

David's Power Grows | 2 Samuel 3:1-39

Introduction:

For the first time since David was anointed king by the prophet Samuel he now is recognized as a king. The two southern tribes, Judah and Simeon, followed David as their king. The other ten tribes were following Ishbosheth. It was not God's design to have a divided nation, so one day there would be just one leader. Who would that leader be? What would make for a good leader?

This chapter contrasts various leaders: David, Ishbosheth, Abner and Joab. Who will come out as the best leader is the focus of the chapter.

David's House – 2 Samuel 3:1-5

1. What is happening politically in the "Promised Land" according to verse 1?
2. What is the power shift we see described in this verse (v.1)?
3. In verses 2-5 we get a list of the six sons born to David in Hebron. What do we discover about David's family through this list?

Abner's Anger Against Ishbosheth – 2 Samuel 3:6-11

4. Who is Abner (v. 4)? As the war progressed between the house of David and the house of Saul, what was happening in Abner's life? (v. 6)
5. What does Ishbosheth accuse Abner of doing (v. 7)? Why would this be such a terrible thing?
6. How does Abner respond to this accusation (v. 8)? Why did Abner respond like this according to verse 8?

7. What interesting fact does Abner reveal in verse 9? What does he plan to do now that he has been shamed by Ishbosheth (v. 10)?
8. How does Ishbosheth respond to what Abner says? Why? (v. 11)

Abner Bargains With David – 2 Samuel 3:12-21

9. What is Abner doing in verse 12? Why send messengers, and not come by himself? What is he offering David?
10. Is David willing to make a covenant with Abner (v. 13)? What one thing does he require of Abner to show “good faith”? Why this request?
11. David now turns his attention to Ishbosheth. Though David had already made his request to Abner, why does he now ask Ishbosheth to return his bride (v. 14)?
12. What is Ishbosheth’s response (v.15)? Why?
13. In verse 16 an interesting scene is described. What happened? How does Abner respond? How does Paltiel respond to Abner? Why?
14. Abner now goes to the elders of Israel. What do we learn about the wishes of the elders (v. 17)?
15. Once again Abner refers to the promise of the Lord (v. 18). What, in particular, will God do through David that is of interest to the elders of Israel?
16. In verse 19 we are told Abner speaks to another specific group. Who are they and why are they important? What do they think about going over to David?
17. Though David’s men have been fighting Abner and the armies of Israel, how does David respond to the visit of Abner and the twenty men he brought (v. 20)? Why?
18. What promise does Abner make to David (v.21)? What does Abner call David?
19. Since Abner came in peace, how does he leave (v.21)?

Joab Learns of Abner's Visit – 2 Samuel 3:22-30

20. Where had Joab and David's men been (v. 22)? How did they fair? What is this telling us about Joab?
21. What does Joab learn in verse 23? Why might he have been told this information?
22. What is Joab's response to the visit of Abner, and his peaceful exit (vss. 24-25)? What is Joab's opinion of Abner?
23. Joab leaves the presence of David, and what does he do (v. 26)? Was this sanctioned by David?
24. What does Joab do when Abner returns to Hebron (v. 27)? What reason is given for this action in this verse?
25. What is the response of David to the death of Abner (vss. 28-29)? David then puts a curse on the house of Joab. What things will befall his family? (any idea what "who holds a spindle" means?)
26. What added piece of information do we get about the death of Abner in verse 30?

David Mourns Abner – 2 Samuel 3:31-39

27. What does David command his men to do in verse 31? What does this mean? How is this a test for Joab?
28. David is a part of the funeral procession. Where is Abner buried (v. 32)? Would this have been the natural place where he was buried? Why here?
29. Who leads the people in mourning for Abner (v. 32)? Is this important?
30. Read the lament that David composes for the funeral. What message does it give (vss. 33-34)?

31. Besides joining in the funeral procession, leading the people in mourning and composing a lament in honour of Abner, what else did he do (v. 35)?
32. How did the people respond to the actions of the king (v. 36)?
33. What did the people conclude (v. 37)? Is this important?
34. What is the message of verses 38-39?

Conclusion

What a way to start a reign as king. Just when it looks like a peace accord is in the works that will unite the nation, and allow David to reign as king over the whole nation, Joab comes along and murders not only a most important person of the Northern Kingdom, but the man brokering the covenant. There is potential for a great outcry, and further hostilities as the Northern Kingdom tries to exact revenge. The last note of the chapter is clear: David is not happy with his general. However, David does nothing against Joab at this time.

Once again a death occurs that advances the career of David. It would be easy to suspect that he had a hand in this, somehow planted the seed or was responsible. Yet the chapter highlights again and again that this was not of David's doing, that he is innocent of the blood of Abner. David would take many lives in battle, but this was murder. The recorder of this history wants us to see that David is innocent of Abner's blood.

This is important, for if David is to be a king blessed by God, he must be a man after God's own heart. He must pursue God's commands and instructions. He cannot lead the people in ways that are contrary to the ways of God. This sad chapter highlights that though evil was around him, David had no part of it. May our lives also be "blameless until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:23).