

Book of Second Samuel chapter two for this evening, Second Samuel chapter two, and this is where the story takes a distinctly political turn. So if you enjoy politics, I think you're going to love the book of Second Samuel. If you do not enjoy politics, don't worry, all is not lost. I think you're still going to really love this book because of the spiritual lessons that it teaches, but make no mistake, this is a very political moment in Israel's history because King Saul is dead and the entire nation is wrestling with the question, okay, what now?

What do we do? Who's steering the ship? Who are we following? Certainly the rumors that God had anointed David to be the next king were pervasive throughout the land of Israel for sure the soldiers of Saul knew that because they've been around Saul now multiple times when he was having this discussion back and forth with David even confessing to David that yeah David I understand it I get it you're going to be the next king and then you know those soldiers go home and they tell their sweethearts and their sweethearts share the word with their neighbors and so on and so forth this has had 10 years to spread throughout the nation of Israel.

So my guess would be that there would not be a single person in all of Israel that had not yet heard that David's got a claim on the throne of Israel and that his claim is that God had called him to do this and has already anointed him to be the king. But still rumors that rumors don't settle anything. You can't make decisions based on rumors. So there are some pretty serious questions here was David's claim?

True. Was that valid? Should he be king? Should someone else be king?

Should this be a son of Saul that's going to be king? So it's an interesting chapter as kingdom alliances, kingdom loyalties sort of all find their place and everyone here in this chapter throughout the nation is essentially going to pick a king and in so doing they're going to pick a side and the result is going to be division. In this chapter we are going to see the nation of Israel divided. It's no longer going to be Israel.

It's going to be Israel and Judah. It's going to be eleven northern tribes and one southern tribe, Judah. This division, if there's a good thing about it, is that it's very temporary. It's only going to last until chapter five.

Well, it's temporary in our reading, okay, but it's going to take seven and a half years for David. So if you're David, it's not a quick thing, but for you and I it's a quick read and just a handful of chapters here. We're going to see the death of Ishebo Sheth, the guy that's going to take over here in this chapter for Israel and serve as their king. He's going to die in the fifth chapter and once he dies then the kingdom is going to be united under David.

But for now, David's path to the throne is not immediate, Saul's death did not resolve that struggle. It has only begun a new phase of it. So David's rise to become king over all of Israel will take a little while longer. And let's go ahead and take a step toward that tonight as we see the kingdom divide itself out.

We read in verse one, after this, and that would be just a refresher memory, it would be after the disaster that took place when David and his soldiers got back from trying to go to war, quote unquote, with Israel on the Philistine side and returned back home to Ziklag, only to find that Ziklag had been razed, RAZED, you know, level burned to the ground, and their people gone. After David gets word that Saul and Jonathan have been killed in battle, after all of those things we read, the David inquired of the Lord, shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the Lord said to him, go up. said, to which shall I go up?

And he said to Hebron, just to quickly point out the two things there. Well, actually, let's take our time through it. So David says, Lord, do you want me to go to the cities of Judah? Lord says, yep, okay, okay, Lord, exactly where do you want me to go?

Again, the Amalekites attacking Ziklag while David and his army weren't there, probably was the best thing that could have happened to David and his people. I'm sure it didn't feel like that at the time. I know it was sketchy there for a little while as he finds out his folks are kidnapped, essentially. His people, his wives, his children, all of their loved ones, captured by the Amalekites and taken elsewhere.

But in the end, none of that was lost, not a family member was lost. They all got their sweethearts back, they all got their wives back, even their mother-in-laws, their father-in-laws, aunts and uncles, all family return. We read very carefully that they got back every single possession. Like there wasn't a single large or small possession that someone lost in the course of those events.

David got all of it back by attacking and defeating the Amalekites. And then a little bonus, they got a surplus by taking some of the spoils of that battle against the Amalekites. So on all fronts there, it was all good stuff, all positive stuff, a little bit of a scare for a while, a little bit of a stress for a while, but they won, they got everything back and more, except, except the city of Ziklag. It was raised, it was burned to the ground.

Their houses were gone and I told you, I felt like that was really a God thing. They didn't know what God knew when that happened. They didn't know that they weren't gonna need to live there but two days, three days on the third day, the Lord's sending them out of there. They didn't realize that, but the Lord knew that.

I think that was his way of kind of shoving them out the door, God closing that door and opening another. So that one thing that they lost kind of helps with this decision, I think if the city is still there and the houses are still there, maybe this is a tougher decision, but with the house is gone, David would be asking the question, okay, what do we do? Do we, pardon me, do we rebuild? I guess that's what we do.

We rebuild all of our houses. I don't know why I can't say the word rebuild tonight. Do we rebuild all of our houses? Easy decision until you get word if you're David, this all's dead.

Whoa, that changes everything. Because if Saul's dead, the chase is off, the hunt is over. David's life is no longer wanted. You know, they're taking his wanted posters down from the post office, from the bulletin boards on the post office and the bulletin boards in the grocery stores.

He doesn't have to worry about Saul chasing him anymore. But I love the fact that he prays here. He doesn't just assume anything. He gets right back to prayer.

This is something we did not see from David, at least, you know, not in scripture text, From chapter 23, all the way to chapter 30, from chapter 23 to chapter 30, David's making a whole bunch of decisions, but we never once see him pray, not once. Not once do we see him ask, Lord, is this a good decision? Lord, what do you want? So chapter 30, after David loses everything, he is back to being a praying man.

It's unfortunate that it took absolute tragedy to bring him back into his prayer life, but at least he's back into his prayer life. Chapter 30, he's praying. Chapter two of Second Samuel, he's praying again. And he's very specific in his praying.

He's not content to know the general area that the Lord wants him in. You know, this would be like me praying, Lord, do you want me to minister in Pennsylvania? And the Lord's saying, yes, I want you to be in Pennsylvania. Okay, good enough, Lord.

I'm gonna go pick a city. This is David saying, okay, great. I know the region now, I know the state, if you will, but where exactly do you want me? What city do you want me in?

In fact, Lord, if you want to pick my house, that's fine with me. He is very specific in his praying, very precise in his praying. And I like that, I like precise praying. I think the Bible would champion that.

I think I could make a very strong biblical case for that. You just judge for yourself, you know, what's better, praying every day. Lord bless the whole world, Lord bless our country, you know, throwing out those general pie in the sky, ethereal esoteric prayers, what's better, that or like, travailing in prayer over the hearts of our leaders, over the soul of our nation, over the condition of the world praying against the persecution against Christians in other countries where Christians are losing their lives. What do you think is better?

It's not that the Lord doesn't know. I mean, we can pray a general prayer and the Lord's like, Hey, you know, I got a plan anyway. I'm going to do my thing. I got this.

But I really believe the Lord loves precise praying. This is also a great example of how simple prayer really can be. It's just a conversation between David and God and prayer is really supposed to be like that. I understand that it's kind of like a, how do I want to say it, it's almost like a conflict of terms to say it's just a conversation, but then to end it by saying with God.

It's just a conversation, well yeah, but it's with God. And so because of the last part of that, it's just a conversation, yeah, but with God, it makes a lot of people nervous or opposite into the spectrum, excitable when they pray. And so they feel like when they pray, there's got to be a ton of emotions behind it. Not saying that's necessarily a bad thing.

I'm just trying to say the Lord doesn't expect you to get all emotional when you pray. He doesn't expect you to have to try to impress him with, you know, how worked up you are about the fact that you're talking to him prayer really can be just like this. So Lord, where should I go? Should I go to Judah?

Yep. Okay. Where to? Where exactly Lord?

Hebron. All right. Got it. Thanks Lord.

Prayer really can just be simple conversation with the Lord. Don't feel the need to impress him. Don't feel the need to convince him of how serious you are about your praying because of how much emotions you have in it. And when you pull out the tears on the Lord, oh now he knows, you know, Arlen's really serious now.

Here comes the crocodile tears. They don't have to do that. We can talk to the Lord and I'm a firm believer that as you've been around this for a while and you mature in your Christianity, that's kind of what it becomes. not that you take him for granted, not that you lose your reverence for him, but that you just revere the ability to simply talk to the Lord in easy conversation, knowing that he values that, he desires that, and he responds to that.

Verse 2, so David went up there to Hebron and his two wives also, a Hinoem of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. You know how I feel, you know what the Bible teaches. He should not have two wives. He does.

We have to deal with it and move on. Verse three, and David brought up his men who were with him, everyone with his household. And they lived in the towns of Hebron. So Ziklag moved to Hebron.

They went from Philistine country to Judah, which is southern Israel. So God's at least got them on the right side now. This is a step in the right direction for David and his men, David and his people, I should say. This is all of them.

This is David, 600 soldiers, their wives, their children. Verse four, and the men of Judah came. And there they anointed David King over the house of Judah. Oh, they're ready.

Judah's ready. We've been waiting for this moment. David, you're the king. Let's do an anointing service.

Let's make it official. Now I would add that David has already had his official authentic anointing back in 1 Samuel chapter 16 when the prophet Samuel at the command of the Lord anointed him to be the king. At the time he was just a young boy, but this is a nice gesture on behalf of the tribe of Judah because it's a public statement for the whole tribe. The statement is that they are expressing belief that God has anointed David to be the king, that God picked this man, David, and in the process of acknowledging that or ratifying that, they are also announcing their submission to David's rule over them.

They waste no time moving on from Saul and backing David. I would like to think I'd be intelligent enough to be right there with them, no matter where I was living. Yes, give me David, thank you, please. It's, I think, good to point out that Judah is David's main tribe.

He comes from the father of Jesse. I said that wrong, but Jesse is David's father. But Jesse comes from the main tribe of Judah. So maybe this was a no-brainer for Judah to go with the hometown kid.

I mean, let's face it. Any tribe who is the tribe of the king of the nation, that tribe is going to be enriched in many different ways, just because the king came from your tribe. So they made the decision that we would have expected them to make. But I would like to think it was more than just that.

I'd like to think it was more than just picking David because, well, yeah, he's from Bethlehem of Judah. He's from Judah. He's from our tribe. He's a hometown boy.

You've got to root for the hometown boy. I would like to think that there was some spiritual element to this, you know, that they were really believing in the fact that God had called David to be the king. On the other side of things, Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin. So this won't be as easy of a decision for Benjamin, for that entire tribe, you know, do they accept David and lose the benefits of no longer being the hosting tribe to the king of Israel, losing all the political perks that comes with being the tribe where the king lives and where the king is from and all that.

Do they hold on to that? Or do they let go of that and honor what they believe is the Lord's calling here in making David king, reading on in verse four, when they told David, it was the men of Jabesh Gilead who buried Saul. So that was new information to David. He did not read for Samuel chapter 31 along with us.

We know that, but David has just been informed about that. You know, they've just let him know that when Saul and his three sons died, it was pretty horrific what happened, they cut Saul's head off and they had Saul's armor in one location, they had his head mounted on a wall in one of their worship temples and they had his body, along with the bodies of his three sons, Jonathan included, hanging from the temple of Dagon. So it was an awful thing. The people of Jabesh Gilead, when they got word about that, They just could not bear that.

They could not stand the thought of seeing Saul and his son's bodies mutilated and dishonored like that. So probably at great risk to their own lives, they made the trek from where they were all the way into these Philistine cities. They retrieved the bodies of Saul and his sons. They cremated them.

This is all stuff we studied. They cremated them and then the bones that remained, they took the bones and they buried them back home. And David's just been informed. Bashgiliad did that.

Now the reason Judah is letting David know that is because they know David and the way that he honors Saul and the sons of Saul, especially Jonathan. He knows Jonathan's respect for Saul and those three sons of his, which the whole Saul part, I admit it's tough for us to relate to. Like, why did he respect Saul so much? I get it.

It's the position. God put the man in the position. But David, isn't there just a little part of you that's like, oh, thank goodness, that guy's gone. Tired of that guy and everything that he pulled me through.

But they knew that about David. So they wanted to let David know that the folks With Jabesh Gilead, I think they deserve a reward for what they've done in honoring Saul and it's almost like that town never forgot about an early moment from Saul's life, the very first battle that he fought when the people of Jabesh Gilead came under attack from the Amalekites and Saul came in there with a military force. raised up a real quick military around him through a mandatory draft, went into the city of Jebus Gilead and rescued the city. I think they never forgot about that.

And regardless of how far Saul had fallen from grace, I think they still honored Saul all the time for Saul coming in there and rescuing their city. And now David's going to do something about this. This is blessed David's heart to find this out, and now he's going to do something to bless them in return. Verse 5, David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh Gilead and said to them, May you be blessed by the Lord because you showed this loyalty to Saul your Lord and buried him.

Verse 6, Now may the Lord show steadfast love and faithfulness to you, and I will do good to you because you have done this thing. Number seven, now therefore, let your hands be strong and be valiant, for Saul your Lord is dead, and the house of Judah has anointed me, king, over them." All right? It seems like David is getting this message to Jabesh Gilead for two major reasons. First of all, David knew that the people of Jabesh Gilead were used to a very highly jealous king, King Saul.

And David probably did not want them thinking that he would take their kind gesture towards Saul as some kind of statement of loyalty to Saul and his side and that David might come in there angry and try to do something with a military response against them. So he deals with that first by saying, I actually really appreciate the kindness that you showed to Saul and his three sons. I want you to know I'm not upset about that. I'm not coming after you with my military.

I'm grateful and I'm going to reward you for that. That deserves some special blessing from me, the king. Secondly, it does seem to me that David wants to know where the people of Jabesh Gilead stand on the matter of David being king. I think he's feeling them out.

And that's why he rather nonchalantly drops this in at the very end, almost as a post-script, you know, like, oh, by the way, the people of Judah, yeah, they've made me king. Just by the way, just wanted to let you guys know that, hint, hint. So basically, if you ask me, here's what he's saying, he's saying, hey, we have a movement going, do you want to be a part of the movement? All of Judah, Judah's in, they're backing me, are you guys in?

and we count on you to be in. Will you recognize me as your king? So he's trying to get a loyal following on the east side of the Jordan River. That's where this city, Jabesh Gilead, is located.

Do you remember early in our studies, this would be, oh, let's see back as far as, Oh, Exodus Leviticus Numbers, probably Numbers, yeah, the Book of Numbers, when the two and a half tribes, Reuben Gad and half of Manasseh decided they wanted to stay on the east side of the Jordan. That's where all of this is located. Jabesh Gilead is over there in those three tribes, or pardon me, those two and a half

tribes right in the middle between the Mediterranean Sea on the top and the Dead Sea on the bottom. So let's look at this on a map real quick and actually we'll take a few moments to get caught up on this.

I used to have like one of those pointers. I don't know if I still do or not. Well, what do you know? It's in here.

I don't know. You might not be able to see this too well. But just to look at a couple of important cities that we've been studying about, maybe this will bring back some memories and kind of help to make some sense of the movement of all of this. Okay, first of all, there's Ziklag.

This is where David and his men have been located. You see the five major cities of the Philistines, Gaza, Ashkelon, Ash.ekron, Gath. This is where David first came and made an alliance, a feigned alliance with the the king of Gath, and eventually they allowed them to go to Ziklag and live in Ziklag. If you can see this here, this is Ki'ila, you remember that location, that's the city that David saved, and then they prayed about it, and the Lord basically said, yeah, you're going to need to leave because Ki'ila is going to give you up, they're going to rat you out, they're going to turn you in, even though you just saved them all, they're going to turn you into Saul, and that's going to be a problem, so you're going to have to leave.

Here we see Hebron, this is, you know, part of what we're studying today, This is where David and his men have moved to, from Ziklag to Hebron. This is headquarters that will be for David and his men for quite a while. If you look up north here, you have Bethlehem, you have Jerusalem, you have Gibeah. Remember this, we're going to be studying this, and I have another map for that.

If you look all the way up here, you have Jabesh Gilead. So you have the Sea of Galilee up here, you have the Dead Sea down here, a little bit higher than halfway. This is Jabesh Gilead on the east side of the Jordan River. There's Jezreel, the valley of Jezreel, remember that?

There's Endor where Saul consulted with the witch of Endor to try to get some intel on a situation. So I think David's plan, well I can't say that he intended this, but militarily I think it's a brilliant move. Because if you're this newly initiated king in Judah, the next task for you is to get the word out to the rest of the nation of Israel and see how they respond. And if you ask me, the more difficult thing to do is to just go right from Hebron here, just push up north, close to your neighbors, out of Judah, and northern Israel, is what we'll call this, all this region up here.

and start asking the northern Israel neighbors, hey, do you want in? Will you submit to me as king? God wants me to be king. He anointed me to be king a long time ago.

Judah's recognizing that. Now are you willing to recognize that? Instead of that, because there is always the possibility that the tribes of the north won't take too kindly to that and will attack you, David starts over here with Jabesh Gilead. And first of all, they are about 90 miles away from where David is.

So if they get mad about this news report, they get mad when David essentially tries to recruit them to his side. David really doesn't have to fear reprisal for that. They're 90 miles away. They are separated by difficult terrain.

First of all, crossing the Jordan River and then you've got mountains to go through. This would be a safe bet, a safe place to start, to try to feel out the people within the rest of the nation. And if you're wondering what happens with the people of Jabesh Gilead, well, it seems to me, based on what we're going to read, that they're going to be a part of the other 11 tribes. They're going to go right along with that.

They are not going to pledge their loyalty to David, and instead they're going to pledge their loyalty to Israel, not recognizing the rule of David. So Hebron, hill country in Judah, 20 miles south of Jerusalem, Jabesh Gilead, just east of the Jordan River in the territory of Gilead. David's got the south, he's trying to see if he can get some loyalty far east before he ventures into northern Israel to see how they feel about the matter. And one of the things I really like here is that he's being very Christ-like about this.

You remember, I'm sure, from previous studies that David is a wonderful type of Christ, and here he is just showing us a perfect typology for Jesus in the fact that he's operating the same way that Jesus operates. Jesus is the King. He has the right to the throne. He won that.

But does He force that? Does He force loyalty? Does He call us Christians to enforce loyalty? Do we have to go out there and put guns to people's head and say, confess Christ, pronounce obedience to Christ, or we pull the trigger?

Does He force loyalty? allows freedom of choice. If Jesus is going to be your king, it's going to be because you decided that you wanted him to be your king. David is taking the same approach.

The nation is not used to that. They're used to Saul who would enforce loyalty. If Saul even suspected that you might not be loyal to him and submitted to him, whether he was right or wrong, your life was in danger. You were either dead or like in David's case, you would be hunted and exhausted until you wish you were dead.

So they were used to that forced kind of heavy handed rule from Saul and David is just completely different. He's just going to ask people, do you want me to be your king? I love that. It's a beautiful type of Christ.

Verse 8, but Abner, remember him, Abner, this is Saul's general, the general over his army. What does his name mean again? Well, let's read on Abner, the son of Ner. Oh, yeah, that's right.

That's what it means. Actually, Abner means Ner is my father. The son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, took Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim, verse 9, and he made him king over Gilead and the Asharites and Jezreel and Ephraim and Benjamin and all Israel. So underline those last two words, that's the most important part there, all Israel.

Ishbosheth is ruling over all Israel. He's got 11 tribes. David's got one tribe, Judah, down south. Abner would be one of the soldiers that survived the battle between the Philistines and the Israelites.

He was among the group that ran from the battle and fled for their lives. So technically he shouldn't even still have his man card, but he's a surviving general. He was the general of the army. He ran for his life.

He's going to run for his life in this chapter. He ran for his life. He survives, so he has taken it upon himself as the commander of Saul's army, now that Saul is dead, to install Isbochef as the king of the northern 11 tribes. He is the son of Saul, as we read.

He is the fourth son of Saul, so he is the fourth oldest. Jonathan was actually the oldest son, and before Saul blew it, Jonathan was the rightful replacement for King Saul being the oldest but Saul and the next two oldest sons of Saul are dead so now the fourth son the fourth oldest son of Saul is installed as the king no questions asked his name means man of shame Ishpovsheth means man of shame. I'm just kind of piecing this together. His dad, Saul, named him man of shame.

In other words, he named this kid, hey, this is the kid I'm ashamed of. That's what he named this kid, man of shame. I'm thinking that if Saul had any say in this, he would say, no, no, no, no, no, skip the

son I'm ashamed of, go to the fifth guy. But there's no questions asked here because by age he's the next son of Saul in line so he's immediately installed as the king of Israel.

No questions asked. So let's real quick look at just look at this. I mean it should be kind of obvious what we're dealing with but just look at Ishbo Sheth's kingdom here. This is based on the names that we read that are loyal, Asher, Jezreel, you know all of these names, Mahanaim, Ephraim, Benjamin.

This is basically the, even outside of that, what does not belong to the Philistines. All of Israel, 11 tribes against Judah down south. Judah is a large area, it's a large tribe, but still it is 11 to 1. In ordinary monarchies this is a totally appropriate selection.

You just move to the next oldest son, whatever that might be, and he gets to be the king. Totally normal, totally expected, but as you and I know, God terminated Saul's family dynasty many years before he terminated Saul. He first lost the royal line before he even lost his position as the king, and don't think for a second that Abner does not know that. He does know that, church.

He knows that. If you go back to 1 Samuel chapter 24, verse 10, Abner was standing right there with Saul as Saul is making the confession to David and saying this, David, I know that you You shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand." Abner heard that. Abner knows this stuff. So let's ask the question.

Abner, did you know that that day, the boy would one day rule the kingdom? Yes, he did know. By the way, Mary did know as well, but different topic. All right.

Abner did know. And so what he's doing here is he is defiantly resisting the will of the Lord. So you see the problem. You see the issue that's arising here.

We've got a divided kingdom right out of the gate. And until chapter five, we have a two state Jewish nation, 11 tribes of Israel and one tribe of Judah down south. Ishubosheth the man of shame, Saul's son was 40 years old when he began to reign over Israel and he reigned two years and that just basically means that his time pretending to be a real ruler in Israel was largely interrupted until his death and that for the space of two years 11 of the 12 tribes actually recognized him as the king and here's where I would assume that that means the tribe of Jabesh Gilead as well, the tribe that David tried to bring on to their side there in Judah. He gave it a good shot but it doesn't appear that it worked.

Reading on in verse 10, but the house of Judah followed David, verse 11, and the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months. Now I don't know what to make of this. Encouragement or discouragement? Was this extremely encouraging to David's faith that he's finally a king over one tribe?

Or was this extremely discouraging to David's faith that he was only a king over one tribe. David got this promise ten years ago. The promise that he would be the king over the nation, not a tribe of the nation, but king over the nation for ten years he has been patient and he's been waiting on the Lord, running for his life, hiding behind rocks, hiding in caves for 10 years. And now Saul's dead.

And you know the guy had to get his hopes up. He had to think, finally, that's it. The obstacles have been removed. I can see what the Lord's doing so clearly now.

Now I'm going to be installed as the king over the nation of Israel. And the first thing that happens after the death of Saul is that 11 of the 12 tribes reject him as being their king. If you ask me, that's discouraging. I mean, it is a step in the right direction.

At least he's a king now, albeit over one tribe. That's, I guess, something to be encouraged about. But he's waited 10 And he's going to wait, we just read it, another seven and a half years before the whole nation, all 12 tribes, will finally name the name of David as their king. And it just reminds us once again, how many times do we get the lesson about patience and waiting on the Lord as we study through the Bible, constantly, constantly.

It's another reminder of that. I say it all the time that if the Lord is going to serve you a meal in the Christian life, either the main course is going to be patience or it's at the very least going to be a side dish. It's always going to be on the menu. You're always going to need patience no matter what.

It's all about waiting on the Lord. Just the fact that he died, he resurrected, he ascended and we're waiting for his return. We're waiting for the Kingdom. is an exercise in waiting patiently and trusting in the Lord.

David is just reminding us of that once again. So how good are you at waiting on the promises that the Lord has given you? You got 17 and a half years in you? You might need it for some stuff.

You just might. Verse 12, Abner the son of Ner, so Ishbosheth's general, and the servants of Ishbosheth, son of Saul went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon. So Gibeon this is in the region of Benjamin. Let's go ahead and show that map on on Gibeon real quick.

Just to show you where this is. Make sure I can find it. It's small okay. Here's David and man Hebron.

Here's Gibeon. You know, here's the line, Judah south of this line, Israel north of this line. Boom, right there's Gibeon, right on the line. So what is this?

This is a display of arms. This is a show of strength. It is a military act of aggression on Ishbo Sheth and Israel's part. What they're doing is they're staging a military provocation.

They're going to show of strength down there in Gibeon, very, very close to where David and his people are, and they're going to see how David and the military of Judah respond. Verse 13. And Joab, the son of Zeruia, so that's David's general, Joab. And the servants of David went out and met them at the the pull of Gibeon.

So that is an even bolder move than Ishbochev soldiers because they've come down near the border close to Judah. But I love this. David's soldiers, they just cross the border. They go right into Israel.

They go right to Gibeon and they meet the soldiers there. So it's an even more bold move for a military to make. Reading on. And they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool.

So they're just kind of sizing one another up, one military checking out the other military, the army of Ishmael Sheth, sizing up the army of David, the army of David sizing up the army of Ishmael Sheth. Verse 14, and Abner said to Joab, let the young men arise and compete before us. And Joab said, let them arise, let's do this. So this is, in case you didn't guess, not like a game of pickup football here.

This is not a friendly competition. This is more like a gladiator battle, gladiators battling gladiators. This is the kind of competition that if you lose, that's because you're dead. That's how you lose.

You die. These are fights to the death, so this is just macho men doing macho things, holding their own little UFC bouts here to the death. And what we would call this is representative combat. And we've had this before.

We've seen this in our studies already through the Old Testament, most notably with who? David and Goliath. That was representative combat. representative combat is in case you forgot that's when instead of two armies just duking it out to the death and producing mass casualties instead of doing that one army picks its best man or men and the other army picks their best man or men they send them out to fight it out and whoever's best men win, then that becomes the decision for the whole battle.

So if your three best soldiers or your ten best soldiers be my best three or my best ten, then we're going to accept that as a loss. You beat us today. We acknowledge that. We hold ourselves to the results of that representative combat.

Verse 15, then And they arose and passed over by number 12 for Benjamin and Ishboch, the son of Saul, and 12 of the servants of David. So it's going to be 12 on 12 here, verse 16, does kind of sound like a football match, but it's not. It's 12 on 12. Football is 11 on 11.

If it was 11 on 11, it might be a little more suspicious of football, but 12 on 12, this is a fight, verse 16. And each caught his opponent by the head, and thrust his sword in his opponent's side, so they fell down together." What? What just happened? Anyone know?

You got to read it carefully, it helps to read it in other versions, it definitely helps to visit the original manuscript, but here's what it means, it means no one, one. They all died. They all died the same way too. They all grabbed each other by the head and stuck the sword in one another.

One of them probably should have thought about maybe going on defense first and using the shield. But they all did the exact same thing, so all 24 soldiers have died. I sure hope they didn't place bets on that one. There wouldn't be a single winner.

They would have all lost that bet. It's a battle to the death. All 24 soldiers are dead at the end of it. On November 16, therefore that place was called Helchath Hatsarim, which means the field of swords, which is at Gibeon, okay?

So that didn't resolve anything, right? We don't have a winner. It was supposed to be 12 on 12. The winner took the day.

If Israel's 12-1, then Israel won the day. If Judah's 12-1, Judah won the day, but we don't have a winner. So what now? 24 dead soldiers, the best of both sides, lying on the floor dead.

What happens now? Now the real battle breaks out. See tensions start flaring, tempers start flying, and now we have two armies that are going to go head to head, large scale here, verse 17. The battle was very fierce that day, and Abner and the men of Israel were beaten before the servants of David, so Judah defeated Israel.

David's men beat Ishebochef's men. And the chapter is going to give us a count of the casualties before we're done here, but suffice it to say for now, very decisive victory for David and his men. David's men handily whooped Ishebochef's men. Little Judah beat up on big Israel, and Israel was on the run.

You're going to see that they are now running from David's men, the warriors of Judah. By the way, this is a good time to bring this up. There is no mention of either David or Ishbosheth being present for this battle. I don't think they were.

If they were, I think we'd be reading their names, but they are not in this story at all. It would seem that, as kings often did, they were sending their armies out, knowing in advance that there was going to be a very small scale display of strength where they were going to feature their best warriors and have a

representative battle and let the winner take the day. So I doubt that either David or Ishpochev expected this to turn into a two-army brawl. I think if they even suspected this is a possibility that they would both be present, but they're not.

So, unfortunately, boys will be boys. People got mad. Everyone's dead in the 24 soldiers who fought, so now everyone's mad at each other and full-scale attack. And the three sons of Zeruia were there.

Okay, so just quickly, this is David's side of things. Zeruia was David's sister. So the sons, the names that we're going to be given next, these sons of Zeruia, these are David's nephews. Keep that in mind, okay?

So Joab, that's David's nephew and his general, Abishai and Asahel. Now Asahel was as swift of foot as a wild gazelle. He is the speedy Gonzalez of David's army here, the Usain Bolt of David's army. So I think since he's mentioned, we can probably expect for there to be a foot race next, right?

And that's exactly what happens. You mentioned the fast guy, you mentioned the speedy Gonzales, yet probably there's going to be a foot race. Verse 19, and Asahel pursued Abner. Again who's Abner?

That's Ishebosheth's general. Asahel pursued Abner and as he went, he turned neither to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner, verse 20, then Abner looked behind him and said, is it you Asahel? And he answered, It is I, and I've almost caught up with you, because I'm faster than you. Verse 21, Abner said to him, Turn aside to your right hand or to your left, and seize one of the young men, and take his spoil, but Asahel would not turn aside from following him.

Verse 22, And Abner said again to Asahel, Turn aside from following me. Why should I strike you to the ground? How then could I lift up my face to your brother, Joab?" So this right here is a real integrity move by Abner. And don't get used to seeing that.

It's pretty much the only good thing you're ever going to see this guy do. He is not a good guy, not by any stretch of the imagination. But he's trying to do the right thing here, and he's trying to prevent the death of Asahel. I mean, he knows this is Joab's brother.

He knows this is David's nephew, so he knows if he kills Asahel that this is going to further insight Joab, the general of David's army. It's going to further insight David. They've already just been whooped by Judah. And if he kills David's nephew, then he knows, boy, that's it.

We're going to just perpetually be at war until one of us is completely wiped out. So he's trying his best to avoid that because he knows that's exactly what's going to happen here. Look, this is not a fair fight. Abner is a trained and experienced killer.

You know what Asahel is? He's a fast dude. That's it. That's all he's got going for him.

He's a young boy. And you know, Abner's probably been killing men, grown men, macho men, since Asahel was in diapers. He knows if this guy does not back off, I am going to have to kill him. So he warns him here, Asahel, I'm telling you, back off, I don't want to have to kill you, but if you make me choose, if it comes down to me or you, you're dying.

then trouble is going to start. Verse 23. But he refused to turn aside, therefore Abner struck him in the stomach with the butt of his spear so that the spear came out at his back and he fell there and died where he was. He was warned.

But Abner knew, or pardon me, Asahel knew that Abner was such a high price target, he just could not back off. He was close. He thought he had a chance to kill the general of Israel. It would have been a

great thing, you know, for David's side, but unfortunately it did not work out that way for him in Asahel.

Joe Ab's brother, David's nephew, was killed, and Abner didn't even have to turn around to do it. You know, he had a long spear and they would take the butt ends of those and they would sharpen them to a point a little bit because they would use those to stick in the ground to dig in to help them with moving over difficult terrain. And also, if you get in an awkward position, it could be a weapon and a pinch. So it is sharp enough, obviously sharp enough to go through Asahel's stomach and out his back.

He just completely spears him through. He waits for Asahel to get close enough and just, boom. And I mean, it does display a great deal of strength because it is still the butt end of a spear, not the spear end of a spear. It just shows you this guy, he was a warrior.

If it tells me anything, it tells me I wouldn't have wanted to mess with Abner. But Asahel is lost. Verse 23, reading on, And all who came to the place where Asahel had fallen and died stood still. That means it was just like shock.

You know, I can't believe we lost Asahel. I can't believe he died. Verse 24, But Joab and Abishai pursued Abner. And as the sun was going down, they came to the hill of Amma, which lies before Gia on the way to the wilderness of Gibeon.

Verse 25. And the people of Benjamin gathered themselves together behind Abner and became one group and took their stand on the top of a hill. So what's happened here is that Israel's army has fallen back. They've retreated.

They've found high ground, now they've regrouped, they've got a high position where they can stand their ground, they're ready to fight again if they need to, but Abner is going to try to diffuse the situation. So what do you know, I guess this is another kind of wise thing that we're seeing out of the person of Abner, verse 26. Then Abner called to Joab, Ishbosheth general, talking to David's general. Do you see what I mean?

Ishbosheth and David, they're not here. They're not making these decisions, right? The two generals are making these decisions. David told me eating cake or whatever, maybe working on trying to find a third wife.

Who knows? I'm sorry, that was mean. But Abner called to Joab, shall the sword devour forever? You know, what are we going to do?

We're just going to keep killing each other until we're all dead? Do you not know that the end will be bitter? And that means, hey, regardless of how this goes, it's going to be a horrible end if we keep fighting. If you beat us, if we beat you, it doesn't matter because you know what it is?

It's still brother killing brother. It's still Jew killing Jew. This is stupid. This is horrific.

Let's put an end to this. How long will it be before you tell your people to turn from the pursuit of their brothers? He's all but begging Joab here to call this off. He's calling for a ceasefire, verse 27.

And Joab said, as God lives, if you had not spoken, surely the men would not have given up the pursuit of their brothers until the morning. Good thing you said something. You talked me into it. Otherwise, we were determined.

We were going to wipe you all out. Verse 28, So Joab blew the trumpet and all the men stopped and pursued Israel no more, nor did they fight anymore, verse 29, and Abner and his men went all that night through the Arabah, the plains of Israel. They crossed the Jordan and marching the whole morning,

they came to Mahanaim, verse 30, Job returned from the pursuit of Abner. And when he had gathered all the people together, they were missing, all the people together, they were missing from David's servants, 19 men besides Asahel.

So Judah lost 20 men, 20 men, verse 31, but the servants of David had struck down of Benjamin 360 of Abner's men. So it was a very lopsided victory for David and Judah, verse 32. And they took up Asahel and buried him in the tomb of his father, which was at Bethlehem. And Joab and his men marched all night, and the day broke upon them at Hebron.

So we end the chapter with both armies returning back to home base. Israel soldiers back in Gibeon and Judah soldiers back in Hebron after a very dominant victory for little Judah over big Israel. So I think the Lord sent a very clear message there to the whole nation. That message would be, I am fighting for David.

You might want to back off. You might want to change loyalties. You might want to get a clue that I've weighed in on this. I've picked a side because a side has picked me.

David will let me lead the nation. He will let me lead this kingdom into glory days for your own good. So David's going to win no matter what, no matter who's against him. So maybe a good closing point for us would be do not die fighting against what God is doing now in order to bring about your blessing in the future.

I wonder how many times we do that, you know, we just, we are just adamant, Lord this stinks, this situation, I don't like it, I refuse and we die on that hill. We die waiting and resisting against what God's doing that's not real pleasant right now but eventually is going to be glorious. Maybe that's something that you can meditate on later on tonight or throughout the week, but I have spoken for 56 minutes, so I think it's time that we stand and close in a word of prayer. Oh my, we're five minutes late.

When's the last time I got you guys out of here late? It's been a while. You know what? Since I went over five minutes tonight, I'll give you off next Wednesday.

Just decided that. Kindness of my heart.