

We started our study of David's life back in 1Sam.16 when he was anointed to be king. As we've seen, there were approximately 15 years between that event and his actual enthronement. And yet, as we shall see this morning, that enthronement would come in two stages with 7 ½ years between. In other words, with the death of Saul and his enthronement over Judah, David's problems were far from over.

And so, while chapter 2 describes David's anointing over Judah, it would not be until chapter 5 (7 ½ years later), that David would be anointed as king over all Israel. Thus, chapter 2 basically has three main points: David returns to Judah, David is anointed over Judah, and David defends Judah in a civil war.

- I. David Returns to Judah (vv1-3)
- II. David is Anointed over Judah (vv4-7)
- III. David Defends Judah in a Civil War (vv8—3:1)
- IV. Lessons

I. David Returns to Judah (vv1-3)

1. I've mentioned before that David had good chapters and bad chapters—we find him obeying God and disobeying God.
2. Well, as we shall see within the chapter, we find a beautiful example why God referred to David as having a heart after God.
3. For, having lamented Saul's death in the previous chapter, here we find David humbly seeking God for guidance.
4. We might think David would simply rush to take the throne, after all, God had already promised this to David.
5. But instead He seeks guidance from God, v1—"It happened after this that David inquired of the LORD, saying, 'Shall I go up to any of the cities of Judah?' And the LORD said to him, 'Go up.' David said, 'Where shall I go up?' And He said, 'To Hebron.'"
6. In fact, there's several indications within verses 1-3, that we find David in a spiritually healthy and prosperous way.
7. (1) He inquired of the LORD—though we are not told how David inquired of the LORD, we learn he did inquire of the LORD.
8. It's likely he sought guidance through one of two means—either the prophet God, or the High Priest (who had the Urim and Thummim).
9. But either way, we learn that David did not act hasty but humbly, in that he refused to act without guidance from God.
10. This actually says a lot about David's present state of mind—given the fact that Saul was dead the throne was vacant.
11. And so, David is here described as a righteous king (trusting in the Lord), which is in stark contrast to king Saul.
12. 1Chron.10:13-14—"So Saul died for his unfaithfulness which he had committed against the LORD, because he did not keep the word of the LORD, and also because he consulted a medium for guidance. But he did not inquire of the LORD; therefore He killed him, and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse."
13. (2) He returned to Judah and Hebron—if you remember, prior to this David was living in Ziklag (a Philistine city).
14. For many years now, David had been banished from the land of Israel, and forced to wander in deserts and caves.
15. But now He was able to return to Judah which was where David was from (as Bethlehem was located in Judah).
16. But David didn't return to Bethlehem but Hebron, a city which had a very rich history in the life of the Hebrew people.
17. It was originally given to Abraham, and it was the place where Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, and Leah were all buried.

18. It was in many ways the firstfruits of the entire land of Canaan, that the physical seed of Abraham would inherit.
19. Here it symbolized the firstfruits of David's kingdom—though it started small, eventually it would become great.
20. But I want to also suggest, it symbolized restoration and fellowship with God—David had returned to God from exile.
21. This is why mention is made of David's entire house, and the households of all his men—this was a permanent move.
22. Dale Ralph Davis—"David has broken completely with Philistia and has made a new beginning in Judah."
A.W. Pink—"In the OT Hebron stands typically for communion."

II. David is Anointed over Judah (vv4-7)

1. Having gone up to Hebron, the men of Judah came, v4—"and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah."
2. Now, I want to remind you that OC people were anointed with oil, which symbolized the personal ministry of the Spirit.
3. It symbolized the fact that God equipped or prepared the person, by His Spirit, for the task for which they were anointed.
4. In this case, God was promises David that He would give him, sufficient grace and wisdom to rule over Judah.
5. Simply put—God never calls a person to a task without equipping or empowering that person for that specific task.
6. Thus, the NT teaches us that God anoints every Christian to enable them to serve Him in every way commanded.
7. God gives His Spirit to every Christian, enabling them to faithfully serve Him in every specific work required.
8. For example, did He call you to serve Him as a wife and/or mother? Did He call you to serve Him as a husband/father?
9. Did He call you to serve Him as an elder or deacon? Did He call you to serve Him in a hostile and evil world?
10. Then He has promised you sufficient grace to fulfill each of the callings. God never calls without sufficiently equipping.
11. Thus, at this point I want to suggest two simple things about David's rule or kingdom—it was limited and it was offered.
12. (1) David's kingdom was limited—it merely extended over Judah, v4—"and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah."
13. Now if you remember, the nation of Israel was composed of 12 tribes or houses—Judah was located in the south.
14. Thus, while Judah acknowledged David as king, the other 11 tribes continued to support or follow Saul's descendants.
15. As we shall see, Abner (Saul's general) would eventually enthrone Ishbosheth (Saul's 4th son) over the 11 tribes.
16. And so, we learn that God's visible kingdom on earth at this point, was limited to only one of the twelve tribes.
17. Dale Ralph Davis—"It is a small beginning, but it is the kingdom of God – concrete, visible, earthy. The kingdom of God has for the moment tucked itself away in the hills of Judah."
18. (2) David's kingdom was offered—after David was anointed over Judah, he sent word to Jabesh Gilead to join him.
19. From the last verses of 1Samuel, we learn that it was the men of Jabesh Gilead who buried the remains of Saul and his 3 sons.
20. And so when David is told this, he sent messengers to them saying, v5—"You are blessed of the LORD, for you have shown this kindness to your lord, to Saul, and have buried him."

21. V6—"And now may the LORD show kindness and truth to you. I also will repay you this kindness, because you have done this thing."
22. David then exhorts them, v7—"Now therefore, let your hands be strengthened, and be valiant; for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah has anointed me king over them."
23. In other words—come and own me as your king and you will be blessed—"for Saul is dead and I am now the rightful king."
24. David was actually extending a gracious invitation to the men of Jabesh Gilead (who remained loyal to Saul's descendants).
25. Now, we are not told how they responded to his gracious exhortation, but it says something about David's heart.

III. David Defends Judah in a Civil War (vv8—3:1)

1. Verses 8 to the end of the chapter (and actually chapter 3 also), contain all manner of trickery, deception and death.
2. They describe what can rightly be called a civil war within Israel—11 of the tribes (led by Abner) against 1 tribe (led by David).
3. (1) Abner's deceit, v8—"But Abner the son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, took Ishbosheth the son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim; and he made him king over Gilead, over the Ashurites, over Jezreel, over Ephraim, over Benjamin, and over all Israel."
4. Now, I have referred to Ishbosheth as Abner's deceit, because it's evident that Abner was the one pulling the strings.
5. In fact, as we read through the remainder of chapter 2, Ishbosheth is portrayed as a rather insignificant person.
6. Abner was merely using him as a pawn, given the fact that the people would support him as a descendant of Saul.
7. Thus, Abner used Ishbosheth as a mere puppet or pawn to promote his own self ambition as leader of the 11 tribes.
8. (2) Abner's defeat—verses 12-29 describe a specific battle between the two leading generals—Abner and Joab.
9. It's important to notice that, according to v12, Abner was the aggressor—"Now Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon."
10. Notice, Abner "went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon"—that is, he deliberately left Mahanaim and went to Gibeon (which was on the border of Judah and only 5 miles from Jerusalem).
11. Thus, when we read of Joab going out to "meet them by the pool of Gibeon" they did so as a defensive necessity.
12. John Calvin—"The Scripture tells us that it was Abner, captain for Ishbosheth, who started the battle, while Joab led the troops of David. Now there is not the least doubt that this resulted from the pride and presumption of Abner, who, being the stronger, went forward and mocked David for wanting to be king, since he was followed by one tribe only, whereas Abner's master was followed by eleven."
13. And so, Abner led the army of Ishbosheth and Joab led the army of David—seemingly, they selected 12 soldiers to represent both sides.
14. V15—"So they arose and went over by number, twelve from Benjamin, followers of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, and twelve from the servants of David."
15. Abner's 12 men were defeated, and so Abner and his army retreated, v17—"So there was a very fierce battle that day, and Abner and the men of Israel were beaten before the servants of David."
16. From verse 18 and following, we learn that Joab's brother, Asahel, who was as fast as a wild gazelle, pursued Abner.
17. Asahel eventually catches up with Abner, and is struck dead by Abner (v23), something he was reluctant to do.
18. This resulted in Joab and Abishai (another brother) to pursue Abner, and at evening they eventually find him (v24).

19. V26—"Then Abner called to Joab and said, 'Shall the sword devour forever? Do you not know that it will be bitter in the latter end? How long will it be then until you tell the people to return from pursuing their brethren?'"
20. Given the fact that this was a civil war, it appears Abner was genuinely saddened that Israelite blood was spilt.
21. From verses 30-31 we learn, that 20 of David's men and 360 of Abner's men had died in the battle (380 Israelites in total).
22. And so we learn that Joab blew a trumpet, v28—"and all the people stood still and did not pursue Israel anymore, nor did they fight anymore."
23. So, Abner and his men returned to Mahanaim, and Joab and his men returned to Hebron (and the battle was ended).
24. But this was only the first battle, for we read in 3:1, that the war between the two armies continued for a long time (7 ½ years).
25. 3:1—"Now there was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David. But David grew stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker."
26. (3) Abner's death—Abner's death is actually recorded in chapter 3—as David grew stronger Abner desired to end the war.
27. 3:12—"Then Abner sent messengers on his behalf to David, saying, 'Whose is the land?' saying also, 'Make your covenant with me, and indeed my hand shall be with you to bring all Israel to you.'"
28. Now, Abner's motivation in this is questionable—obviously he knew it was only a matter of time until he was defeated.
29. Well, when Joab heard about this, he was furious as, if you remember, Abner had earlier killed his brother (Asahel).
30. So, we read in v27—"and Joab stabbed him in the stomach, so that he died for the blood of Asahel his brother."
31. And then from v31 to the end of chapter 3, we find that David lamented the death of Abner, and described Joab's behavior as wicked (v39).
32. After news of Abner's death was known, "all Israel was troubled" (4:1)—this eventually led to Ishbosheth's death (which will lead us to chapter 5 and David becoming king over all Israel).
33. Thus, before I come to some specific lessons on how Christ is found in this passage, let me say something about selfish-ambition.
34. Within 2Samuel 2, we find a contract of two men and their ambitions—David had godly ambition, Abner had self-ambition.
35. Thus, let me suggest two characteristics of selfish ambition as illustrated in Abner—failure to submit to the will of God and failure to pursue the unity of God.
36. (a) Failure to submit to the will of God—Abner refused to accept David as God's choice of king over all Israel.
37. Abner was well aware of David's rightly claim to the throne, but he was simply unwilling to bow to David as king.
38. Simply put, he wanted for himself what David had—he wanted to rule over Israel and was not willing to submit to God's will.
39. It was God's revealed will that David rule over Israel, and not merely Judah only, but the entire nation (all 11 tribes).
40. This is how selfish ambition looks—they want to be personally recognized without submission to God's revealed will in Scripture.
41. For example, someone wants to be a pastor but is not willing to submit to pastors—this is a sure sign of selfish ambition.
42. (b) Failure to pursue the unity of God—Abner elevated his own self ambition over the unity of the twelve tribes.
43. Now, some of you may know that John Calvin never commented on 1&2 Samuel, but he did preach through both books.
44. Unfortunately, his sermons on 1Samuel were never preserved, but his 87 sermons on 2Samuel were translated into Latin and eventually English.

45. Calvin preached 3 sermons on 2Samuel 2, and throughout them, he likened Abner to a man who promoted himself at the expense of the church.
46. You see, we must remember, this was a civil war—that is, it was a war within the nation of Israel (the people of God).
47. And Calvin saw in Abner a man who was willing to divide the church for personal and selfish gain—a rebellious member.
48. John Calvin—"In short, Abner cared only for himself, just as worldly people always tend to do, for each one is addicted to himself. That, I say, is what motivated Abner when he divided the people and made of them two bodies, so to speak."
49. Abner simply refused to unite the 12 tribes, but instead was willing to divide them for personal and selfish gain.
50. Now you must know, that in Calvin's day there were men who divided the church over personal, practical, and theological reasons.
51. For Calvin, there were only two reasons to leave or divide a church—serious theological error or blatant moral sin in the leadership.
52. It scares me brethren to think how Christians can be willing to disrupt churches in defense of some truth or practice they believe is all-important.
53. Many professing Christians are willing to leave or divide a church over music, programs, and even color of carpets.
54. This results from selfish ambition—placing our own personal aspirations and convictions over the unity of the church.
55. Thus, Abner claimed to be concerned for the welfare of the brethren (v26), and yet, he had little concern for their unity.
56. Perhaps we could say, Abner disrupted the unity of God's visible people, because of personal and self-ambition.
57. I really believe, dear brethren, we need to be reminded of the importance of church unity and the need to maintain it.
58. And so, before I come to our fourth and final heading, let me briefly suggest two practical helps to maintain the unity of God's visible kingdom on earth (the church).
59. (i) Refuse to fixate on anything not clearly taught in Scripture or any non-essential truth that is taught in Scripture.
60. This is usually what happens—someone gets one thing stuck in their minds which outweighs every other thing!
61. For example, a person might have strong convictions on what type of shoes should be worn to church (and that's fine).
62. But this can become a problem and even a source of division, when it becomes an all-consuming matter to discuss (is it really that important).
63. (ii) Determine to fixate on the major truths of Scripture as they find their relation of Christ—focus on what matters.

IV. Lessons

1. Here I want to suggest four descriptions of David's new kingdom, and point out how these shadowed Christ's kingdom.
2. (1) It was given in two stages—while David was anointed king over Judah in ch.2, he wouldn't be anointed over all Israel until ch.5.
3. Now, for David this was in part because God had remaining lessons to teach David to prepare him for future use.
4. David had many things he needed to learn during this 7½ years, and so his kingdom had a very humble beginning.
5. Now, here I want to say something that can easily be misunderstood—Christ too needed to learn certain things.

6. Heb.5:8—"Though He was a Son, *yet* He learned obedience by the things which He suffered"—Christ learned obedience in 3½ years of suffering (not 7 ½ years).
7. Before I go further let me clarify—Christ learned obedience as a Man and not as God, because God cannot learn.
8. And so too, David learned obedience by the things which he suffered in these additional 7½ years (between ch.2 and ch.5).
9. And let me briefly say, this is also true of us, who have been anointed as kings when we became Christian, and yet, in a sense we are only anointed over Judah, as we too, have need to learn obedience through suffering.
10. Now, Jesus had need of learning obedience for 3½ years, David had need of learning for 7½ years, and we have need of learning obedience from the time we become Christians to the time Christ returns.
11. Simply put brethren, this is why God anoints us as kings at conversion, and yet, leaves a distance between that anointing and our final anointing.
12. Let me put this another way—why does God save us (make us kings), and yet leave us in this world to fight and suffer?
13. Here's why—because we, just as David and Jesus, need to learn obedience, that will bring glory and honor to God.
14. We need to learn obedience! And one way we learn obedience is hardship and suffering—these drive us to God.
15. Simply put—hardship and suffering teach us how weak and frail we are, and how wise and powerful God is.
16. Now, here I must humbly admit, it's oftentimes difficult to learn these lessons while in the midst of hardship and suffering.
17. For the past week I have been laid low—having injured my back a week ago yesterday, I was not able to function.
18. I was not able to do the things that I ordinarily do—I was not able to make my morning coffee, or sit in my study.
19. In fact, for many days, I wasn't able to stand on my feet, and for the most part, I was overtaken with severe pain.
20. And it's very easy during such times to retreat within ourselves, and simply endure the hardship without any intent to learn.
21. But this would be to miss the entire point—these hardships come to teach us obedience (to show us our weakness).
22. But here's the good news, dear Christian, they will only last 7½ years—put another way, chapter 5 is soon to come!
23. (2) It had a humble beginning—David was initially anointed over Judah, which meant his kingdom had a humble start.
24. Though it grew steadily throughout his 40-year reign, nevertheless it started out very modest in size and character.
25. This of course was also true of Christ's kingdom, which began in a very humble manner, and grows even now.
26. Matt.13:31-32—"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."
27. Here our Savior compares His kingdom to a mustard seed—a mustard seed was "the least of all the seeds"—it was a very small seed.
28. And yet, in time it grows to a tree (or a very large bush), which gives rest to "the birds of the air"—it starts small and yet becomes big.
29. This is similar to our Savior's kingdom—it began small with a handful of disciples, and now it's a great and grand tree.
30. (3) It was advanced by force—David advanced his kingdom through military force (power) gradually over time.

31. David's kingdom was militant—it always faced opposition—it was opposed by Abner, Ishbosheth, and the remainder of 11 tribes.
32. Now, at this point, let me remind you, as a type of Christ there are profound similarities between David and Christ.
33. Just as David is anointed over a remnant of his people, points to Christ's ascension when His kingdom began with a small remnant.
34. But in both cases, this began a season of intense warfare, wherein the kingdom is advanced through military force.
35. Matt. 11:12—"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force (what does our Savior mean – how is His kingdom taken by force).
36. (a) Sinners enter the kingdom by force—to enter the kingdom of God you must leave the kingdom of Satan which is no easy task.
37. Our Savior describes the conversion of a poor sinner as "taking the kingdom by force"—you must fight through much opposition.
38. There's the opposition of this world—there's the opposition of your own corrupt heart—there's the opposition of spiritual forces.
39. (b) Saints advance the kingdom by force—this holy violence continues after you've entered the kingdom of heaven.
40. (4) It was characterized by grace—that is, the very first thing David did as king was graciously extend an offer to others to join his kingdom.
41. Perhaps we could say, the first thing David does as king was to send messengers to his enemies to receive blessing.
42. Surely this is intended to teach us something about his greater Son, for doesn't Christ do the very same thing!?
43. Doesn't He also send forth His messengers, urging his enemies to lay down their weapons and find in Him blessing!
44. What was Christ's final words to His little band of believers—"Go and make disciples of all the nations"—Go and exhort sinners to bow before David their rightful King!