

Alright folks, the Bibles are back on the table, so if you need one, grab one, and then open up with us to 2 Samuel chapter 3 where the Jews find themselves in a civil war. Saul has died, but the answers did not come easily after Saul's death. The kingdom here is very divided. We have the one tribe of Judah that is following David, while the rest of Israel, all the other eleven tribes, are trying to force some life into Saul's dynasty through Saul's son Ishmael Sheth, but it's an invalid, unauthorized dynasty.

That was Saul's fault years ago, Saul had just obeyed the Lord so recklessly that he lost both his throne and the right of his sons to sit on the throne in his dead. So he's lost the throne, he's lost the dynasty, and that is why you're never going to hear a scholar refer to Ishmael Shep as the second king of Israel. I mean, he was if you read it, but since it was invalid and unauthorized, no scholar is going to call Ishmael Shep the second king of Israel. They're going to refer that to, of course, King David.

But this is a season where God's promise to David is so close and yet so far away. You know, the dangled carrot, it's like right there. Every time these big things happen, it's all dead. Surely this has got to be it.

Now it's my turn and I'm finally going to be the king over all the nation. Okay, it didn't happen right away. Well, surely after this event and surely after that event. But it just is elusive for David and tonight we'll read about a guy by the name of Abner.

Of course that was Saul's general. He remains as the general of the unified 11 tribes of Israel. He is the most powerful man among the 11 tribes. He's the general who propped up the house of Saul after Saul's departure.

He's the strategist that kept David at bay and kept the 11 tribes of Israel in this war and he is the one man in all of the nation on both sides that has enough influence, enough clout, enough street cred, if you will, if you're younger. To be able to influence all of those 11 tribes to pick a side, he's already done that. He's taken in hand of these 11 tribes to Ishibosheth, but this guy still has that influence. So what would happen if that guy decided to switch sides?

What would happen? What if he decided to go over to David's side? Would he be able to leverage that influence and bring all 11 tribes to David? Well, I'm not going to answer that question.

If you want to know, you're going to have to stay until the end of the teaching. Don't peek at the title screen or think you'll be able to figure it out. What will he do? I will tell you this.

There's going to be a major kingdom shift in this chapter and the most unexpected occurrence ends up being the thing that causes this major kingdom shift. It won't be prayer. It won't be speaking God. It won't be doing research.

It won't be very well-crafted campaign signs for the nation to read. It won't be any of that. It's going to be through a broken human relationship and some things like suspicion and accusation. That's going to be the thing.

One human relationship in all of the nation of Israel that's going to end up causing this major shift in the nation of Israel and how the kingdom is comprised. So this chapter is a good reminder to us that God's purposes are always moving forward even when we're pretty sure they've stalled out. I know you know what that feels like. You know, the Lord spoke to you, He's leading you, and then you just feel like you're stuck, but you're not stuck.

Those purposes are always moving forward and God can use something as daily and ordinary as one human relationship to basically completely redefine the composition of an entire nation. Isn't that pretty amazing, pretty incredible? So again, if you're pretty good at reading between the lines then I've

already given you the answer about what this guy Abner is going to do in this chapter. But let's let the Bible take us there.

at the beginning in verse 1 we read, there was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David. And David grew stronger and stronger while the house of Saul became weaker and weaker. But that is just the effect. There's a cause here.

We know what this is really about. We know that this is that God is opposed to Israel right now and he refuses to fight for them until they accept the king that he has appointed and anointed for them and that would be David. And there's a great little sermon in that. That if you reject God's king, don't expect to be treated like you're in God's kingdom.

You know, there's a lot of people that want the kingdom blessings, the kingdom privileges, but they don't want the king. Look, this is the way it works in life. This is the way it works spiritual life. If there's a kingdom that comes with a king, and you've got to take one and both.

You can't just take one or the other. If you want the kingdom and all of its privileges, you've got to take the king. And of course, I think, you know, I'm speaking spiritually here. You can't benefit from the kingdom blessings of the Lord.

Not really. I mean, he's gracious to the unbeliever, sure, but you can't really enjoy full kingdom blessings if you've rejected God's king, and that would be Jesus, of course, the Messiah. Verse 2, And sons were born to David at Hebron. His first born was Amnon.

His first born was Amnon of a hynoem of Jezreel. Verse 3. And his second chiliab of Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. And the third, Absalon, son of Ma'aqa, the daughter of Taumai, king of Geshe, verse 4, and the fourth, Adonijah, the son of Haggis, and the fifth, Shefatea, or Shefateia, the son of Abitol, verse 5, and the sixth, Israim of Egla, David's wife.

These were born to David and Hebron. So Div has been very busy in Hebron, very, very busy. We knew about two of these wives already. That would be a Hinoem and Abigail.

We did not know about these four other wives. We just found this out for the first time that he's now got six wives and it's kind of weird to read that they all gave him sons. What's the likelihood of that happening? He's got six wives.

Every single one of them give him a son. I'll tell you what I think that's about. I think that's probably by sheer statistics alone going to cause us to think that he probably had daughters too during that time period. And it's just that they weren't mentioned because the point that the author would be trying to make here is that David's kingdom is growing.

And if you're having sons born, then that's qualified and quantified growth for your kingdom. That's growth for your royal line. So I think that's why the sons are mentioned and not the daughters. So yes, David has been busy, but he's also been very, very bad.

And he would have known that quite well because he would have known the Old Testament scriptures. And it was written into the law of Moses in Deuteronomy chapter 17, looking specifically at verses 14 and 17, some specific rules for a king. And I love this, that God gave this law when he did. He gave this law to Moses when he was giving Moses the rest of all of the law.

This was ages before the nation ever even conceived the idea of having a king like the rest of the nations. But God was way out ahead of them on that. He knew one day they would want a king and he built the laws for that right into his law that he gave to Moses and that Moses gave to the people. So

here's what it says in verse 14 of Deuteronomy 17.

When you come to the land that the Lord your God is giving you and you possess it and dwell in it and then you say, I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me. That's the Lord saying, I know this is going to happen. I'm making provision for it, verse 17, and he shall not acquire many wives for himself lest his heart turn away. And I like how the King James Version translates this.

It says that the king is not to multiply wives. And I just wonder if that was maybe David's excuse. Like, I'm sorry, Lord, yes, I do have six wives. I'm just really super bad at math.

I thought I was adding wives. I didn't realize I was multiplying them. I like the King James version there, but for real, David is not even fully the king over the whole nation. He's just ruling over the one tribe and he's already up to six wives.

So he's violated that law that was given to the nation of Israel multiple times already. Don't forget this is actually his seventh wife because he was married to McCall, the daughter of Saul first. So he's violated this law quite a bit. If you think that's bad, as I mentioned before, just wait for his son Solomon to come along and take that to all new levels.

He's going to end up with a thousand wives. If you are new to Bible study and you assume I'm exaggerating, let me tell you I'm not. I just gave you an exact number that's found in 1 Kings 11 verse 3 that Solomon had had 700 wives, and that wasn't enough. So he also got him 300 concubines.

Why would any man do that to himself? Do you realize how many in-laws that generate? That's crazy, right? How in the world would you organize like holidays and birthdays and special occasions?

would you do that? I would think that would be very difficult. If you just looked at your extended family, you'd have multiple things every day. Birthday at three o'clock for a family member.

Baby shower in the evening. That's a lot of extended family. That's a lot of in-laws. So I say no thanks.

Now I love my in-laws. It's just that it becomes complicated. Yeah, it becomes complicated. Come holiday time and whose house are we meeting at?

Where are we doing Christmas? Where are we doing Thanksgiving? Can't take turns. There's a thousand of them.

Yeah, it's not going to work. If there's a modern day encouragement in all of this for us, it would be that even divorce and remarriage sins are forgivable sins. They're not the unpardonable sins. I know some old school Christians have thought that that is the case, that you can get yourself in a marital situation that God cannot forgive and that God cannot redeem.

But that's just not true. God can pardon a marriage that was entered into sinfully and then bless that marriage. If that's the prayers of the new marriage, we've talked about this in our very lengthy five-part series on the topic of what? Stinginess, marriage, divorce, and remarriage.

Yeah, we went into very good detail about this. But really, here's a good proof of that. Because David, he demoed that for us. Like, every way that you could meritally sin against the Lord, David demonstrated it for us.

You you know, he marries a wife, that he was divorced from, that was, and God, you know, he ends up remarried again, God forgave him. He'll eventually get that same wife back, which is against Deuteronomy chapter 24 verses 1 through 4. We're going to bring that up in a little bit. That's another

sin.

He's going to leap with the woman that he's not married to marry to someone else and then he's going to facilitate her husband's death and then steal that guy's wife and the Lord's going to forgive him of that. Oh, and did I mention there's polygamy? Six wives. I mean, every way that you can marry the least in against the Lord, David did.

David wasn't a reprobate. David didn't cease from those relationships. He always picked up where he was. Sorry, Lord, I couldn't help myself.

She was so cute. I've got wife number four. Sorry, Lord. This one is really good at conversation.

Now I got number five. And he would repent and the Lord would forgive him. And that's the foundation for forgiveness for even the biggest messes that we make of our marriages, the sins that we get ourselves in when it comes to marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Now, you know, it's a very sticky and tricky topic, a very painful topic, because the Lord does not like polygamy.

He does not like divorce. He does not like remarriage. The Lord hates all of that because families are broken up, but it's just the fact that the Lord is very merciful and gracious, way more so than human beings are ever going to give him credit for. Some folks will try to get around this viewpoint by interpreting Acts chapter 17 verse 30 incorrectly.

That's the passage that says, in times of ignorance, in the times of this ignorance, God winked at that, but not anymore. Now the Lord expects to mourn from his people. That's the way they interpret that passage. Well, that's actually talking about serving other gods entirely.

That is not talking about the sins of God's people. That's talking about idolatry from the heathen. So it's a completely different topic. Just ask yourself the question as a realist, as a very sober-minded person.

Do you honestly think that God will be more gracious in the Old Testament to a guy like David than he would be in the New Testament in the dispensation of grace? Does that even make sense that God would be less gracious in the dispensation of grace. That something shouldn't even compute there for us. So the truth is God's standards have always been His standards.

I think Coach Tomlin stole that from him. The standard is the standard with God. Truth has always been truth. The way he feels about things, it's always been that way.

And church, His grace, has always been the same. His grace has always been His grace, even though we human beings struggle to understand it sometimes. Of course, the Lord is going to be more merciful and gracious than humankind always. And it's for reasons like that, the Apostle Peter would have to tell us in 2 Peter 3 verse 18 that we need to grow in grace.

It's a constant thing. We need to grow in grace. grace, or else we're going to constantly be judging folks, cutting people off and considering them reprobates, apostates, when the Lord is loving them and bringing them back to himself, getting repentance and confession from them and then forgiving them. But you really can start to look behind that curtain of grace tonight into the private life of David and you can already see that there is a problem in the life of David that's already emerging before he ever fully took the entire throne of Israel and that would be a problem with the ladies.

Now he doesn't have a problem getting them and that's the problem. He's a good looking guy and he likes women a little bit too much and is not faithful to one wife. So it's going to be a constant problem and eventually it's going to bring about the biggest sex scandal in the history of the nation of Israel. Of course I've already referenced that.

That is adultery with Bathsheba and the facilitation of her husband's death so that David could have her as his wife. This is still the guy that the Lord is going to say that's a good guy that's a guy after my own heart because he was human like us but he would not get stuck in his sins and he would not give up he always came back to the Lord and confessed and repented and the Lord restored him look at his passion for that Lord created me a clean heart renewer right spirit within me restore unto me the joy of thy salvation you know Lord don't obey I know I'm a sinner. I know I messed up. But Lord, I love you.

Now quickly before we move on, the third wife that's mentioned here, the one that gave birth to David's son, Absalom, that was a political marriage. Now I am not saying that that was the sole purpose for that marriage. I'm not saying that they didn't love each other, nothing like that. I'm just saying that on paper this is a political marriage.

marriage. David married the daughter of a pagan king, the king of gesture. And that became a very strategic method in, you know, ancient days in times like this that we're studying somewhere around the 1KBC mark where if there was a nation that wanted to make an ally of another nation, a lot of times they would do that through these political strategy marriages. They would use those relationships to leverage and build good relationships between two people groups, two nations.

So if a king had a daughter and he was wanting to become an ally of another nation, he would give his daughter as a wife to the king of that nation or to the prince of that nation or something to that effect that built alliances and something that was very popular throughout history and again Solomon is going to come along and take that too to the next level and a lot of his marriages will be hey we need to have a good relationship with that nation so hook me up with a royal girl I'll marry her too number 764 or whatever you know so very political and strategic thing to do. Verse 6, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner was making himself strong in the house of Saul. That's cool. He was lifting weights in Saul's personal gym there.

He's not using it anymore. No, that's not really what that means, of course. To understand what that means, first, we need to look at the phrase the house of Saul. I think we read that phrase before actually in study.

I don't think this is the first time that came up. I could be wrong, but if memory serves, this is now the second or third time that this has come up. And that is not just talking about Saul's family. You might want to make a note of that, at least a mental note of that.

It's not just talking about Saul's family. That is actually a political label that refers to anyone that was loyal to Ishbochef and the 11 tribes. So you'd be referred to if you are among the 11 tribes supporting Ishvosheth as someone from the House of Saul. You know, it's like being called a Trumper today or something like that, a maga, you know.

It's a political label that's put on people to kind of show their affiliations and their allegiances. So with that in mind, making himself strong in the House of Saul that is referring to all the 11 tribes. That means that Abner was gaining more and more influence over those 11 tribes of Israel. He was being esteemed really as the leader of the nation, more so even than Ishbo Sheth himself, who is the king.

Here, see that shortly. This Abner guy, he really does have all of the weight here in his leadership. He was really the power behind the throne and it would appear that Ishpoche is more of a political puppet and that does happen in politics. We see that a lot.

We know for a fact that happened during the Biden presidency and you know the whole auto pen debacle. That was not Joe Biden making many of those decisions that his name was signed to. They admitted that to us. That's not a right-winger assumption or conspiracy, that was admitted to us by the

White House.

He wasn't doing that. He was in his basement eating ice cream cones, and someone had the auto pen, and someone was making decisions. I don't know who. I wish we knew, and I wish they would be held accountable regardless of who the President is, regardless of who the King is.

If you've elected them, or if God has appointed them, then they should definitely have the power and not your military general, but this guy, he's got the power. And same thing here, you know, Abner's got the auto pen. And Ishbosheth is just like the face for TV speeches. He's the guy that, the face that you associate with as the king, but it's really Abner that's pulling all the weight and making the big decisions.

Verse 7, now Saul had a concubine whose name was Rispa, and you can look up all of these name meanings later if you want to. There's a bunch of names in this chapter, and if we define them all, this would be a very long study, so in order to keep this study short, as all of my teachings are, we're going to let you look those up and define those for yourself. But it says, had a concubine whose name was Rispa, the daughter of Aia, and Ishbochev said to Abner, why have you gone into, which is an idiom, it's an expression, a Hebrew expression that means why have you had sex with my father's concubine? What he's accused Abner of here, we're very familiar with this in history, in the ancient world, having sex with a former king's wife or concubine, that wasn't about love, that wasn't even about lust most of the time, most of the time it was again a political statement.

I warned you, this book back in Samuel's a very political book, we're seeing a lot of politics here in chapter 3, this was a way to make a political statement, it was way of saying I've conquered the former king. I've taken his place in the bedroom with his wife and now I'm going to take his place on the throne. This is me announcing I've displaced him and I'm taking over. So that's why Ishmael Boshas is so upset here.

I mean yes, it's his, would this be his stepmom? So he has emotional attachment and reason to be upset about this, but it's even more than that for Ishbosheth. This is a potential coup in the making. If this is true about Abner, if he really did this, then that's Abner making a statement.

Ishbosheth, I'm coming for your throne, and that makes Ishbosheth nervous. We'll see this again in 2 Samuel 16. A hit the fell instructed Absalom, the son of David to go into basically David's harem and sleep with David's concubines to accomplish the same thing, to embarrass and humiliate David to weaken his reputation among the nation and then to make that political statement, I've displaced David. I've taken his place in the bedroom in the harem and now I'm going to take his place on the throne as well.

But here's the interesting thing about all this. We don't really even know if Abner actually did this. He never admits it. He never says that he didn't, but he never admits that he did, he never admits to it or denies it.

Don't drive you crazy when people do that to you, you're asking them questions. Did you do this? I can't believe you would say that. Okay, but did you do this?

I am shocked that you would believe that about me. Okay, but why are you avoiding the question? Why won't you answer the question? You're not admitting to it or denying it that does make a person a little bit suspicious because if you're innocent, well, then you're quick to say, no, I'm innocent, I didn't do it.

It seems like that's kind of what he's doing here. He's not wanting to admit it. If I had to guess, I'd say he did it, but that's just a gas and not a judgment. You can make your own judgment on that if you want.

Not so much important that we know that, but... Abner, I can't believe you slept with a concubine of my father, Father Saul. Verse eight, then Abner was very angry over the words of Ishmael Shafiq instead. Am I a dog's head of Judah?

Don't you just love how they talk back then? The Jews have always been a very colorful people. I just love their expressions. I love to reach back into these Old Testament expressions and grab them and try to figure them out.

They're pretty funny. This is pretty easy to figure out. David made a similar statement before about a dead dog's head. And that was just to express a valueless thing, right?

What's less valuable than the head of a dead dog? Not too many things. to do with the head of a dead dog. Can't sell it.

Nobody buys that stuff on eBay. Marketplace, no. Probably get in trouble. No one wants that.

You can't give it to anyone. Even if you package it, send it as a Christmas gift, it's going to get returned. It's completely valueless, But when Abner adds the words of Judah, am I a dog's head of Judah? This then takes this into the other realm here, onto the other side completely.

In other words, what he's saying is, you don't value me, but guess who will value me? How do you think the people of Judah feel about me? You think I'm a dead dog's head in Judah? You think I'm valueless there?

The people of Judah, they would love it if I switch sides. I mean, they would absolutely love it. They'd give me a huge contract. They would be so excited.

So basically, he's getting ready to make the threat. If I switch, you're through, pal. You got no hope. I'm your guy.

He should have valued me more. Reading on in verse 8. To this day, I keep showing steadfast love to the house of Saul, your father, to his brothers and to his friends, and have not given you into the hand of David. And yet you charge me today with a fault concerning a woman.

See? Didn't admit it. Didn't deny it. But he says, hey, I've been fighting for you, defending you, protecting you from David.

And what do I get from you in return? An accusation of sexual immorality, accusing me of fornication, adultery. What have you? You know, here I am giving my all to you and to the eleven tribes, and you give me in return a slap in the face.

Well, verse 9, God do so to Abner. You know it's serious now because he's speaking in the third verse in here. God do so to Abner and more also if I do not accomplish for David what the Lord had sworn to him, verse 10, to transfer the kingdom from the house of thought and set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah from Dan to Beersheba. That means from one end of the promised land to the other.

So you know, that's it. I'm out of here. I'm done with this. all tribes to you.

And now I'm switching allegiances and I'm taking my 11 tribes with me. I'm going to hand them over to King David, delivered to him on a silver platter. And he's going to appreciate me. You didn't.

He will. You're toast, buddy. The disturbing portion of verses nine and 10 is just how much, in fact, Abner did know. at what we read.

Up until now, we could hold out some hope that, well, maybe Abner was just uninformed. Maybe he really loved the Lord. He was trying real hard to do the right thing, praying, asking the Lord to give him direction. Just couldn't figure it out.

But I told you a while ago that Abner is the general, and he was the general for Saul. So he was right there with Saul when Saul was confessing to David, blubbing, and confessing to David, David, you're a better man than me. And I know all of the promises that God made to you, He's going to do them, you're going to be King David, I know it. Abner was there to hear Saul say all of those things.

So this is not new news to Abner. He knew this all along because Saul knew this all along and confessed it in front of his men that God had chosen David, that God had given promises to David. So why I say that's disturbing is in the fact that for seven years, seven and a half years, Abner knows God's will full well and yet is adamantly resisting it and fighting against it. Why do you do that?

That's the explanation of an unbeliever. It's knowing the truth. It's hearing the gospel. It's seeing the change in the lives of believers, having all kinds of evidences.

As the scripture says, you can just walk outside and look at the sky. Look at the order of creation, how everything works, how the seasons and cycles work, everything's positioned just perfect for sunshine that doesn't fry us, or freeze us. It's just perfect oxygen mix that's just perfect not too rich so that we're hyperventilating. There's it the other way around.

I forget which one of those words means which but not too little oxygen in the mix so that we're gasping for air any time we try to do anything that's strenuous. You can look around and see God's everywhere, His proof. Creation is testifying of Him constantly. Don't let the unbeliever fool you.

The Apostle Paul says creation knows this. Mankind knows this innately. God has put this in mankind. As Solomon says in the book of Ecclesiastes, he's fixed eternity or said eternity in the hearts of mankind.

We know these things innately, but what the unbeliever does is intentionally determine to be an unbeliever. And they resist the known will of God and fight against him just like Abner's been doing. But this is a good day for Abner. This is a new page in his life.

We read in verse 11, and East Bochev could not answer Abner another word because he feared him. I mean, he knew he blew it. The guy he needed most, he just accused him of a sexual inappropriate act, and now this guy is threatening to switch sides. Verse 12, and Abner sent messengers to David on his behalf saying, to whom does the land belong?

What's the answer to that question? I mean, as we read this, we would have to say, well, it belongs to Ishvosheth. He's got the majority of the land. David's got Judah, you know, the little southern part of Israel, the whole rest of it, all 11 tribes.

That would be Ishvosheth. That would be the house of Saul, quote, unquote. That would be the 11 tribes. So to whom does the land belong?

It belongs to us up here in the north to Ishbo Shaph, so he says this, make your covenant with me and behold, my hand shall be with you to bring over all Israel to you. Does one guy really have this kind of pull? Verse 13. And he, David, said, good.



Seems like he could have been more excited about this. Oh, okay, yeah, fine, whatever. David said, Good, I will make a covenant with you. But one thing I require of you, I just have this one condition.

That is, you shall not see my face unless you first bring McCall, Saul's daughter, when you come to see my face. Verse 14. Then David sent messengers to Ishmael, all sons, saying, Give me my wife, McCall, for whom I paid the bridal price of a hundred foreskins of the Philistines. Okay, there is an interesting statement, it's interesting that he says one thing to Abner and he says another thing to Ishr'bochev, his message to Abner is bring me my ex-wife, I want my ex-wife back, bring her, but the message that he gets sent to Ishr'bochev, He goes into details and basically says, do you know what I had to go through to get that wife?

Do you know the price I had to pay? I had to come up with a hundred Philly foreskins. Now, this is not a discrepancy or an inconsistency with 1 Samuel, chapter 18. This is just David acknowledging the price.

The price was a hundred Philly foreskins. That was the price. What did David do? He over-delivered.

I think I'd be done at a hundred if I had to. But he over-delivered. He doubles it. He ends up delivering to Saul two hundred foreskins of the Philistines.

So he's just basically acknowledging that price and he's not talking about the gratuity that he threw upon the prize, you know? Here's the 100 Philly foreskins and here's the 100 Philly foreskin gratuity, yeah, tip. It's trying to be careful with my words there, but... So, no, there's no discrepancy here.

He's letting him know I went through so much to get that woman and I don't want to lose her. I want her back. Okay, so now we come back to the love story of David and Michal. There's good and bad in that love story.

The good would be that David and Michal really, truly did love each other. I think we could take that safely from 1st Samuel, chapter 18, verse 20, if we had to pick a verse. But really, all you have to do is read their story and you'll see that they really did actually love each other. And if you ask me, he wants his true love back.

never got over her. He did not want to divorce her. Saul forced that. So I think he just wants her back because he loves her.

Some speculate that he's doing this as a political marriage, that he's doing this for political reasons so that he could say, hey, I'm married to Saul's daughter. I'm now in the house of Saul. I've married into the house of Saul. That makes me eligible to be the replacement if you're still holding fast to that whole house of stall thing.

I'm legit. I'm qualified. And I suppose that's possible that that was a motivation or a portion of his motivation, but we are much safer to assume that he wanted him to call back because he loved her. We have source text for that.

We don't have source text for this being a political move on David's part. So I'm going to credit that to love, and that's the good part of this love. There's true love between David and McCall. What's the bad part?

The bad part is David currently has six wives, and there's a problem with the wife that he wants to bring back. It's in the fact that he wants to bring back a wife that he was previously married to. That was a big no-no in the Old Testament Scriptures. You can read this for yourself later, Deuteronomy chapter 24 verses 1 through 4.

I call that the law of no take-backs. Because there in that passage, the Lord instructed Moses to tell the people, okay, if you must because of the hardness of your heart, Moses didn't say that, Jesus did, but if you must because of the hardness of your heart in that marriage, divorce that woman, then man, make sure you know what you're doing when you let her go. is when you divorce her and she goes out and finds another man and marries that man, there's one thing you can't do and that is take her back. You can go marry someone else, she can marry someone else, there's one thing you can't do in that situation and that is take her back.

And the Lord doesn't just call it a sin, He calls it an abomination in the nation to take back a woman that a person was married to and then she was defiled by another person and married to another person. The Lord says that's just gross. This is gross. I don't want that to happen within the nation.

Okay, now we're talking about marital sins that the Lord will forgive. Will He forgive this one? It's not just a sin. It's an abomination for that to happen.

For you to divorce someone, for that person to go out, get married again, and then you say, eh, change my mind, come back. I want you again and marry that same wife again. Will the Lord forgive that one if it's an abomination? Who are we studying?

David. And David does this. And the Lord obviously forgives David of this abominable sin. So once again overwhelmed by the mercy and the grace of God.

I'm not trying to empower you to sin, certainly not sexually because those are sins against your own body. They are very destructive. If you're a true Christian, your heart is going to be to avoid sin, but I do want to stress what we do know about God's forgiveness when it comes to sexual sins. God does forgive.

He can't undo the damage, at least He's not obligated to, that you have done through your sexual sins but don't think for a moment and don't let any church cause you to think for a moment that the Lord won't forgive even the worst of your marital sins that you've committed. He will. Furthermore, you know, you have the Old Testament passage of the Lord Himself divorcing the nation of Israel, her whoring after other gods, taking idols and being married to them. And then the Lord takes her back.

And in that sense, he's showing that love, mercy, forgiveness, it can conquer any sin. nothing that he can. So, David just committing all kinds of sins here, verse 15, and Ishvosh sent and took her from her husband, Paltiel, the son of Leish, verse 16. But her husband went with her, weeping after her all the way to Bahpuri.

Man, he is just so happy that she's gone, weeping for joy. I'm so, so happy for this guy. Now, I'm absolutely getting you know that he's not weeping because he's happy that someone's relieving him of his husbandly duties to McCull he is weeping because he is completely heartbroken completely distraught over this I mean you figure he's been with her for at least 10 years probably upwards of 15 years they've been married together. So, you know, this is a lot of time for a relationship to form and closeness to happen.

Do you feel bad for the guy? Don't answer out loud, because I do have a counterpoint. Do you feel bad for Paul Teal? I can't believe David is stealing this poor guy's wife.

I mean, I do feel bad for him, no matter what. This is heartbreaking stuff, this is devastating stuff. But I think I can temper our sorrow for Paltiel a little bit just by reminding you of some history. If we were going to make a statement about this entire ordeal, we'd have to say, well, Paltiel actually started it.

He did this very thing to David. David was married to McCall. She was still married when he went to take her as wife and then Saul did that whole forced divorce thing. That was when David was on the lamb.

He didn't even know about this. He would have found out about this at some point later. Oh, by the way, David, word from the throne. You've been divorced from McCall and she's married to Paltiel now.

Wow. Okay. So this guy did this first knowing full well that David loved McCall. At the very least, he knew David was married to McCall and he stole David's wife first.

Now, I'm not saying Turnabout is fair play in situations like this. I'm just saying that both did some dirty, rotten, filthy stuff to one another, actually the same crime. His wife was stolen from him and now he's stolen him back. I just think it's a bad look when a Christian has gone through trauma and then they're not a protector and a preventer of trying to help people to not go through that same type of trauma.

I think if you emerge from trauma with a good heart, that's your position. As the scripture says, God comforts us with his comfort so that we can take that same comfort from which God comforted us and then comfort other people with it. So if you've been through a very ugly and destructive divorce and remarriage, if you came through that with a good heart, a clean heart, a pure heart, then you're going to have a sympathy, a certain sympathy, a certain compassion for people who are going through the same stuff that you went through and experiencing the same trauma as you. If you don't emerge from that trauma with a good heart, if it corrupts you, if it and bitters you, then you know, you get to the point where you're like, yeah, I don't care, whatever.

I've been through it, been there, done that, it's their turn. It's an absolute complete lack of compassion for others and I don't think that should ever happen in the life of a Christian, it just shouldn't be. The things we've gone through, we should be healed and developed from that so that we can become ministers of those things to others. The New Testament puts it like this, Christ has given reconciliation to us so that we can give the ministry of reconciliation to others.

Christ reconciled us to himself, let's help other people to be reconciled as well. Did I say people? I think I did. That's all right, I like it.

Let's stick with it, kinda like it. All right, verse 16, reading on, then Abner said to him, go, return. And he returned. You know, look, King David wants her, so she's his.

He lost her, move on, go back home, get over it. Verse 17, and Abner conferred with the elders of Israel, saying, for some time past you have been speaking David as king over you. Verse 18, now then bring it about. For the Lord has promised David, saying, by the hand of my servant David, I will save my people, Israel, from the hand of the Philistines and from the hand of all their enemies.

Verse 17 and 18. Did you just read what I did? The elders, the leaders of the 11 tribes, this whole time, they have been wanting to side with David. We just read it and Abner knew that.

And probably the only reason they hadn't sided with David is because of Abner. of his pull, because of the power behind him, the entire military behind him, but we just found out the truth. These folks have been dying to join up with David all along. He acknowledges that again there's this promise from David, David's supposed to be the guy.

They knew this stuff and what a shame that they have had to try to fight that off and suppress of that and resist the will of God in this situation. Verse 19, Abner also spoke to Benjamin and then Abner went to tell David at Hebron, all that Israel and the whole house of Benjamin thought good to do. Verse 20, when Abner came with twenty men to David at Hebron, David made a feast for Abner and the men who

were with him, verse 21, and Abner said to David, I will arise and go and will gather all Israel to my Lord the King that they may make a covenant with you and that you may reign over all that your heart desires. So David sent Abner away and he went in peace.

So you know, first you have the verbal deal, David, I'm gonna deliver all 11 tribes to you. Then they have a celebration of that. They're celebrating this new alliance. And now Abner says, okay, time to go.

I'm gonna go and I'm gonna fetch those 11 tribes. I'm gonna bring them back to you David and they're yours. They're already on board. I just got to go get them for you So I mean we're right at the finish line here for David to sit on the whole throne over the whole nation, right?

What could possibly go wrong? We better read Verse 22 just then the servants of David arrived with Joab Joab is David's nephew He is the sitting general of David's army the army of Judah and they weren't there for any of this they were away on a military campaign. Service of David arrived with Joab from arrayed, bringing much spoil with them, but Abner was not with David at Hebron, for he had sent him away and he had gone in peace. Verse 23, when Joab and all the army that was with him came, it was told Joab, you know, someone was just sitting on this, couldn't ever just dying to tell Abner, Abner, you're not going to believe this.

Or pardon me, Joab, you're not going to believe this. Abner was in David's camp. They made a covenant and David let him go. Primo opportunity to kill the guy.

Instead, he makes the league with the guy. So he says, Abner, the son of Nour came to the king and he has let him go and he has gone in Can you believe that? Verse 24, then Joab went to the king and said, What have you done? Have you lost your mind?

Behold, Abner came to you. Why is it that you have sent him away so that he is gone? This was your opportunity, David, to cut him down instead you've welcomed him in. What is wrong with you?

Verse 25, you know that Abner, Abner, the son of Ner, came to deceive you and to know you're going out and you're coming in and to know all that you are doing. All right, let's stop right there for a second. Very clearly, Job has a problem with this. He does not believe the conversion of Abner.

He doesn't believe that Abner is sincere in his switching of sides from Israel to Judah. Now I can give you three good reasons why he is struggling with this. Reason number one is, as was mentioned here, he suspects that Abner is coming as a spy to gather intel, to learn the comings and the goings of the military, the military movements, to learn their strategies, to see how they operate, to learn the landscape and then take all of that intel back to the house of Saul, Ishtarbosheth, and then use that to try to overcome the tribe of Judah. He suspects that this guy is a spy and a traitor in the making, a mole, I guess they would call that, right?

Reason number two, I think, is Joab, David's nephew is the sitting general, again, the sitting general of this little army of Judah and now you got a guy like Abner who's got the kind of military resume that he does coming to town, a trained and hardened experienced killer, a powerful military leader coming to town. You mean to tell me that's not going to make you nervous, that you're going to lose your job? Of course, David's going to see Abner and say, sorry, Joe, we're going to demote You can be like in the next position, but we got to make Abner the general reason number three And this is the one that's going to be given to us in just a bit Abner is the guy that killed Joab's brother David's nephew in a previous battle. Do you remember that?

Reading on verse 26 We're just trying to get through this when Joab came out from David's presence he sent messengers after Abner, and they brought him back from the cistern at Sira, so that's like one or two miles away, Abner didn't get very far before Joab caught up with him. It says, but David did not

know about it, verse 27, and when Abner returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside into the midst of the gate to speak with him privately, he wanted He doesn't really want to talk. Here's what he does. Put him aside to speak with him privately, and there he struck him in the stomach so that he died for the blood of Asahel, his brother.

So you see what happened there. He's taken upon himself the role of being the Avenger of Blood as the Old Testament Law of Moses would word it, but this doesn't really qualify, because Avenger of Blood would be, you know, someone that's committed cold-blooded murder. And Abner did not do that. As bad of a guy as Abner could be when he killed the brother of Joab Asahel.

He did that in a military battle in self-defense, even trying to warn the guy, would you just stop chasing me? But remember, the guy was a fleet of foot as a row, a deer, a gazelle. And so he tracked him down and Joab fell forced. You were me.

Well, it's going to be you. I've got to kill you." So that was military self-defense. This, for Joab, is cold-blooded murder. Cold-blooded murder.

Verse 28, afterward, when David heard of it, he said, I am my kingdom are forever guiltless before the Lord for the blood of Abner, the son of Nair. Verse 29, may I fall upon the head of Joab. Joab did this, not us. We're not responsible.

And upon all his father's house and made a house of Joab, never be without one who has a discharge or who is leprous, or who holds a spindle, or who falls by the sword, or who lacks bread. So he's praying a curse over Joab and his household. It's odd that he doesn't deal with this. The The penalty, according to the law, most of this for cold-blooded murder is execution.

And David is going to put this off his entire life, only at the very end of his life will he tell Solomon. Solomon, by the way, now that you're taken over, that's your first order of business, you need to do something I couldn't, you need to kill Joe, he's deserving of execution for cold-blooded murder. And that's what takes place, but believe it or not, the warrior that David was, he He did not like confrontation. He did not like conflict.

He wasn't very good at discipline. It was part of his weakness as a man, but he does not take care of business. He just basically pronounces a curse over him. Verse 30, so Joab and Abishai, his brother, killed Abner because he had put their brother as the hell to death in the battle of Gibeon, verse 31.

Then David said to Joab, and to all the people who were with him, tear your clothes and put on sackcloth and mourn before Abner, and King David followed the buyer, verse 32, they buried Abner at Hebron, so he gets buried on the side that he switched to, he gets credit for that, and the king lifted up his voice and wept at the grave of Abner and all the people wept, verse 33, and the king lamented for Abner, saying, so this is a little tribute, a poetic tribute to Abner, should Abner die as a full dies? This guy deserved better than this. Verse 34, your hands were not bound, your feet were not fettered. As one falls before the wicked, you have fallen.

So you weren't arrested and then sentenced to execution. This wasn't fair. You were cut down by a wicked person. Interesting, his nephew, Joab, would be sitting there listening to this, the guy that just basically David accused of having a wicked heart.

And all the people wept again over him. Verse 35, then all the people came to persuade David to eat bread while it was yet day. But David's score is saying, God do so to me and more also if I taste bread or anything else till the sun goes down. This is a typical fasting in order to communicate mourning or loss or grief.

Verse 37, So all the people in all Israel understood that day that it had not been the king's will to put to death Abner, the son of Ner. And the king said to his servants, Do you not know what a prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel. Verse 39. And I was gentle or broken or tender.

I was gentle today, though anointed king. These men, the sons of Zareai Uia, that's David's sister, are more severe than I. The Lord repay the evil doer according to his wickedness. So if you look at verse 36 and verse 37, you realize how close Abner pardon me, how close Joab was to ruining this whole thing for David, you know.

Abner's got the whole nation convinced to come over to David's side. He's out there making that happen, celebrating, and as he begins to head back to get the people, their general, this is the way that the 11 tribes would look at this, their general was killed by David's general. You think that would cause you change your mind? I think the only thing that stopped them from changing their mind and staying on their side and fighting against David is the fact that they could see how broken David was about this.

Well, let's stand. We're well over our time for this evening. That almost never happens. And I'll make up for it next week.

We'll go down to the basement and have ice cream cones.