HARP CONCERTS IN THE PALACE
- #2 THE SLAYING OF THE GIANT FROM GATH NAMED GOLIATH
- #3 SAUL WANTS TO KILL DAVID & TRIES UNSUCCESSFULLY ON A COUPLE OF OCCASIONS
- #4 DAVID LIES TO AHIMELECH THE PRIEST, LEAVES THE LAND OF ISRAEL, LOOKS TO THE ENEMY THE PHILISTINES FOR HIS PROVISION. HE FEIGNS INSANITY AND RETURNS TO THE CAVE OF ADULLUM.
- #5 HE SAVES THE CITY OF KEILAH, AND DOES NOT SLAY SAUL.
- #6 NABAL AND ABIGAIL
- #7 HE DOES NOT SLAY SAUL & GOES TO RESIDE WITH HIS FAMILY AND MEN IN THE LAND OF THE PHILISTINES AT A PLACE CALLED ZIKLAG.
- #8 DAVID IS ON HIS WAY TO FIGHT IN THE PHILISTINE ARMY WITH HIS MEN, BUT HE IS COMMANDED BY ACHISH TO RETURN TO ZIKLAG. WHEN HE DOES, HE FINDS IT ALL THE PEOPLE CARRIED INTO CAPTIVITY. THE 8TH EPISODE ENDS WITH DAVID RECAPTURING ALL THAT HAD BEEN TAKEN.

This brings us now to EPISODE #9 – 2 Samuel 1: and 2:

1 Samuel began the royal history of the nation Israel—The end of the judges and the beginning of the kings.

Remember, the people were in an awful state, and they were clamoring for an earthly king, just like all the other nations. God first gave them one after their own heart—SAUL—Now in 2 Samuel he gives them one after His own heart—DAVID.

God always intended His people to be led by a king—CHRIST.

1 Samuel records the failure of man's king.

2 Samuel describes the enthronement of God's king, David, and the establishment of the house of David through which the Messiah should come.

When Christ comes again He will sit upon the throne of his father David.

You can divide 2 Samuel into two parts:

1. David was made king over Judah – chap. 1-4
2. David made king over all Israel – chap. 5-24

Actually, there is no division between 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel. Originally, the two books were one, but 2 Samuel is occupied wholly with David. He is already an important character in Scripture.

One of the purposes of 2 Samuel is to highlight David's reign as king of Israel. Some of the events of his life are found in other books: the Chronicles and the Kings.

David was a man of wonderful personal power and charm. There is no one found anywhere in God's word who is so versatile. He is:

David, the shepherd-boy  
 the court musician  
 the soldier  
 the true friend  
 the outcast captain  
 the king  
 the great general  
 the loving father  
 the poet  
 the sinner  
 the broken-hearted old man,  
 but always, the lover of God.

Maclaren points out, "David's calm indifference to outward circumstances affecting himself is very strikingly expressed in his conduct. Partly from his poetic temperament, partly from his sweet, natural unselfishness, and chiefly from his living trust in God, he accepts whatever happens with equanimity, and makes no effort to alter it. He originates nothing. Prosperity comes unsought, and dangers unfeared. He does not ask for Jonathan's love, nor the people's favor, or the women's songs, or Saul's daughter. Saul gives him command; he takes it, and does his work. If Saul flings his javelin at him, he simply springs aside and lets it whiz past. If his high position is taken from him, he's quite content with the lower. If a royal alliance is offered, he accepts it. If it is withdrawn, he is not ruffled. If renewed, he is still willing. If a busy web of intrigue is woven around him, he takes no notice. If reconciliation is proposed, he cheerfully goes back to the palace. If his life is threatened, he goes home. He will not stir to escape, but for the urgency of his wife. So well has he already begun to learn the worthlessness of life's trifles; so thoroughly does he practice his own precept: 'Fret not thyself because of evil doers. Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him.'"

The SCENE of this episode opens in the city of ZIKLAG. David had been successful in pursuing the Amalekites and bringing back a vast amount of plunder that he has been distributing among the cities of Judah.

David and his men had marched with Achish from Gath to Aphek before being told to go back to Ziklag. Achish and the Philistines were moving north another 35 miles to face battle with King Saul and the hosts of Israel at a place called Mount Gilboa.

v. 1 After the death of Saul, David returned from defeating the Amalekites and stayed in Ziklag two days.

The death of Saul probably occurred while David was fighting the Amalekites and retrieving all of his lost possessions.

I am sure since he knew that Achish and the Philistines were going into battle against Saul and the Israelites, he was much concerned about the outcome of that battle because of the fact that Saul and Jonathan were involved.

He came back to the city of Ziklag, the city that Achish had given him that had been destroyed by fire by the Amalekites a few days before. He had stayed in Ziklag two days, then something happens.

v. 2 On the third day a man arrived from Saul's camp, with his clothes torn and with dust on his head. When he came to David, he fell to the ground to pay him honor.

Early the third day, David has a visitor who comes from Saul's camp. He has traveled about 95 miles in the process when he arrives at Ziklag.

He is described as having "clothes torn and dust on his head," indicating that he is in grief and the news is bad.

"When he came to David, he fell to the ground to pay him honor."

v. 3 “Where have you come from?” David asked him. He answered, “I have escaped from the Israelite camp.”

David’s first question of the young man is “Where had he come from?” and the response is “I have escaped from the Israelite camp.”

v. 4 “What happened?” David asked. “Tell me.” He said, “The men fled from the battle. Many of them fell and died. And Saul and his son Jonathan are dead.”

David’s first question is **WHERE**, and now his next question is **WHAT HAPPENED**. He is so eager for information, he says, “Tell me.”

The young man says that there was a high casualty rate because many of them fell and died. Then he also adds, “And Saul and his son Jonathan are dead.”

### 1 Samuel 31:1,2

“Now the Philistines were fighting against Israel, and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines and fell slain on Mt. Gilboa. And the Philistines overtook Saul and his sons, and the Philistines killed Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchishua, the sons of Saul.”

v. 5 Then David said to the young man who brought him the report, “How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?”

David asks the questions: WHERE, WHAT, and now HOW. “How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?” He here focuses just in these two.

The young man’s story is included in verses 6-10:

v. 6 “I happened to be on Mount Gilboa,” the young man said, “and there was Saul, leaning on his spear, with the chariots and riders almost upon him.

v. 7 When he turned around and saw me, he called out to me, and I said, ‘What can I do?’

v. 8 “He asked me, ‘Who are you?’ ‘An Amalekite,’ I answered.

v. 9 “Then he said to me, ‘Stand over me and kill me! I am in the throes of death, but I’m still alive.

v. 10 “So I stood over him and killed him, because I knew after he had fallen he could not survive. And I took the crown that was on his head and the band on his arm and have brought them here to my lord.”

This report conflicts with the record in 1 Samuel 31:3-6

“And the battle went heavily against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was badly wounded by the archers. Then Saul said to his armor-bearer, ‘Draw your sword, and pierce me through with it, lest these uncircumcised come and pierce me through and make sport of me.’ But his armor-bearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. So Saul took his sword and fell on it. And when his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword and died with him. Thus, Saul died with his three sons, his armor-bearer, and all his men on that day together.”

Some Bible scholars believe the young man told the truth; others believe he lied. But whatever the correct version is, he took his story to the wrong man.

David had just returned from a battle with the Amalekites to retrieve all of his possessions just a few days prior to this visit.

He asked him twice where he was from. He wasn’t even a citizen of Israel. He was an enemy of Israel and he had committed a crime by killing the king and his own mouth had confessed it.

I personally think the man lied. I think he stole the crown and the bracelet from Saul’s dead body and brought them to David, thinking he would really get in good with David and be rewarded.

Smith points out, “As already pointed out, the reply contradicts the account already given of the death of Saul. In 31:3 it was the archers who got him in range. Saul had been facing the enemy but now looked about for help. After calling the stranger, Saul says ‘Who art thou?’ to which the stranger makes the reply, ‘I am an Amalekite.’ The contradiction had thus become more glaring. Saul, instead of appealing to his squire who must have been near his person, finds only one person within call. Instead of shrinking from the abuse of the Philistine, he is willing to give himself to be dispatched by an equally despised enemy, an Amalekite. Saul’s prayer, ‘Stand over me, I pray, and slay me, for dizziness had seized me’—exhaustion of a man worn out with fighting.”

If, in fact, Saul was slain by an Amalekite, justice is certainly being served because of Saul's prior disobedience of failing to slay the Amalekites in 1 Samuel 15.

### Galatians 6:7

“God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

Winter points out, “How did an Amalekite get into Saul's army? Mercenaries were allowed to join in a campaign, especially if it were an unholy war in which the citizens had no interest. It is rather ironic that the man was a member of the tribe whom Saul was sent to exterminate. It was God's intention that these people be driven out of the land of Canaan. Saul had failed to do his work thoroughly. His lack of thoroughness had brought about his downfall and rejection. At this point, an Amalekite takes credit for having killed Saul.”

Krummacher asks the question, “Did the man truly slay the king? Possibly it was the case that he found him still living after his suicidal act, and at his request, had given him the last death stroke. But probably, his whole story was only a tissue of falsehoods; and all the truth that was in it was confined to this one thing merely—that as he passed across the field of battle for the purpose of plundering the dead, after the manner of the Amalekites, he drew nearer to that part of the mountain to which Saul and his armor-bearer had fled at the moment when that well-known scene of despair occurred between the two; and that he then, when he saw the unhappy men dead, swimming in their blood, hastened forward to take possession of Saul's royal insignia.”

J. Vernon McGee points out, “If this man did slay Saul, it was because Saul had disobeyed God when he refused to slay all of the Amalekites back in the book of 1 Samuel 15. Had Saul obeyed God, this man would not have been alive to kill him, and perhaps Saul would have survived.”



Vos says, “There are at least two particulars that cast real doubt on the validity of the Amalekite’s story: The intimation that Saul was alone and unattended by Israelite warriors, and that Saul would call on a pagan Amalekite to kill him in order to save himself from the uncircumcised Philistines. Evidently, the Amalekite found Saul after he had died, but before the Philistines came to strip the dead on the battlefield. He made off with the king’s crown and arm band, and took them to David with the report that he had killed the king—no doubt hoping for some reward from David.”

v. 11 The David and all the men with him took hold of their clothes and tore them.

As a result of the report, they took hold of their clothes and tore them, a sign of grief and mourning.

v. 12 They mourned and wept and fasted till evening for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the army of the Lord and the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.

This report had come to them early on the third day of their residence in Ziklag. Having received the report, they did three things after tearing their clothes:

1. They mourned
2. They wept
3. They fasted until evening

They mourned and wept and fasted, first, for Saul, and then for Jonathan, and then the army of the Lord, and the house of Israel.

The last phrase gives us the reason for this activity, “because they had fallen by the sword.”

David was not happy about Saul's death. He mourned and wept. David had a tender heart. He didn't bear Saul any malice. He grieved over the king's death.

Proverbs 17:5

He who rejoices at calamity will not go unpunished."

Proverbs 24:17

"Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles."

David had a spirit of forgiveness. This is also seen in JESUS as he is being nailed to the cross. He prays, "Father, forgive them, for they are not knowing what they are doing." STEPHEN reflects this same attitude in Acts 7 when he is being stoned to death.

v. 13 David said to the young man who brought him the report, "Where are you from?" "I am the son of an alien, an Amalekite," he answered.

David again asks another question of the young man, and this having to do with his family history. The young man admits that he is the son of an alien, an Amalekite.

v.14 David asked him, "Why were you not afraid to lift your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?"

David had always had a strong aversion to raising his hand against God's anointed. He wouldn't let any of his men do it either.

1 Samuel 24:6

“So he said to his men, ‘Far be it for me, because of the Lord, that I should do this thing to my lord, the Lord’s anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, since he is the Lord’s anointed.’”

1 Samuel 26:9-11

“But David said to Abishai, ‘Do not destroy him. For who can stretch out his hand against the Lord’s anointed and be without guilt?’ David also said, ‘As the Lord lives, surely the Lord will strike him; or his day will come that he dies; or he will go down into battle and perish. The Lord forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the Lord’s anointed. But now please take the spear that is at his head and the jug of water, and let us go.’”

Genesis 4:3-6

“So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground. And Abel, on his part, also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and for his offering. But for Cain and for his offering, he had no regard. So Cain became very angry, and his countenance fell. And the Lord said to Cain, ‘why are you angry, and why is your countenance fallen?’”

Matt. 7:21, 22

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. And many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? and in your name cast out demons, and in your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you. Depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.’”

This young man brought the crown and the band from the king’s arm, fully expecting to receive a reward and to be blessed for his deed. But instead, he loses his life:

Matt. 25:41

“Then he will also say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire, which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.’”

We actually destroy the Lord’s anointed every time we refuse to respond to his invitation for salvation, to his provision in grace of the gift of salvation through his death on Calvary’s cross.

Jesus says, “I am the way, the truth and the life. No man is coming to the Father but through me.”

v. 15 The David called one of his men and said, “Go, strike him down!” So he struck him down, and he died.

v. 16 For David had said to him, “Your blood be on your own head. Your own mouth testified against you when you said, ‘I killed the Lord’s anointed.’”

Vanderwall in his master’s thesis points out, “David’s response is both internal and external. He internalizes his emotions by going through the traditional actions of grief: torn clothes, mourning, weeping, fasting. He externalizes his emotional response by executing the man who had claimed to have killed the Lord’s anointed.”

v. 17 David took up this lament concerning Saul and his son Jonathan.

David is so noble here. His generous heart not only forgot all that Saul had done to him, but he remembered all the things that were favorable in Saul’s character and life.

W. G. Blaikie writes, “David appears to have had a real affection for Saul, if only it had been allowed to bloom and flourish. Saul condemned himself by refusing to be reconciled to David, just as condemnation rests on those who reject the lover of their souls, Jesus Christ.”

Vanderwall points out, “Composed prior to 1000 B.C., the poetic lament which David chanted over Saul and Jonathan has made an impression upon those who have studied it. The lament has been described as one of the most poignant eulogies ever written. Another writes that it is one of the most eloquent expressions of sorrow in the most genuine sense recorded in ancient history.”

Laney points out, “The lament begins with a prologue in which David instructed that the children be taught the bow. Evidently, this is the song of the bow—a reference to the ballad that follows.”

v. 18 and ordered that the men of Judah be taught this lament of the bow (it is written in the Book of Jashar):

McGee points out, “Saul had taught Israel something. He made a contribution. You see, the Israelites had no iron weapons of war, so Saul taught them to be bowmen. The bow and arrow was a formidable weapon. Many of our ancestors would testify to that. The Indians used the bow and arrow to hold back their enemies and win many battles.”

Vanderwall, in doing his translation work on this particular section of 2 Samuel, records the following:

- v. 17 Then David chanted this lament concerning Saul and concerning his son Jonathan,  
 v. 18 and he commanded that they teach the sons of Judah the bow (it is now written upon the Book of the Righteous):  
 v. 19 The beauty, O Israel, is slain upon your high places. How the mighty men have fallen!  
 v. 20 Don't tell it in Gath, don't announce it in the streets of Ashkelon, lest the Philistine women rejoice, lest the daughters of the circumcised exult.  
 v. 21 O mountains in Gilboa, let no mist or rain be upon you, and your fields of offerings because there the shield of the mighty men was defiled, the shield of Saul was not anointed with oil.  
 v. 22 From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan did not turn backwards, the sword of Saul did not return empty.  
 v. 23 Saul and Jonathan—the beloved and the delightful in their lives, and in their deaths were not divided. They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.  
 v. 24 O daughters of Israel, weep concerning Saul, who clothed you in scarlet with luxuries, who put ornaments of gold upon your garments.  
 v. 25 How the mighty have fallen in the midst of the battle! Jonathan was slain upon your high places.  
 v. 26 My distress is over you, my brother Jonathan; you were very pleasant to me. Your love was more wonderful to me than the love of women.  
 v. 27 How the mighty men have fallen! And the vessels of warfare have perished!

v. 19 “Your glory, O Israel, lies slain on your heights. How the mighty have fallen!”

David repeats this phrase three times in his lamentations:

- |                             |       |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| How the mighty have fallen! | v. 19 |
| How the mighty have fallen  | v. 25 |
| How the mighty have fallen  | v. 27 |

On the heights of Mt. Gilboa lay the bodies of those who had been slain in the battle with the Philistines.

v. 20 “Tell it not in Gath, proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines be glad, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised rejoice.

David cannot stand the thought of a victory celebration in the Philistine cities of Gath and Ashkelon. And so, in his lamentation he commands that the news not be told in these cities, lest the daughters be glad and rejoice.

v. 21 “O mountains of Gilboa, may you have neither dew nor rain, nor fields that yield offerings of grain. For there the shield of the mighty was defiled, the shield of Saul—no longer rubbed with oil.

David in verse 21 speaks to the mountains of Gilboa, and in verse 24 to the daughters of Israel.

His wish for the mountains of Gilboa is that they have **NO RAIN AND NO GRAIN**. The reason that he gives for this is “for the shield of the mighty was defiled, the shield of Saul—no longer rubbed with oil.”

Vanderwall points out, “Saul’s shield was not covered with protective oil but was left to disintegrate upon the mountain slopes with no one to care for it or use it again.”

Winter points out, “This was David’s way of saying that the mountains of Gilboa would stand for defeat, as Waterloo did for Napoleon. This was similar to Custer’s last stand.

Someone has said that there is enough good in the worst of us and enough bad in the best of us that none of us can condemn the rest of us.

Saul had been a very wicked man, but there were good things about him. These were the things that David praised in his long song of the bow.

Byron says,

“Farewell to others, but never we part,  
Heir to my royalty, son of my heart.  
Bright is the diadem, boundless the sway,  
Or kindly the death which awaits us today.”

Saul is a notable example of a young man of the brightest promise becoming a total wreck in character and career.

v. 22 From the blood of the slain, from the flesh of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan did not turn back, the sword of Saul did not return unsatisfied.

### 1 Samuel 20:35-37

“Now it came about in the morning that Jonathan went out into the field for the appointment with David, and a little lad was with him. And he said to his lad, ‘Run, find now the arrows which I am about to shoot.’ As the lad was running, he shot an arrow past him. When the lad reached the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan called after the lad and said, ‘Is not the arrow beyond you?’ And Jonathan called after the lad, ‘Hurry, be quick! Do not stay.’ And Jonathan’s lad picked up the arrow and came to his master.”

v. 23 “Saul and Jonathan—in life they were loved and gracious, and in death they were not parted. They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.

David says, “In life they were loved and gracious, and in death they were not parted.”

He then speaks of their swiftness and their strength:

“They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.”



According to Keil, “The swiftness of the eagle and the strength of the lion were the leading characteristics of the great heroes of antiquity.”

Maclaren points out, “We have now to turn and see the sudden change of fortune which lifted the exile to a throne. The heavy cloud which had brooded so long over the doomed king broke in lightning crash on the disastrous field of Gilboa. Where is there a sadder and more solemn story of the fate of a soul which makes shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience than that awful page which tells how godless, wretched, mad with despair, and measureless pride, he flung himself on his bloody sword and died a suicide’s death with sons and armor-bearer and all his men, a ghastly court of corpses laid round him. He had once been brave, modest and king, full of noble purposes and generous affections; and he ended so. Into what doleful regions of hate and darkness may self-will drag a soul when once the reigns fall loose from a slackened hand.”

v. 24 “O daughters of Israel, weep for Saul, who clothed you in scarlet and finery, who adorned your garments with ornaments of gold.

In verse 21 it is “O mountains of Gilboa,” and now in verse 24 it is “O daughters of Israel.”

Back in verse 20 he does not want the news to get to Gath and Ashkelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines be glad and rejoice. Now his command to the daughters of Israel is to weep for Saul.

David speaks about their clothing, which he had made possible for them. Since Saul emphasized the external, clothes were so important to him.

#### 1 Peter 3:3,4

“And let not your adornment be external only, braiding the hair and wearing gold jewelry and putting on dresses. But let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit which is precious in the sight of God.”

v. 25 “How the mighty have fallen in battle! Jonathan lies slain on your heights.

Back in verse 19 David has said, “How the mighty have fallen!” Now it is repeated here in verse 25 and referring specifically on this occasion to Jonathan, who lies slain on your heights.

v. 26 I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother: you were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women.

David refers to Jonathan as his brother. He was his brother-in-law by relationship because of his marriage to Michal. But he was a brother by the covenant of friendship, which they established early in their relationship.

There have been three deaths in David’s life in the past little while that have marked him deeply:

1. SAMUEL’S DEATH – The elderly prophet who anointed him at 16.
- 2,3. And now a double blow in the deaths of SAUL AND JONATHAN.

Beth Jameson in her book Hold Me Tight describes her feelings as she sits at the bedside of her 14 year old daughter who is dying of leukemia. “O Kim, my child, as my eyes and fingertips search your face in death, was it only 14 years and 9 months ago that I examined your face, just as I am doing now. Then I searched each tiny feature of your pink newly-born face with sensitive eyes and fingers, and my heart overflowed with awe at the beautiful baby in my arms, this God-given gift so fresh from heaven’s home. And though my heart is now full of unspeakable sadness, as I trace your beautiful features once more, I am still in awe at being blessed with your presence in my life for as long as 14 years and 9 months. Your chilled face has turned from pink to gray, but there is a beautiful radiance as you let go and let God have his wonderful way. I know it’s time for me to let go also, but my grief at watching you leave is so intense.”

Smith points out, “A burst of grief at the recollection of what Jonathan’s friendship had been, ‘I am in anguish for thee, my brother Jonathan. Thou wert delightful to me, exceedingly wonderful. Thy love for me was beyond the love of women.’”

Spenser point out, “Clearly David and Jonathan had learned that devotion was the glue that held them together. Even when it would have been much easier for Jonathan to side with his father, his devotion to David enabled him to maintain a relationship through thick and thin. In other words, Jonathan was not willing to walk out on David merely because the circumstances would warrant such an action. As a matter of fact, when circumstances were at their worst, Jonathan went to David and strengthened his hand in God. David and Jonathan had come to enjoy one of the most precious fruits of intimacy, namely, the security which is present when two individuals know that circumstances will never override their commitment to one another. The above study of David’s relationship with Jonathan had revealed the following requirements which are essential for developing a relationship characterized by genuine intimacy:

1. a selfless love
2. a spiritual oneness
3. transparency in trust and devotion

Paul Jorden points out, “David said about Jonathan, ‘Your love to me was more wonderful than the love of women.’ What was he saying? Was this a deviate relationship, as some people have tried to suggest? No, it wasn’t. David was saying exactly what he meant. The love he and Jonathan had for each other was one of total commitment. But can two men deeply love one another? Absolutely. In one hospital where I was on the staff, two of the doctors had known each other since early childhood. After 30 years of close friendship, they looked alike. It was a pleasant thing to see the love these two men had for each other—a love which did not in any way interfere with their love for their wives and children. In our day of blatant openness about homosexuality, we need to be careful not to rob genuine friendships of their strength and godness by suggesting that there is anything wrong in them. Men need one another’s friendship and the commitment of true love, but in no way does this include a sexual relationship.”

Here in this verse David is only doing like we all do when we mourn for one who has died who is precious to us: We remember the good times. David can remember four real good times with Jonathan:

1. The covenant of friendship with they met.
2. Jonathan's intercession before Saul for David.
3. The time at the rock when David and Jonathan parted and David wept uncontrollably.
4. The reunion at Horesh when Jonathan made a 26-mile trip to find David and to strengthen him in the Lord his God.

1 Thess. 2:8,11,12

“Having thus a fond affection for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us, just as you know we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.”

v. 27 “How the mighty have fallen! The weapons of war have perished!”

As David concludes this lamentation for the third time he uses the exclamation: “How the mighty have fallen! We have seen it in verse 19, verse 25, and now here in verse 27.

As we come now to chapter 2, we can write over this chapter Psalm 27-

“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the defense of my life; whom shall I dread? Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a level path. Wait for the Lord; be strong and let your heart take courage. Yes, wait for the Lord.”

v. 1 In the course of time, David inquired of the Lord. “Shall I go up to one of the towns of Judah?” he asked. The Lord said, “Go up.” David asked, “Where shall I go?” “To Hebron,” the Lord answered.

“In the course of time” indicates the fact that David was not in any hurry but willing to wait patiently for the Lord to bring about his purpose in David’s life.

The death of Saul did not immediately end David’s troubles. He knew that he was the anointed king but he didn’t just send word that he was coming to claim the throne.

He probably could have done this with an army. He could have established himself by force. “David inquired of the Lord”—O what a precious phrase that has recurred in our first series of studies a number of times. You will remember that we said that when the phrase “David inquired of the Lord” or “bring the ephod” was used, then David was back in fellowship with the Lord once more.

Although David is still in Ziklag, he has gotten his heart right with the Lord once more.

David has two questions of the Lord here:

1. Shall I go up to one of the towns of Judah?”

The Lord’s answer is “Go up.”

2. “Where shall I go?”

And the Lord specifies “Hebron.”

Hebron is about 15 miles northeast of Ziklag, so David had this distance to travel to be obedient to the Lord’s direction.

David was not in any hurry. He made no fast move at this time. The circumstances seemed to be right for him, but David was learning to be careful of circumstances. Circumstances are a consideration in making a decision but they shouldn't be the first. Maybe they should be the last.

He asked if he should go up to any of the cities of Judah. This was his own tribe, and it was by far the friendliest. They knew how cruelly Saul had hunted him down.

God says, "Yes, go." David asks specifically where he should go.

David is practicing his son's proverb, Proverbs 3:5,6

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding.  
In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will direct your path."

God gives him a specific answer: Hebron. Hebron means "alliance" or "communion", which is a contrast to Ziklag, which has reference to self-will.

David is now allied with God and in communion with him.

Hebron was a priests' city, one of the cities of refuge established when Joshua conquered the land. It was a fitting place for David to be crowned. It was the oldest city in the land; and Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, the first four great men of the nation Israel, are buried here.

Winter asks the question, "Why did David go up to Hebron? Hebron was the principle city of a coalition of surrounding cities in Judah. Abraham had made his home near Hebron. It was near Hebron that Abraham bought the Cave of Machpelah for a burial place for Sarah when she died. It was central in Judah and far enough away from the home of Saul to make it safe from any who might support a Benjamite as a king to succeed Saul. The word Hebron means 'a strong fortified city.' There were little cities grouped around the larger city. We read of the cities of Hebron. The city itself was the strongest and oldest city in Judah at this time. It was something of a sacred city."

Dr. Paul Jorden says, “David had already waited for several years to be king of the whole nation, in addition to the 10-12 years before he became king of Judah. Our lives are so often affected by other people. We can do one of two things: either recognize that God is in control or take matters into our own hands. If you find yourself in a position of waiting for God to bring you to the time and place of his choosing, I hope you can know the confidence that David seemed to have. God will guide you, and you will gain strength in waiting upon him.”

I wonder if David wrote Psalm 37 during these years of waiting. Three times in the psalm he says, “Fret not thyself.” I don’t know anything more needed by Christians today than to trust in God, that chooses to do good, cultivate faithfulness, commit one’s way to God, rest in him, wait patiently for him, cease from anger, and forsake wrath.

### Psalm 37:23

“The steps of a man are established by the Lord, and he delights in his way.”

Davis points out, “The answer of the Lord came immediately, and David was commanded to go to the city of Hebron in the southern hill country. Hebron is located approximately 20 miles south of Jerusalem, and between 15-20 miles away from the town of Ziklag where David was residing. It was an ideal place for the capital in Judah, since it was situated near the center of the tribe. It was well protected, being located in the mountains; and it had a long, sacred history.”

v. 2 So David went up there with his two wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel

Immediately, David is obedient to the command of the Lord. And along with his two wives, he left to go to Hebron.

v. 3 David also took the men who were with him, each with his family, and they settled in Hebron and its towns.

David not only took his two wives, but he also took all the men that he had taken down to Ziklag, and they went with their families and came to settle in Hebron and its towns.

It is interesting to notice that David does nothing about making himself king. He and his men and their families simply go and dwell there; and the men of Judah, of their own accord, are going to come and anoint David king over the house of Judah.

v. 4 Then the men of Judah came to Hebron and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah.

David was anointed by Samuel when he was 16 years of age, and here he is anointed by the men of Judah the second time. This anointing is for David to become king over the house of Judah.

Although this is not all that God had promised David, it is a large installment. Judah was the largest tribe with the largest territory in the nation. Also, it is the royal tribe, through whom Christ is going to come.

Ecclesiastes 3:11

“He makes all things beautiful in his time.”

Lamentations 3:25,26

“The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the person who seeks him. It is good that he waits silently for the salvation of the Lord.”



Habakkuk 2:3

“For the vision is yet for the appointed time. It hastens toward the goal, and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it, for it will certainly come. It will not delay.”

Davis points out, “The journey which leads to the throne is a long and arduous one for David. It is an experience in the agony of defeat and sorrow, on the one hand, but at other times, the thrill of victory. David is a man of many talents. He is a musician, writer, leader, and man of valor. Because of such capabilities, he is eminently qualified for the highest position in Israel.”

Krummacher points out, “We find it recorded in the fifth book of Moses. God the Lord, it is said there, would in the exercise of his sovereign power, always choose out and set up over them the man who should be their king. Israel must not set a stranger on their throne, but their king must always be one from among their brethren. The king was never, through a vain desire after a multitude of beautiful and stately horses, to allow himself to be misled into forming an alliance with Egypt which would only bring ruin and be a snare to his people. Also, he was not to multiply to himself wives, lest his heart might thereby be turned away. He was to guard also against covetousness and an unseemly accumulation of state treasures. He was rather to put his gold and silver into circulation for the welfare of the land. But above all, when he sat upon the throne of his kingdom, he was always to remember the law of his God.”

David purified in the furnace of severe persecutions and sorrowful humiliations, and strong faith through the joyful experience of wonderful deliverances and merciful exaltations, is prepared and ready for the lofty dignity which the Lord has destined for him. He is now called to the throne by the grace of him who had reserved to himself the right of absolute sovereignty and supreme power over his covenant people.

Vos points out, “David had waited a long time to take the reigns of government. Of course, he could not take the throne as long as Saul occupied it. The reader has learned that Saul was now out of the picture, but David did not know this. Now the news reaches him. The way he received it and his reaction to it, tell much about the character of the man. David clearly had the patience to wait for God to work out his place for his life in his own way. He was not motivated by personal ambition to the extent that he sought to take developments into his own hand. Above all, he had profound respect for God’s anointed sovereign, and refused to take the life of one who ruled by divine sanction.”

The rest of verse 4 says, “When David was told that it was the men of Jabesh Gilead who had buried Saul,”

Saul’s first military campaign was to deliver the people from Jabesh Gilead from the Ammonites.

Now in deep appreciation for that courageous act of Saul, the men of Jabesh Gilead (which is 65 miles northeast from Hebron) had gone and gotten Saul’s body and buried him.

v. 5 he sent messengers to the men of Jabesh Gilead to say to them. “The Lord bless you for showing this kindness to Saul your master by burying him.

David’s message to these folks who have done this kind act is that the Lord may bless them for showing this kindness to Saul their master by burying him.

v. 6 May the Lord now show you kindness and faithfulness, and I too will show you the same favor because you have done this.

His wish is for kindness and faithfulness from the Lord and David says that he will also show favor to them because they have done this.

v. 7 Now then, be strong and brave, for Saul your master is dead, and the house of Judah has anointed me king over them.”

His challenge to these folks 65 miles north of him is that they would be strong and brave because Saul is dead. He then announces that the house of Judah had anointed him king over them.

Gehrke points out, “David, however, has much more extensive ambitions. That is clear from the message he sends to the men of Jabesh Gilead, a message that not only congratulates them on their respectful burial of the late king, but also most diplomatically adds a postscript about his own having been anointed king over Judah. This rather broad hint means ‘I’m available also for you, if you wish.’”

v. 8 Meanwhile, Abner son of Ner, the commander of Saul’s army, had taken Ish-Boseth son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim.

Saul’s dynasty is not to be replaced without a fight. So seven years of bloody civil war take place with rebellions, rival factions, assassinations, suspense and intrigue occur before the opposition is quelled and David rules as king over a united kingdom.

His kingdom is set up by degrees.

Abner was Saul’s first cousin. He was also Saul’s general and he was very ambitious. He was not about to allow David to become king of Israel, although he too knew that it was God’s will. Abner never had any love for David. He was jealous and he wanted to retain his place of power.

Abner takes Ish-Boseth, Saul’s son, and brings him over to Mahanaim, which is a town about 65 miles northeast of Hebron, and very close in the proximity of Jabesh Gilead, on the east side of the Jordan River.

Winter asks the question, “What was Abner’s motive in proclaiming Ish-Bosheth king? Abner was the son of Saul’s uncle. A number of things contributed to his proclaiming Ish-Bosheth king in the first place:

1. He would want to defend the family’s pride and interests.
2. In the second place, there were Abner’s own personal ambitions. These could be more probably justified if Ish-Bosheth rules.
3. Abner had a natural interest in the tribe of Ish-Bosheth.

Abner, Saul’s commanding general, was the son of Ner, who was a brother to Saul’s father Kish.

Jorden points out, “Throughout Saul’s reign, there was a close personal relationship between Saul and Abner, these first cousins. A few years after Saul’s death, Abner proclaimed the one remaining son Ish-Bosheth as king of Israel, but maintained control of the kingdom himself. During the 7 1/2 years from the death of Saul to the joining of the kingdom, the forces of David and Ish-Bosheth were meeting in combat with some regularity. Because Abner was cousin to Saul, he was second cousin to Michal, and therefore to David by marriage. Joab, David’s commanding general is first introduced to us here. His mother was David’s sister Zeruah, and his brothers were Asahel and Abishai. These three young men were wild ones and David had difficulty controlling them, especially Joab.”

v. 9 He made him king over Gilead, Ashuri and Jezreel, and also over Ephraim, Benjamin and all Israel.

The geographical boundaries of the kingdom of Ish-Bosheth is described here in verse 9. It is basically all of the area, with the exclusion of Judah.

v. 10 Ish-Bosheth son of Saul was forty years old when he became king over Israel, and reigned two years. The house of Judah, however, followed David.

If Ish-Bosheth, Saul's son, could be kept on the throne, Abner would have even greater power than he had under Saul because Ish-Bosheth was nothing but a figurehead, a very weak man whom Abner could control.

We have a nation divided.

Matt. 12:25

“And knowing their thoughts, he said to them, ‘Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and any city or house divided against itself shall not stand.’”

In this story we are reading many individuals are striving for positions of leadership and power. Some would even scheme, kill, or change sides in order to gain their personal ends. The result is chaos, frustration, and death.

v. 11 The length of time David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

David's tenure of leadership over Judah is 5 1/2 years longer than that of Ish-Bosheth over Israel in the north. The text says, “David was king in Hebron for a period of 7 1/2 years.”

This tells us that David had to wait 7 1/2 years before the whole kingdom is to be put under his hand. David still has to wait. But it is God's time he is waiting for, not man's.

v. 12 Abner son of Ner, together with the men if Ish-Bosheth, son of Saul, left Mahanaim and went to Gibeon.

Abner and his men representing Ish-Bosheth cross the Jordan and came southwest 43 miles into the land of Benjamin to their southern border.

Gibeon is north of Hebron about 23 miles.

Winter points out, “The main jurisdiction of Ish-Bosheth was over Ephraim, the tribe formed from the descendants of the son of Joseph. He also ruled over Benjamin, his own tribe. This wide domain would mean that Ish-Bosheth had jurisdiction over most of the northern part of Palestine on both sides of the Jordan River.”

What is the meaning of the name Ish-Bosheth? The word Ish-Bosheth means ‘man of shame.’ In 1 Chron. 8:33 this man is called ‘Esh-Baal.’ This word Esh-Baal would mean man of Baal. Baal is the name for a false god. One would hardly expect that the Israelites would put a man on the throne who had a name of Esh-Baal. Abner may have changed his name to Ish-Bosheth when he put him on the throne.

Abner seems to be the aggressor here in taking the initiative to travel this far south to challenge David’s forces.

v. 13 Joab, son of Zeruah and David’s men went out and met them at the pool of Gibeon. One group sat down on one side of the pool and one group on the other side.

Joab is David’s nephew, a son if David’s sister Zeruah.

In the army of David there were three brothers, sons of David’s sister Zeruah: Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. The first Joab, was commander of David’s forces.

Alexander Whyte points out, “Joab, the son of David’s sister was a man of the very foremost ability. Had it not been for David, Joab would have climbed up into the throne of Israel. As it was, he stood on the steps of the throne and faced the king all his days. Notwithstanding their family relationship, David and Joab were much of an age, and that no doubt helps to account for a good deal that went on between the uncle and the nephew. Joab was a stern, haughty, imperious, revengeful man. His only virtue was a certain proud, patronizing loyalty to his king.”

v. 14 Then Abner said to Joab, “Let’s have some of the young men get up and fight hand to hand in front of us.” All right, let them do it,” Joab said.

Abner throws down a challenge similar to the challenge of the Philistines to the nation Israel in 1 Samuel 17:8,9

“And he stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel and said to them, ‘Why do you come out to draw up in battle array? Am I not the Philistine, and you servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight me, and kill me, then we will become your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall become our servants and serve us.’”

Abner’ s proposal is to take a few men from each side and let them settle the conflict.

If one side or the other won, or if there had been just one who survived to claim victory, then honor would have been satisfied.

v. 15 So they stood up and were counted off—twelve men for Benjamin and Ish-Bosheth son of Saul and twelve for David.

The lines are drawn up and the twelve men for each side are chosen and facing each other for conflict.

v. 16 Then each man grabbed his opponent by the head and thrust his dagger into his opponent's side and they fell down together. So that place in Gibeon was called Helkath Hazzurim.

“The field of sword edges”

Because the contest was a draw, a general fight ensued.

v. 17 The battle that day was very fierce, and Abner and the men of Israel were defeated by David's men.

David's men had never lost a battle yet. And as they went to fight, they had a winning streak on the line. In this situation they once again claimed the victory and defeated Abner and the men of Israel.

v. 18 The three sons of Zeruiah were there: Joab, Abishai and Asahel. Now Asahel, was as fleet-footed as a wild gazelle.

Asahel was the marathoner in David's time. He was the Alberto Salazar, the Bill Rodgers of his day, the Philipiddes.

Gehrke points out, “Joab and his men proved the stronger, and the Benjamites must flee toward their trans-Jordanian base. The famous runner among the Judean mercenaries is Asahel, the youngest of David's nephews, the son of David's sister Zeruiah, and the brother of Joab and Abishai. His ambition and overconfidence proved his undoing, for he imagines that he can overtake and kill the most important man in the fleeing enemy force—the commander Abner.”



v. 19 He chased Abner, turning neither to the right nor to the left as he pursued him.

v. 20 Abner looked behind him and asked, “Is that you, Asahel?” “It is,” he answered.

v. 21 Then Abner said to him, “Turn aside to the right or to the left; take on one of the young men and strip him of his weapons.” But Asahel would not stop chasing him.

v. 22 Again Abner warned Asahel, “Stop chasing me! Why should I strike you down? How could I look your brother Joab in the face?”

Now Abner issues his second warning, which also goes unheeded.

v. 23 But Asahel refused to give up the pursuit; so Abner thrust the butt of his spear into Asahel’s stomach, and the spear came out through his back. He fell there and died on the spot. And every man stopped when he came to the place where Asahel had fallen and died.

Being a skinny runner, Abner just stopped quickly and the butt end of his spear went right through Asahel’s stomach.

Krummacher point out, “And it came to pass, that as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died, stood still. A deep painful sorrow that such a hero should fall arrested the steps of everyone that drew near. Often enough since has this scene renewed itself. How many a soldier, rushing forward in battle even during our last war, had suddenly with tearful eye stood still on the battlefield when he came upon the bloody corpse of a brave companion or even of a valiant and well-tried leader. Many a one who saw his comrade or even his leader fall with unfeigned grief gave expression to the wish that the next bullet might lay him down beside the fallen one, and did not rest until he had provided for the dead an honorable grave, as good as the circumstances would allow, and had marked out his resting place by a cross, though it might be but rudely made and had adorned it with an oaken wreath bedewed with his tears.”

v. 24 But Joab and Abishai pursued Abner, and as the sun was setting, they came to the hill of Ammah, near Giah on the way to the wasteland of Gibeon.

Joab and Abishai, the two brothers, bitter and resentful over what has happened to Asahel, have continued to pursue all the way out to the wasteland of Gibeon.

v. 25 Then the men of Benjamin rallied behind Abner. They formed themselves into a group and took their stand on top of a hill.

v. 26 Abner called out to Joab, “Must the sword devour forever? Don’t you realize that this will end in bitterness? How long before you order your men to stop pursuing their brothers?”

Abner has three questions:

1. “Must the sword devour forever?”
2. “Don’t you realize that this will end in bitterness?”
3. “How long before you order your men to stop pursuing their brothers?”

v. 27 Joab answered, “As surely as God lives, if you had not spoken, the men would have continued the pursuit of their brothers until morning.”

Joab is very bitter and resentful toward Abner in what has happened, and so he speaks to him firmly, “Surely as God lives, if you had not spoken, the men would have continued the pursuit of their brothers until morning.”

v. 28 So Joab blew the trumpet, and all the men came to a halt; they no longer pursued Israel, nor did they fight anymore.

Joab reminds Abner that he is the one that started the whole thing, and he blows the trumpet and retreats. He is David's commander, and he knows how adverse David is about shedding blood of God's people. I think he wanted to get back and see what David would command about the matter. Also, he is grieving about his brother, and he wants to go back to bury him.

v. 29 All that night Abner and his men marched through the Arabah. They crossed the Jordan, continued through the whole Bithron and came to Mahanaim.

This is a 43-mile return trip, and they did not stop but continued to head home.

v. 30 Then Joab returned from pursuing Abner and assembled all his men. Besides Asahel, nineteen of David's men were found missing.

This is not too bad since 12 of them died at the beginning in the standoff that they had had initially. So along with Asahel, there were seven others who lost their lives, which made a total of twenty.

v. 31 But David's men had killed three hundred and sixty Benjamites who were with Abner.

The casualty list for Abner and his men is substantially longer. A total of 360, or 340 more than David lost in this civil war.

Winter points out, "The loss of Asahel was a very severe loss. He was not only the king's nephew but he was the brother of Joab who became David's captain. Joab never quite forgot the fact that Abner killed Asahel. From that day forth he was determined to kill Abner. He really had no right to be the avenger of blood since Asahel died in battle and Abner slew him reluctantly."

v. 32 They took Asahel and buried him in his father's tomb at Bethlehem. Then Jab and his men marched all night and arrived at Hebron by daybreak.

Zeruiah, David's sister, evidently married some local boy from Bethlehem and had these three sons.

Joab and his men, after burying Asahel, marched all night and arrived at Hebron by daybreak. They had a 23-mile trip back home.

This is just a beginning of a long civil conflict before David comes to the throne.

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons that we can gain from this particular study?

LESSON #1: A house divided against itself cannot stand.

LESSON #2: David demonstrates that he is back in fellowship with God because he inquired of the Lord.

LESSON #3: If Saul were killed by an Amalekite, then his prior disobedience brought about his own demise.

LESSON #4: David has learned not to take matters into his own hands but to wait upon the Lord.

LESSON #5: When people die, it is the right thing to remember the good times.

LESSON #6: The Lord is wonderfully good to those who will wait for him.

LESSON #7: The throne will not be possessed without conflict.

Romans 8:25

“But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.”

Hebrews 11:1

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

Winter points out, “David must have spent many years as a fugitive. He was anointed king over Israel while still a young man and living in his father’s home in Bethlehem. All of us can learn a lesson of patience from this experience with David. We should not take things into our own hands but let God and his own good providence lead us step-by-step. We need also to be sober and be vigilant, for Satan is like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. David had little time to rest on his laurels. A rival king was ruling in Gilead. It is ever thus with Christians. There never seems to be any time when they can let down their guard. Our adversary the devil is a roaring lion and walks about continually seeking whom he may devour.”

The poet put it this way in a piece called “The Rock That Is Higher Than I”

“Though sometimes the shadows are deep,  
And rough seems the path to the goal,  
And sorrows sometimes how they sweep  
Like tempests down over the soul.

O sometimes how long seems the day  
And sometimes how weary my feet  
But toiling in life’s dusty way,  
The Rock’s blessed shadow how sweet.

O near to the Rock let me keep,  
If blessings or sorrows prevail,  
Or climbing the mountain way steep,  
Or walking the shadowy veil.

O then to the Rock let me fly,  
The Rock that is higher than I.”

Psalm 37:3-5

“Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land, and cultivate faithfulness. Delight yourself in the Lord; and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust also in him; and he will do it.”

Psalm 37:7

“Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who carries out wicked schemes.”

Psalm 37:23,24

“The steps of a man are established by the Lord, and he delights in his way. When he falls, he shall be hurled headlong because the Lord is the one who holds his hand.”

Psalm 145:14

“The Lord sustains all who fall and raises up all who are bowed down.”

Psalm 147:11

“The Lord favors those who fear him, those who wait for his loving kindness.”

Og Mandino writes, “I will never consider defeat, and will remove from my vocabulary such words and phrases as quit, cannot, unable, impossible, out of the question, improbable, failure, unworkable, hopeless, and retreat—for they are the words of fools. I will avoid despair, but if this disease of the mind should infect me, then I will work on in despair. I will toil and I will endure. I will ignore the obstacles at my feet, and keep my eyes in the goals above my head; for I know that where dry desert ends, green grass grows. I will forget the happenings of the day that is gone, whether they were good or bad, and greet the new sun with confidence that this will be the best day of my life.”

Paul Billheimer in his book Don't Waste Your Sorrow says, "I would have you learn when temptations assail you, and the enemy comes in like a flood, that this thing is from me, that your weakness needs my might, and your safety lies in letting me fight for you."

Stan Cottrell in his book No Mountain Too High says, "Sometimes when I'm a little unsure of myself, I remember something my Mama still says to me, 'Son, there is nothing you can't do with the good Lord's help.' That's a great lesson I've learned. I need God every day. I've even learned a verse from the Bible which I quote to myself regularly, 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.' I've also learned that I need people. I can't make it in life alone. I need the support, encouragement and friendship of others. Experience tells me that when I commit myself to a goal, hold on and keep trying, I can do it, as long as I remember a most important qualifier—with God. There's no mountain too high anymore, not a single one. With God I know that I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."