

## Divided Kingdom

### 2 Samuel 2

#### Lesson Outline

##### I. David Anointed in Judah: 2 Samuel 2:1-7

- A. David in Hebron: 2 Samuel 2:1-3
- B. David King of Judah: 2 Samuel 2:4-7

##### II. David's Army Successful: 2 Samuel 2:8-32

- A. Battle at Gibeon: 2 Samuel 2:8-17
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#### David Anointed in Judah

##### 2 Samuel 2:1-7

#### David in Hebron: 2 Samuel 2:1-3

##### David Looked to the LORD

With Ziklag in ruins, David found himself without a home. There in the land of the Philistines, he looked to God for direction (Proverbs 3:5-6). David knew he was anointed to be the next king, but how and when remained a mystery. In the ruins of Ziklag with an unknown future, David willingly waited upon God and desired to follow His direction (Ephesians 5:17). Sadly, people often look to the Lord last, after they have exhausted all their resources and sought counsel everywhere else (Matthew 6:33). David asked about going to Judah but was willing to go anywhere in Israel the LORD directed. He mentioned Judah because it appeared to be the location the LORD opened up to him.

1. *Personal reasons* – it was his tribe and where he had many allies.
2. *Practical reasons* – it was in the south, just across the land from the Philistines.

After receiving direction to enter Judah, David asked for the specific city God wanted him to reside in. He was directed to Hebron. It was one of the oldest cities in the land and possessed great historical value, being the place of the patriarch's sepulchres. Hebron's strategic location in the mountains provided protection from enemy forces. The city of refuge was an ideal place for David to begin his reign as king (1 Chronicles 6:57). The LORD knew what David required and furnished it for him (Philippians 4:19). It is important to seek the LORD'S direction and not our personal desires. He knows what is best for us and how to provide it (Luke 12:27-28).

**David Followed the LORD**

Upon receiving an answer to his request, David immediately left for Hebron and took his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail. Michal his first wife was not with him at the time (1 Samuel 25:44). Polygamy is not condoned in this passage, just reported. The Bible makes it clear marriage is between one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24; Mark 10:6-8; Ephesians 5:31). Anything else is a perversion of God's plan for marriage. The Bible expressly prohibited kings from polygamy (Deuteronomy 17:17). This sin of David would produce many problems for him, his family, and the nation (Galatians 6:7-8).

David's men went with him to Hebron and resided in the cities, where they lived and continued to follow his leadership. He took care of those that remained loyal to him.

**David King of Judah: 2 Samuel 2:4-7****David and the Men of Judah**

The leaders of the cities in Judah gathered and met with David. They went to Hebron looking for a king and found the man the Lord selected. In the city of Hebron, David was anointed the King of Judah. The elders respected David and looked upon him as their leader. They did not assume power over the nation but simply made David their king. The other tribes would have to make their own decision.

It is important to notice David's behavior throughout the process. Though he may have been tempted to hurry things along, he wisely allowed the Lord to work.

1. *David's knowledge* – he knew he was anointed to be the next king (1 Samuel 16:13).
2. *David's recognition* – he knew the time was near since Saul and Jonathan had been slain (1 Samuel 31).
3. *David's patience* – he did not force himself upon the people but waited for the LORD to work on his behalf.
4. *David's faith* – he trusted the LORD with his life and future (Psalm 59:9).

David ascended to the throne in the LORD'S time and way (Proverbs 3:5-6). He was content with where God placed him and how He directed his life (Philippians 4:11; 1 Timothy 6:6). Discontentment often leads to rash and improper decisions. Believers must trust that God has them where He desires and will work on their behalf when the time is correct. This is faith in the LORD'S ability to guide. When one recognizes that God is Almighty, then one becomes content with His direction.

### David and the Men of Jabeshgilead

David was informed of their valiant action concerning Saul and his family, risking their lives they rescued and buried the bodies of their dead king and his sons (1 Samuel 31:11-13). David sent them a message recognizing their deed as an act of kindness to the LORD, because Saul was king of the LORD'S people.

David prayed the LORD would be kind to them and he promised to treat them graciously. This proved to be more than polite words of a politician, with David backing it up by treating the people and Saul's descendants generously. He encouraged the men to remain strong, knowing the Philistines would be upset at their actions. Likewise, believers must remain strong in the work of the LORD (1 Corinthians 15:58). David finished by informing them of his being anointed King over Judah, encouraging them to unite with him and his leadership.

## David's Army Successful

*2 Samuel 2:8-32*

### ***Battle at Gibeon: 2 Samuel 2:8-17***

#### Two Kings

Abner, the cunning and ambitious captain of Saul's host, opposed David and purposed to keep him from the throne, probably for personal reasons. Abner became a problem, as he worked to keep the dynasty of Saul intact (Ecclesiastes 9:18). He was a military minded man and planned on using force to keep the throne in Saul's family. Finding and exalting Saul's son Ishbosheth, he appeared loyal to the nation. If successful, Abner would be rid of David and essentially rule the kingdom through the weak young king. Driven by personal ambition, Abner went directly against God's will. Like many, he believed his happiness on earth mattered more than his submission to God, but he was wrong and would fail in his efforts. The truly successful are not those with earthly gains but those that seek the LORD'S will (James 4:7-10).

Ishbosheth, Saul's fourth son, was taken to Mahanaim and made king over all Israel. Evidently he was incapable of going into battle, yet many wanted him to lead the nation. People often choose unsuitable and disqualified leaders. In this case, they chose a man unfit to go to war over a man with great victories, including one over the giant Goliath (1 Samuel 18:7). Ishbosheth probably would have refrained from this course of action, if not for Abner. He was accepted in Gilead, over the Ashurites, over Jezreel, over Ephraim, and over Benjamin. It must be remembered that Saul's actions towards David rendered him a renegade and influenced many against him (1 Samuel 24:2, 26:2). It probably didn't help matters that David lived amongst the Philistines and had even marched with them (1 Samuel 29). David had nearly acted as a traitor and had to reap for his poor decisions (Galatians 6:7-8). To their credit, the house of Judah did not follow after Abner and Ishbosheth, but looked to David as their leader. Evidently, they understood the LORD'S direction for David's life and the nation. It is always best to follow the LORD, even when it is unpopular.

### **Terrible Fight**

After strengthening their forces, Abner and the servants of Ishbosheth marched across the Jordan with plans to take Judah from David. The wicked are never content with what they possess (Micah 2:1-2). Joab and the servants of David met the invading force, not looking to fight Abner's army but prepared if necessary. The two forces met at a pool in Gibeon, perhaps the great waters of Gibeon (Jeremiah 41:12).

Upon Abner's request, each side sent twelve men to go against each other. The word play refers to making sport, and this was probably a duel of some sort, perhaps with swords. Apparently the conflict began as a test of fighting abilities and not a full-fledged battle. It may have started as a sport but ended with blood being shed and the death of all the participants. Many good men have died because a proud leader foolishly sent them into battle. With neither side able to claim victory, the opposing armies attacked each other and fought with all their might. It was a terrible fight, with many dying, and David's men coming out on top. This proved to be the beginning of a long war (2 Samuel 3:1).

### **Bold Pursuit:** 2 Samuel 1:19-27

#### **Pursuing Abner**

Abner quickly left the area, looking to make a safe escape but was pursued by the swift Asahel. He was the third son of Zeruah, David's sister. These cousins of David were valiant but also provided numerous problems for him.

1. *Joab* – captain of David's host and a cunning warrior (2 Samuel 10:7-14).
2. *Abishai* – valiant soldier and recognized leader (1 Samuel 26:7; 2 Samuel 23:18).
3. *Asahel* – one of David's commanders known for his speed and ability to pursue in battle, which was a great asset (1 Chronicles 11:26, 27:7).

Asahel persistently pursued Abner determined to overtake him. Maybe he believed he could end the conflict quickly by capturing or defeating him. It was rash and proved to be fatal. Abner, recognizing Asahel, encouraged him to chase after another man. Abner's words indicate he understood Asahel looked to conquer him and recognized Asahel would catch him.

1. *Abner counseled Asahel concerning his ambition* – he did not ask him to return or quit but to seek out another man to fight, but Asahel persisted.
2. *Abner warned Asahel concerning his decision* – he was an experienced soldier and may have known Asahel was no match for him.

Abner had no desire to slay Joab's brother. Apparently, he respected Joab and did not want him as a relentless enemy. Asahel refused to turn away, so Abner struck Asahel with the end of his spear, like a powerful backstroke. The end of a spear was often equipped with a sharp point, perhaps of metal,

in order to drive it into the ground (1 Samuel 26:7). Abner's powerful maneuver may have surprised Asahel. He either overestimated his abilities or underestimated Abner's skills. Whatever the case, the bold young man was unable to defeat the more experienced older man. David's men stopped where Asahel was slain. Upon seeing their beloved friend's lifeless body, they became discouraged. But Joab and Abishai were relentless, determined to avenge the death of their brother they continued the pursuit until the sun went down.

### Pursuing Peace

Abner and what was left of his men gathered upon a hill prepared to meet Joab and Abishai. Abner called out unto Joab and reasoned with him in a hypocritical manner.

1. *Shall the sword devour forever* – in regards to the bloodshed of the day. Abner sent men to die over sport, but when threatened he proclaimed to be concerned with lives.
2. *It will be bitterness in the latter end* – the fighting would continue and many would die. Abner understood the future consequences to their actions that day, however, he should have considered those before he marched into the land and challenged David's army.
3. *Ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren* – implying Joab was the aggressor and unwilling to end the bloodshed. Abner, who started the fight, was all but rebuking Joab for his actions, wondering when Joab would stop the pursuit.

When things do not turn out well, troublemakers often attempt to blame those they harassed. Abner probably impressed his men and even some of the local residents but he would answer for his words and actions (Job 20:5, 27:8). Joab was placed in a difficult spot by Abner's hypocritical words. If he pursued, many would see him as the aggressor without compassion, even though Abner started the battle. If he returned, some might believe he cowered down to Abner unwilling to meet the challenge. Joab shrewdly reminded Abner that he was the aggressor and the blood shed that day was due to his desire to fight. They all could have returned home that morning, had not Abner instigated the conflict. Joab blew the trumpet and wisely agreed to end the battle. It is our responsibility to do all within our power to live in peace (Romans 12:18).

Abner and his men walked all night, after covering a great distance they arrived at Mahanaim with 360 casualties. It was a long and discouraging journey. Abner had taken what remained of Saul's defeated army into battle and was overmatched. Joab and his men returned to Hebron with only 20 casualties. These tough veterans of war won another battle. Asahel's body was buried in Bethlehem in his father's sepulcher, and Joab would not be satisfied until his death was avenged. The nation remained divided.