

- The book of 2 Samuel is the second half of a fascinating story
 - The Hebrew Bible originally contained a single book called Samuel
 - But when the elders of Israel translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek, they decided to divide the book into two books
 - And they changed the names to 1 & 2 Kingdoms, and that lasted until the fifth century or so
 - Jerome renamed the books 1 and 2 Samuel when he translated them to Latin and the new names stuck
 - VBVM I taught 1 Samuel a few years ago, and this study picks up where that earlier study left off
 - At that time I provided an introduction to the book, so I direct readers there for that background
 - But a couple of details are worth repeating here
 - First, the book was written by Samuel and probably one or two other prophets like Gad or Nathan
 - 1 Samuel covers the rise of kings in Israel and a rivalry between Israel's first kingdom Saul, and his successor, David
 - 2 Samuel picks up at Saul's death and tells the story of another rivalry but this time it's between David and himself
 - The story starts with David consolidating his power as the new king of Israel, and his early victories as he obeys God and leads well
 - But soon the story turns to David's temptations, his stumbles into sin and the consequences that follow
 - First, David's own son Absalom attempts a rebellion against his father
 - Later, God brings famine and other calamities as consequences for David's failures, leading to David's repentance in the end
 - So if 1 Samuel was a story of a strong man with an ungodly character, 2 Samuel is the story of a man of godly character who has weak flesh
 - That's a story every believer should recognize, and therefore the lessons David learns are lessons for us too
 - The Lord brings discipline to His children when we are unfaithful for the purpose of working out our sanctification
 - And like David, the proper response to the discipline of the Lord is humility and repentance, which brings restoration
- Secondly, in 1 Samuel we learned that a major theme of the book was God's sovereignty, and that is no less true for 2 Samuel
 - At many points, the author takes care to show how events in David's life unfold according to the will of God
 - David was chosen by God and would be successful so long as he consented to God's will

- We too need only consent to God to find the success God has planned for us... but do it in our own will, and we will fail
 - David could rely on God so long as he didn't take God's presence or power for granted nor try to impose his will on God's plan
 - Ultimately, our appreciation of God's sovereignty manifests in a heart attitude that seeks to please God and treat others in the same way
 - David's life story is that of a man who begins with this perspective, leaves it for a time but ultimately finds it again
 - And the events of his life are a testimony to the sovereignty of God as the Lord works patiently with David through it all
- So in 2 Samuel, we pick up essentially in the middle of the story, which necessitates a little recap of what happened in 1 Samuel
 - The books of Samuel cover the lives of three principle men in Israel's history from 1121 BC until 971 BC, a total of 150 years
 - The prophet Samuel, born in 1121 BC, and Israel's first two kings: Saul who dies in 1011 BC and David who dies in 971 BC
 - David's son, Solomon, only gets a brief mention in 2 Samuel
 - 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel focus on this period, while Solomon and the rest of the kings are covered in 1 & 2 Kings and Chronicles
 - During these 150 years, Israel experienced a remarkable period of growth and development
 - As 1 Samuel starts, Israel is a small nation of oppressed people led by weak judges and harassed by numerous enemies
 - By the end of 2 Samuel, Israel is an emerging world superpower with a king soon to be the richest and wisest man in history
 - This transition is all the more remarkable given the personal failures of Israel's judges and of the nation as a whole
 - Judges records the widespread failure of God's people to keep the Law and live in obedience to God's word
 - As 1 Samuel begins, the high priest, Eli, is a weak man with godless sons
 - Even Israel's first king, Saul, was a man chosen by the people for his appearance, not his godly character, against God's counsel
 - Eventually, Saul forgets God, becomes greedy and ultimately turns to witches for guidance
- But God continues to bless the nation by giving them their greatest king, David, who is introduced midway through 1 Samuel as a young shepherd boy
 - David is chosen by God to replace Saul's failed dynasty after Saul disobeyed God
 - The prophet Samuel informed Saul of God's decision this way

1Sam. 15:24 Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned; I have indeed transgressed

the command of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and listened to their voice.

1Sam. 15:25 “Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me, that I may worship the LORD.”

1Sam. 15:26 But Samuel said to Saul, “I will not return with you; for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel.”

1Sam. 15:27 As Samuel turned to go, Saul seized the edge of his robe, and it tore.

1Sam. 15:28 So Samuel said to him, “The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to your neighbor, who is better than you.

1Sam. 15:29 “Also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind.”

- Saul disobeyed the Lord by not utterly destroying the Amalekites when ordered to do so
- His heart had become so perverted that he rather keep their spoil for himself rather than protect his people
- So Samuel tells Saul his time is up, and Saul responds by crying crocodile tears begging for forgiveness
 - His repentance was not the kind of heartfelt return that could have received God’s mercy
 - He was crying the way Esau cried when he realized he lost his family’s inheritance to Jacob
 - He was sorrowful over his circumstances, not repentant for how his actions lead to those consequences
- Therefore, Samuel says God’s decision will stand, because God had made His decree and God doesn’t change His mind, the prophet says
 - But Samuel goes on to tell Saul that God’s penalty was even worse than Saul realized
 - Not only was Saul being disqualified as king but so are Saul’s descendants
 - In other words, Saul’s dynasty was ending
- A dynasty refers to a line of kings of the same family who inherit the throne from their father in a succession from one generation to the next
 - A king’s first born son is automatically heir to his father’s kingdom, so when the father dies, the son becomes king
 - Dynasties usually lasted for centuries because only if the family fails to produce an heir or in a revolution does a dynasty end
 - But in Israel’s case, God dictated who would be king, and He also decided the beginning and end of dynasties
 - So now Saul is hearing that God has rejected him as king and is putting an end to Saul’s dynasty

- In v.28 Samuel says that the Kingdom will be taken away from Saul and given to his neighbor
 - The word neighbor in Hebrew means friend or companion, in other words a non family member
 - So Saul learns that the Kingdom will be taken from his family and given to a new family, a new dynasty
 - Saul has failed so miserably that the Lord is rejecting Saul and his family line
 - In place of Saul's family, a new family will rule Israel, the family of Jesse, and specifically his youngest son, David
- God's decision sets the scene for the rest of the action in the books
 - The Lord raises David up to a position in Saul's court and ultimately to be commander of Saul's army
 - But after Saul learns that David has been anointed by Samuel in his place, he begins to wage all-out war against David
 - David eventually flees from Saul to live a decade in the desert wilderness running from Saul with a small, loyal band of men
 - During those ten years David suffers, prays, learns and ultimately matures into the powerful, compassionate leader we remember today
 - Though Saul seeks to kill David, David refuses to raise his hand against Saul, trusting God to defend him until David's day comes
 - In the meantime, David writes most of the psalms and becomes devoted to prayer and song and seeking the Lord's counsel
 - And remarkably, David also establishes a close relationship with Saul's son, Jonathan
 - Of all the people who should have been threatened by David's ascent to power, it should have been Jonathan
 - As the heir to Saul's throne, Jonathan represented the greatest threat to David's future dynasty
 - And David should have been Jonathan's greatest enemy since he would deny Jonathan his dynasty
 - Yet David and Jonathan are best friends, and David enters into a covenant promising to protect Jonathan when he rules
 - In return, Jonathan secretly pledges allegiance to David's dynasty
 - And David tells Jonathan he can serve in David's court
- So by the end of 1 Samuel, Saul has become obsessed and deranged by his pursuit of David and engaged in a full-fledged spiritual breakdown
 - Meanwhile, David continues waiting patiently for the throne and uses his reputation as an outlaw to deceive and defeat Israel's enemies
 - And as the book comes to an end, David and his small army of a few hundred men are in the south of Israel fighting Amalekites

- While Saul and his three sons, including Jonathan, have gone with Israel's army to the north to battle the Philistines
- David's men are victorious despite being greatly outnumbered because they were protected by God
 - While Saul's great army is routed by the Philistines, and Saul and his sons are killed in battle
 - The bodies of the king and his sons are beheaded and hung on the town walls of Bet She'an, just south of the Sea of Galilee
- While the Philistines celebrate their victory over Saul in northern Israel, David and his men enjoy their victory in Ziklag in the south
 - News couldn't travel instantly in that day, so David doesn't yet know that Saul is dead and he has become king
 - It will take a few days for the news to reach David, and that's where the story resumes in 2 Samuel

2Sam. 1:1 Now it came about after the death of Saul, when David had returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, that David remained two days in Ziklag.

2Sam. 1:2 On the third day, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul, with his clothes torn and dust on his head. And it came about when he came to David that he fell to the ground and prostrated himself.

2Sam. 1:3 Then David said to him, "From where do you come?" And he said to him, "I have escaped from the camp of Israel."

2Sam. 1:4 David said to him, "How did things go? Please tell me." And he said, "The people have fled from the battle, and also many of the people have fallen and are dead; and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also."

2Sam. 1:5 So David said to the young man who told him, "How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?"

2Sam. 1:6 The young man who told him said, "By chance I happened to be on Mount Gilboa, and behold, Saul was leaning on his spear. And behold, the chariots and the horsemen pursued him closely.

2Sam. 1:7 "When he looked behind him, he saw me and called to me. And I said, 'Here I am.'

2Sam. 1:8 "He said to me, 'Who are you?' And I answered him, 'I am an Amalekite.'

2Sam. 1:9 "Then he said to me, 'Please stand beside me and kill me, for agony has seized me because my life still lingers in me.'

2Sam. 1:10 "So I stood beside him and killed him, because I knew that he could not live after he had fallen. And I took the crown which was on his head and the bracelet which was on his arm, and I have brought them here to my lord."

- After his victory over the Amalekites, David and his men remain in the southern area of Judah in a town called Ziklag, located in Philistine territory

- All of Israel knows that David has been hiding among the Philistines in southern Judah to stay out of Saul's reach
 - Yet the nation also knows that David is Saul's anointed successor and they know he has been attacked by Saul
 - So when Saul dies in battle in the north, the survivors of the battle instantly realize David is now their king
 - Yet someone needs to inform David of that fact, so this enterprising man escapes from the camp and travels south
- That journey would have taken 4 days on foot walking a normal pace
 - Since David was in the far south outside the territory of Israel in that day, he will be among the last to hear the news
 - And for the one who brings the news to David, there is opportunity for reward but also great risk
- And the fact that this messenger arrives in just 3 days suggests he ran most of the way to be sure he was first to inform David
 - He was hoping for reward, because he knew David was anointed Saul's successor and has suffered under Saul for the last decade
 - So he assumes David will be happy to hear that Saul is dead and therefore David might reward the one who delivers the news
- But there was also risk in being the one to inform David, because this man will have to convince David that he had nothing to do with the death
 - Typically, the history of warfare is told by the victors, because the losers don't survive to tell it, so this man's survival makes him suspect
 - Moreover, the one in possession of the king's personal effects is usually the one who kills the man, as David took Goliath's sword
 - Therefore, the fact this man survives *and* possess Saul's crown suggests he was at fault and now wants to exploit Saul's death
 - So David will naturally suspect this man had a hand in Saul's death, so the man's story will need to explain these details
 - And that sets up this fascinating exchange between David and the man as David tries to get to the bottom of things
 - In v.2 the man falls at David's feet asking for an audience and David tells the man to explain himself
 - He begins his story saying he came from the camp of Israel, which means he was fighting in the army of Saul in the north
 - This piques David's interest because he knows Saul had been battling Philistines in that region and wants to hear the result
 - So David asks for a report, and to the man's credit, he doesn't bury the lede
 - He says we lost and many died including the king and his son Jonathan
 - Before David reacts to the news, he demands proof of the man's report

- So in v.6 the man begins telling the story that he no doubt had been rehearsing for three days
- He says during the battle he found himself on Mt Gilboa, which is located in the Jezreel Valley of Galilee, when he saw Saul leaning on his spear during battle
 - Leaning on his spear is a way of saying trying to commit suicide...Saul is literally pressing his body down on the tip of his spear to thrust it in
 - Closing in on wounded Saul were chariots and horsemen of the Philistine army
 - Saul was in danger of capture or worse at the hands of his enemies, but he hasn't the strength to finish the deed
 - So Saul calls this man over for help and asks his identity, and the man tells Saul he was an Amalekite
 - The messenger's inclusion of this detail in his story results in a moment of intrigue between David and the messenger
 - Early in his reign, Saul failed to destroy all the Amalekites as God commanded, which is why Saul lost his dynasty to David
 - And David had just returned from destroying some Amalekites so clearly David isn't afraid to carry out God's request
 - And now David learns that this messenger is none other than an Amalekite, so how will that impact David's response?
 - Undoubtedly the messenger feared this truth would come out at some point, so he's skillfully woven the disclosure into his story
 - He's hoping that as David learns about his true identity in this round-about way, he will let it pass unnoticed
 - For now David says nothing and allows the man to continue telling his story, and in v.9 the man gets to the main point
 - The Amalekite claims Saul was already mortally wounded and destined to die, so takes Saul's life as an act of mercy
 - He expects David to overlook his violence against the king since Saul requested it and his life was lost anyway
 - So that explains how he came into possession of the king's crown, but it doesn't explain how he escaped the Philistines
- So finally, David responds to this man's story

2Sam. 1:11 Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them, and so also did all the men who were with him.

2Sam. 1:12 They mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and his son Jonathan and for the people of the LORD and the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.

- David's first priority was showing honor to Israel's fallen king

- David tears his clothes on his body, which was a traditional way of displaying mourning in Israel
- He wouldn't have done it violently but ritually, to demonstrate he was in a period of mourning and then his men followed suit
- Then also fasted for the remainder of that day, which wasn't very long by the standards of that day
- And I suspect they might have fasted longer except that the times were now very dangerous and David had to act quickly
- After this brief period of public mourning, David returns his attention to the messenger

2Sam. 1:13 David said to the young man who told him, “Where are you from?” And he answered, “I am the son of an alien, an Amalekite.”

2Sam. 1:14 Then David said to him, “How is it you were not afraid to stretch out your hand to destroy the LORD’S anointed?”

2Sam. 1:15 And David called one of the young men and said, “Go, cut him down.” So he struck him and he died.

2Sam. 1:16 David said to him, “Your blood is on your head, for your mouth has testified against you, saying, ‘I have killed the LORD’S anointed.’”

- Because David knows the man is an Amalekite, he’s curious to understand how he came to be in the camp of Israel
 - The man says he is the son of an alien, which means he was born in Israel to an Amalekite father who immigrated into Israel
 - According to the law, this man was a protected alien...not Jewish but under the protection of Jewish Law
 - The man expects his status as a protected alien will protect him from David harming him
 - He knows David is obligated to give him due process under Jewish Law like any Jew under the Law
 - But in this case, the fact that he’s under the Law instead serves to convict him
 - Notice in v.16 David says this man has confessed to a murder by his own testimony
 - The man admits to killing Saul, and though he claims it was a mercy killing, there’s no provision in the Law for such a killing
 - In the same way, we can’t kill a person today simply because the person is in pain or terminally ill or asks us for that help...
 - If we did kill them, we would be prosecuted for murder, and the same was true for this Amalekite
 - Under the Law of Moses, murder is punished by death, and since this man has confessed to the killing, no further adjudication was required

- David orders that the man die immediately for his offense, and justice in that day was swift
 - David asks this man how he dared to raise his hand against God's anointed and then come claiming credit for it?
 - David is amazed the man thinks killing the anointed of God is ever a good thing, and this comment shows David's growth
- Earlier in 1 Samuel, David dared to raise his hand against Saul by cutting off a corner of the king's robe to show the king he could have done worse
 - Though that gesture seems fairly harmless to us, David later regretted that decision greatly
 - David realized that his offense wasn't merely harming or embarrassing Saul
 - His offense was in challenging the authority and honor of the man that God had placed in power
 - David was disobeying God and showing contempt for God's choices, which was contrary to David's heart
 - So once David realized his mistake, he repented and from that moment forward, David never dared to oppose God's anointed again
 - Even as Saul committed even greater wrongs against David, David respected Saul and demanded that others do likewise
 - If God had anointed Saul as king, then David rightly believed that only God could remove the king in His timing
 - David couldn't strike Saul just because he knew God intended to replace Saul with David one day to come
 - David knew that God doesn't just control who becomes king of Israel, but God also decides when the change happens
 - And therefore, trying to impose his own timetable on God's plan was just as much disobedience as ignoring the plan
 - It took David a while to learn that lesson while he was running from Saul, but he has come to understand it well
- And now he's prepared to teach this Amalekite the same, by holding him accountable to the law of Moses, which requires a life for a life
 - David orders the man killed on the spot, and one of David's men carries out the order instantly
 - In this way, David ensures no one will suspect him of celebrating the death of Israel's king though he benefited from it
 - This is the kind of decision that David will become known for...honoring God at all costs
 - And in this case, there was a cost for David because he's currently living in Philistine territory in Ziklag
 - David has spent the last few years pretending to be allied with the Philistines against Saul so he could spy on them and attack

- By now killing this man at the news of Saul's death makes clear where David's allegiance lies, so there's no turning back
- David must leave Ziklag and return to Israel having forfeited any possibility of an alliance with the Philistines
- But that's what God wanted...and that's what drove David more than anything
- And what of the man's story...did he tell the truth about Saul's death??
 - Because the man confessed to murder, David never had to determine whether the man's story was true
 - But looking at the details, the man was almost certainly lying
- We find the biblical account of Saul's death and the death of his sons at the end of 1 Samuel

1Sam. 31:2 The Philistines overtook Saul and his sons; and the Philistines killed Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchi-shua the sons of Saul.

1Sam. 31:3 The battle went heavily against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was badly wounded by the archers.

1Sam. 31:4 Then Saul said to his armor bearer, "Draw your sword and pierce me through with it, otherwise these uncircumcised will come and pierce me through and make sport of me." But his armor bearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. So Saul took his sword and fell on it.

1Sam. 31:5 When his armor bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword and died with him.

1Sam. 31:6 Thus Saul died with his three sons, his armor bearer, and all his men on that day together.

- The Bible's account in 1 Samuel says that Saul committed suicide unassisted, which means that the Amalekite's story was false
 - Jewish historian Josephus tried to reconcile the two accounts by claiming that the Amalekite helped Saul fall on his sword
 - But it seems unlikely Saul's armor bearer would have stood by while an Amalekite killed his king
- More likely, the messenger witnessed Saul kill himself, and seeing what happened, he hatched a plan to exploit the death
 - When he saw the armor bearer die also, he seized the opportunity to take the king's personal effects
 - Then he ran to David to tell his story hoping for reward
- Whether true or not, the Amalekite miscalculated badly, because he didn't possess David's godly perspective of God's anointed king
 - Saul wasn't David's enemy, as far as David was concerned
 - The Lord had placed Saul in power, and as badly as Saul treated David, he was still

the Lord's anointed

- Which meant that anyone who opposed Saul was opposing God, and anyone who killed Saul was striking against God Himself
- In our present day, the fight for political power has increasingly become an existential struggle and it's led some Christians to forget David's example
 - Even as we oppose those on the other end of the political spectrum, we have to remember that leaders are appointed by God
 - And when a regime change takes place, the Lord is selecting the winners for reasons of His own
 - And so when we oppose leaders in unlawful ways or dishonor them, we are challenging God
 - And even when those we opposed strike out at us, our proper response is not to strike back or lower ourselves to their tactics
 - Like David we must maintain a respect for those God appoints knowing that God's ways are higher than our ways
 - If David can defend Saul's honor even after all Saul did to harm David, then surely we can show our opponents decency too
 - Our witness lies in the balance, to say nothing of our obedience to God
- David honored Saul's rule not because he necessarily liked the man himself...but because David's heart was fully submitted to the Lord
 - As much as any sinful person can, David's heart remained subject to God's will in everything he did
 - In 1 Samuel 13:14 David is called a man after God's own heart, which means that David had a heart to want what God wants
 - Of course, David stumbled at times because he was a man of sin like every person apart from Christ
 - But David's heart followed after God to a degree few have equalled
 - And that obedience to God was all the more remarkable given his power and wealth as king of Israel
 - Saul was not that kind of man, as 1 Samuel records, and the way Saul's life ended was emblematic of his entire rule over Israel
 - Saul's life ended leaning on his spear, which in a sense was the way that Saul lived his entire life as king
 - Saul leaned on himself, his own abilities, his own strength instead of seeking the Lord and walking in His strength
 - So just as Saul killed himself by leaning on that spear, so also he brought his dynasty to an end by relying on himself
 - Saul was all style but no substance...all hat, no cattle...selected by the people because he looked the part but his appearance was a facade
 - Saul is the Bible's poster child for the folly of God's people seeking spiritual

leaders based on earthly qualities

- And David is God's rebuttal...the youngest son of an average family, a shepherd boy with no training for war or politics
- Yet he defeats Goliath with a slingshot, rises to commander of Israel's army and is anointed Israel's king
- From outward appearances, David is not impressive, but inwardly he's a man after God's own heart
 - So if you can choose between a man who has the looks or the one who has the character, go with character every time
 - Even though sometimes you can find someone with good looks and godly character in one package...
- But never assume that a pretty wrapper means spiritual goodness
 - External beauty is temporary and prone to failing, especially when it conceals a corrupt heart
 - But someone who has a heart for God will become increasingly beautiful over time, and that's the story of David
- David's devotion to God's sovereign will is on full display in the song that he composes to end Chapter 1

2Sam. 1:17 Then David chanted with this lament over Saul and Jonathan his son,
2Sam. 1:18 and he told them to teach the sons of Judah the song of the bow;
 behold, it is written in the book of Jashar.

2Sam. 1:19 "Your beauty, O Israel, is slain on your high places!

How have the mighty fallen!

2Sam. 1:20 "Tell it not in Gath,
 Proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon,
 Or the daughters of the Philistines will rejoice,
 The daughters of the uncircumcised will exult.

2Sam. 1:21 "O mountains of Gilboa,
 Let not dew or rain be on you, nor fields of offerings;
 For there the shield of the mighty was defiled,
 The shield of Saul, not anointed with oil.

2Sam. 1:22 "From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty,
 The bow of Jonathan did not turn back,
 And the sword of Saul did not return empty.

2Sam. 1:23 "Saul and Jonathan, beloved and pleasant in their life,
 And in their death they were not parted;
 They were swifter than eagles,
 They were stronger than lions.

2Sam. 1:24 "O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
 Who clothed you luxuriously in scarlet,

Who put ornaments of gold on your apparel.

2Sam. 1:25 “How have the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!

Jonathan is slain on your high places.

2Sam. 1:26 “I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan;

You have been very pleasant to me.

Your love to me was more wonderful

Than the love of women.

2Sam. 1:27 “How have the mighty fallen,

And the weapons of war perished!”

- In v.17 David chants a song in memory to Saul, and the Hebrew word for chant refers to a lament or dirge sung at a funeral
 - In v.18 David instructs his men to teach all generations of Israel to sing this song as well, and it has come to be known as the “Song of the Bow”
 - In fact, the author notes that this song was ultimately recorded in the book of Jashar, an ancient text lost to history
 - The book is first mentioned in Joshua, and it contained history from Joshua’s day and David’s day
 - The only way that could be true is if it was a living work of history, being updated continuously as a Jewish history record
 - So it wasn’t scripture and it was eventually lost to antiquity as Scripture took its place
 - Looking at the content of the song, you can see how it reflects David’s respect for Saul as he notes many of Saul’s accomplishments
 - In v.19, David says that the nation lost a part of its beauty as its king is disfigured on the high place of Mt Gilboa
 - In v.20 David says may the news never be repeated in Gath or Ashkelon, cities of the Philistines
 - The Philistines were by far the greatest of Israel’s enemies during this time of history
 - And David couldn’t bear the thought of those people celebrating Saul’s death
 - And even the place of Saul’s death is called to suffer as a result of its role in diminishing the Lord’s anointed
 - David asks that the mountains of Gilboa see no rain nor should any fields of the mountain become offerings to the Lord
 - Because that’s where the shield of Saul was defiled by Gentile soldiers and Saul’s shield wasn’t anointed to save him
 - Notice even in that comment David acknowledges that the Lord ordained Saul’s death by not anointing his shield
- And then the lament shifts focus to include the man whose death certainly saddened David the most: Jonathan

- Jonathan is the closest thing David has ever had to a friend to this point in his life
 - David has other men who have stood by him in his conflict with Saul or who have fought with him
 - But Jonathan was the one man who David knew as a close confidant and friend
 - Every other man respected David because of his position as Israel's future king
- But Jonathan befriended David *despite* David's position as God's anointed
 - Jonathan valued David's friendship more than he coveted the throne, and he loved David as one believer loves another
 - His love was agape love, to use the New Testament term, a self-sacrificial love, and it impressed itself on David's heart
 - But now that his one true friend David is gone, David feels very much alone
- So in the lament, David connects the two men in death as they were in life
 - In v.22 David sings of the blood and courage of these men who faced death in battle without shrinking back
 - Jonathan's bow engaged the enemy and Saul's sword did not return empty having killed Philistines before he fell
- And then notice in v.23 David says both Jonathan and Saul were beloved and pleasant in life even as they remained united in death
 - This isn't simply the case of saying nice things about the dead...
 - David is sincerely honoring Saul's memory by noting his goodness along with Jonathan's
 - To understand how forgiving and loving David was, ask yourself could you be this generous in a eulogy for your worst enemy?
- Concluding the song, in vs.24-27, David asks the people of Israel to join him in lamenting Saul's passing
 - The daughters of Israel who enjoy fine clothing and jewelry should mourn Saul, because under his leadership Israel became wealthy
 - And that was true and it reminds us that even those we oppose may be used by God for good purposes
 - That reason alone is cause to restrain our tongues in criticism
 - And the lament ends with David expressing his feelings for Jonathan, the mighty friend slain in battle
 - David says he was distressed for his brother, Jonathan, who was very pleasant to him
 - The word for pleasant in Hebrew is often translated lovely but it can mean beloved or full of love
 - David was beloved by Jonathan, and for David, having a friendship like that was better to David than the love of women
 - David means that he found a deeper connection with Jonathan than he had

obtained even in his relationships with women

- Predictably, some today will make the perverse suggestion that David is expressing romantic homosexual love for Jonathan here
 - That's a crude and intentionally slanderous suggestion which has no basis in the context much less in the biblical record overall
- Any man who has established a close personal friendship with another man knows exactly what David is describing here
 - Romantic love is special and desirable, and nothing in life can equal the relationship a man has with his wife
 - But at the same time, no woman can offer a man the relationship that two men can establish in friendship (and vice versa)
- A special bond is formed that transcends other relationships, especially when two men have fought together in war, as these two had done
 - The relationship is not sexual in the least, yet it is a deep and abiding and hard-to-replace friendship
 - It's the kind of bond that will lead one man to give his life for his friend in battle
 - And in Jonathan's case, it led him to forfeit the kingdom of Israel so he could support the future reign of his friend, David
 - David was mourning the loss of that special friendship
- David's tribute to Saul demonstrates one of those attributes of God's own heart: limitless forgiveness for his enemies
 - Forgiving someone who has hurt us repeatedly and deeply is truly a God thing and not something that comes easily for anyone
 - Of all Old Testament characters, perhaps only Joseph equals David's capacity to forgive enemies who have hurt him
 - And David's ability to forgive served him well his whole life, especially when he declined the opportunity for revenge as king
 - Secondly, we see something here that drives David for the rest of this story
 - David starts his reign a lonely man without his friend Jonathan, and that loneliness is a driving force in David's life
 - The loss of Jonathan becomes a subtext to the whole story as we watch a man struggling to replace what he lost
 - Trying to find those he trusts, trying to find love, trying to trust God even
 - David's feeling of loneliness may have been the secret to his genius
 - I believe it allowed David, the leader and warrior, to become that much more dependent on God
 - And it inspired David, the poet and musician, to write some of the most inspiring Scripture in all the Bible
 - Perhaps the best known passage of the entire Bible was written by David: the 23rd psalm

- And if there was ever a psalm about how to respond to loneliness and fear in a godly way, that one is it
- And it's appropriate that the story of David's rise to king of Israel should begin with a poem set to music praising David's enemy
- It shows the man's talent and his heart after God

- With our introduction of 2 Samuel behind us, it's time to move into the heart of our story which begins with a period of tremendous blessing for Israel
 - After 40 years of rule under the “wrong” king, the nation now receives a king after God’s own heart and the turn around is dramatic
 - The Lord shows His pleasure in David’s rule by instigating a period of tremendous blessing and fertility within Israel
 - But not everyone is ready to embrace David as the new king, and quickly a division emerges in the wake of Saul’s death

2Sam. 2:1 Then it came about afterwards that David inquired of the LORD, saying, “Shall I go up to one of the cities of Judah?” And the LORD said to him, “Go up.” So David said, “Where shall I go up?” And He said, “To Hebron.”

2Sam. 2:2 So David went up there, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite.

2Sam. 2:3 And David brought up his men who were with him, each with his household; and they lived in the cities of Hebron.

2Sam. 2:4 Then the men of Judah came and there anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, “It was the men of Jabesh-gilead who buried Saul.”

2Sam. 2:5 David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said to them, “May you be blessed of the LORD because you have shown this kindness to Saul your lord, and have buried him.

2Sam. 2:6 “Now may the LORD show lovingkindness and truth to you; and I also will show this goodness to you, because you have done this thing.

2Sam. 2:7 “Now therefore, let your hands be strong and be valiant; for Saul your lord is dead, and also the house of Judah has anointed me king over them.”

- In order to understand what’s happening here, we need a short lesson on Israel’s history and geography
 - The nation of Israel settled in the land under Joshua according to tribe
 - They were first ruled by judges who each came from different tribes and ruled over a period of centuries
 - During that time there was no capital city and no temple...just a tent tabernacle that moved between Bethel and Shiloh
 - For that reason, the nation maintained a strong tribal identity though it was one people according to the Old Covenant
 - And naturally, the larger tribes tended to dominate the rest
 - Manasseh and Ephraim in the north and Judah in the south began to contend for power over the rest of the tribes
 - And that began a north-south division that gained strength in the time of the kings

- When the nation demanded a king, the Lord gave them what they demanded in Saul from the tribe of Benjamin
 - At least in one way, Saul was the perfect man to lead Israel as king because he came from a “neutral” tribe
 - Benjamin was one of the smaller tribes, so it didn’t upset the power balance between Ephraim/Manasseh and Judah
 - Secondly, it was located on the Jewish version of the “Mason-Dixon Line” dividing north from south
- Therefore, both the Northern and Southern tribes were willing to embrace a king from the tribe of Benjamin because neither felt threatened by him
 - Which made Saul the perfect man to unite the people...he even maintained his headquarters in Gibeon, in the land of Benjamin
 - But soon the north-south rivalry returned because of a couple of important events
 - The ark of the Lord was stored in the tabernacle at a place called Shiloh, which sat near the division of north and south
 - This meant all Jews traveled a similar distance to worship at the tabernacle as required by the Law
 - But early in Saul’s reign, the ark of the Lord was captured in battle by the Philistines when Saul unwisely took it into battle as protection
 - Later when it was returned, Saul had it moved from its previous place in Shiloh to Jabesh-gilead far to the north
 - This forced southern Jews to travel long distances to worship, and reignited the rivalry between north and south
 - The second trigger to renew the rivalry happened when Samuel anointed David as Saul’s successor, a man from the tribe of Judah
 - That cemented the north-south rivalry, because now the northern tribes worried about power shifting to the south
 - That rivalry will only grow during the fight for who succeeds Saul and it will come to a head after David’s son, Solomon dies
 - Ultimately, it leads to civil war and the eventual split of the nation into two nations called Israel and Judah
 - And you can see the seeds of that division reflected in the text even now in 2 Samuel 2 as the names Israel and Judah begin to be used
 - In v.9, the northern tribes are called “Israel” and in v.10 the southern region is called by the name of Judah
 - So as 2 Samuel begins, we see the earliest signs that the nation is straining to remain one people
 - And we’ll see that struggle reflected in the circumstances and places mentioned in this chapter
- Turning to the text now, in v.1 David asks the Lord if he shall go to Judah?

- Remember, David has been hiding from Saul by living in Ziklag, a town of Israel's enemies, the Philistines, outside the land of Judah
 - David believes he must return to Israel now, but as obvious as that conclusion might have been, David still asks the Lord
 - Specifically, David has the high priest with him, and the Urim and Thummim stones that reveal the will of the Lord
 - So David could ask the Lord specific questions of the Lord and gain specific responses
- Nevertheless, you see the growth of this man during his decade of running from Saul merely in the fact that he did ask
 - Having the ability to hear from God and receive His counsel is not unique nor is it a mark of spiritual maturity
 - Every believer has the opportunity to approach the throne of God boldly and seek the Lord in prayer
 - And every believer is promised a response from the Lord in some form or fashion, according to 1 John
- The mark of spiritual maturity is making the effort to take advantage of that opportunity before making a decision so that the Lord guides us
 - David's maturity is seen in the way he didn't act until he heard from the Lord even in cases where the answer seemed clear
 - And perhaps that quality more than anything else made David a good leader... because he stayed in the will of God
- The Lord tells David, yes, go up to Judah and to Hebron, which sat on the highest point in the land of Judah in the Judean hill country
 - A high place was a significant strategic advantage in warfare, so it made sense for David and his men to make their camp there
 - So David departs with his men and notably with his two wives
 - And the mention of David having multiple wives reminds us that David is not perfect
 - In fact, the juxtaposition of v.1 and v.2 seem designed to balance one another
 - On the one hand, David is a man who seeks God's will in matters of governance, warfare and politics
 - And for that reason, David is a good king and inspiring leader
 - But on the other hand, David always had woman problems, beginning with taking multiple wives
 - The Bible teaches that marriage is a relationship between a man and a woman
 - And in the case of Israel's kings, the Bible is explicitly clear that taking multiple wives is sin

Deut. 17:14 “When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, and you

possess it and live in it, and you say, ‘I will set a king over me like all the nations who are around me,’

Deut. 17:15 you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses, one from among your countrymen you shall set as king over yourselves; you may not put a foreigner over yourselves who is not your countryman.

Deut. 17:16 “Moreover, he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor shall he cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, since the LORD has said to you, ‘You shall never again return that way.’

Deut. 17:17 “He shall not multiply wives for himself, or else his heart will turn away; nor shall he greatly increase silver and gold for himself.

- So while multiple marriages is possible simply in the sense it is possible to establish more than one marriage at a time, they are acts of adultery
 - And as such, they are contrary to God’s plan, especially in David’s case since the Law prohibited it for Israel’s kings
 - Which means as David took additional wives, he did so without asking God’s counsel
 - For if he had asked God, the Lord would have directed David back to His law and away from that decision
- This is a pattern I mentioned in our first lesson, where David shows so much insight and obedience to God...except in the area of women
 - And of course, the worst comes later when he engages in murder and adultery over a woman who catches his eye
 - But as I also said, this issue is connected to a larger problem for David...he has no close confidant or friend
 - So he is perpetually lonely and under attack, and so he searches for earthly companionship without finding satisfaction
- Back to the text, in v.4 after David arrives, the men of Judah come to anoint David as king in keeping with Samuel’s anointing many years earlier
 - But notice, it’s the men of Judah alone who come to David, which means that for now David is only king of that tribe
 - No other tribe sends representatives to acknowledge David’s reign as king
 - And their conspicuous absence tells of the conflict underway
 - These men of Judah inform David that the men of Jabesh-gilead were the ones who traveled to Bet She’mesh to retrieve Saul’s body
 - Jabesh-gilead sits in tribal territory of Gad east of the Jordan river and it held the ark of the Lord
 - These people gave Saul and his sons a proper burial allowing the king to rest in dignity and it showed their allegiance with Saul
 - So as David hears this news, he sees an opportunity to build a bridge with the northern tribes and perhaps unite the nation under his rule

- So David sent messengers to these men thanking them for their kindness to Saul and asking that the Lord bless them as well
- And then David says he, too, will show them kindness for this gesture because the men of Judah have anointed David king
- David's purpose is clear...he's extending an olive branch to the north while he assumes the posture of a king promising protection
 - He hopes the men in the north might see David's coronation as a fete accompli and fall in line to stay on his good side
 - But unfortunately, there are forces in the north already working against David to prevent him from taking rule of Israel

2Sam. 2:8 But Abner the son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, had taken Ish-bosheth the son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim.

2Sam. 2:9 He made him king over Gilead, over the Ashurites, over Jezreel, over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, even over all Israel.

2Sam. 2:10 Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, was forty years old when he became king over Israel, and he was king for two years. The house of Judah, however, followed David.

2Sam. 2:11 The time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

- Enter new characters in our story...beginning with Abner, the commander of Saul's army, who takes another character, Ish-bosheth to Mahanaim
 - Abner was first introduced in 1 Samuel 14, where we learn he's the son of Saul's uncle, Ner, making Abner a cousin of Saul
 - Moreover, Abner was a rival of David since Saul made David the leader of men in battle yet Abner was the army's senior leader
 - So clearly, Abner has a strong personal interest in seeing Saul's family retain control of the throne
 - Abner worries about his future should David take charge, so now that Saul is gone, he moves quickly to fill the vacuum
 - Abner installs a puppet leader who he can control, which will secure Abner's position over the army
 - Abner goes to the man he believes to be the last living son of Saul, a man named Ish-bosheth and anoints him king
 - The name Ish-bosheth was probably not the man's given name
 - According to 1 Chronicles 8, the man was probably named Eshbaal, which means "Man of the Lord"
 - But in 2 Samuel 2-4 he's called Ish-bosheth which means "man of shame"
 - And that suggests that he is not a man of strong moral courage or character, which may explain why he wasn't in the battle

- He may have survived because he was too cowardly to fight or he ran away, and now he's a pawn in this power struggle
 - Abner brings this man of shame to Mahanaim to anoint him king over numerous regions
 - The list starts with their present location in Gilead but it includes a wide region
 - It extends to the extreme northern tribe of Asher, the Jezreel valley, Ephraim, Benjamin and all of "Israel"
- In summary, Abner makes Ish-bosheth king over the northern tribes while David has been made king over Judah
 - In effect, this is tantamount to the dividing of the tribes into two nations of Israel in the north and Judah in the south
 - And this split continues for some time with Ish-bosheth beginning a reign over the north at age 40
 - And his reign as king lasted two years while David's reign over Judah lasted seven and a half years
 - The difference in these two periods of time reflects that David ruled Judah from the moment of Saul's death
 - But Ish-bosheth wasn't able to consolidate his power over the north for the better part of five years
 - Abner was only able to bring all the northern tribes under his power for the final two and a half years of this period
 - Nevertheless, there was constant tension during that time with both sides looking for a way to consolidate power over all 12 tribes
 - And on one occasion the conflict was especially brutal

2Sam. 2:12 Now Abner the son of Ner, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon with the servants of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul.

2Sam. 2:13 And Joab the son of Zeruiah and the servants of David went out and met them by the pool of Gibeon; and they sat down, one on the one side of the pool and the other on the other side of the pool.

2Sam. 2:14 Then Abner said to Joab, "Now let the young men arise and hold a contest before us." And Joab said, "Let them arise."

2Sam. 2:15 So they arose and went over by count, twelve for Benjamin and Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David.

2Sam. 2:16 Each one of them seized his opponent by the head and thrust his sword in his opponent's side; so they fell down together. Therefore that place was called Helkath-hazzurim, which is in Gibeon.

2Sam. 2:17 That day the battle was very severe, and Abner and the men of Israel were beaten before the servants of David.

- This meeting was an attempt at brokering a peace between the two sides

- The king of the north has traveled from Mahanaim down to Gibeon which is just north of the border of Judah
 - They sit separated by a great pool, which provided some protection against an ambush
 - This pool has been excavated and is visible today in Israel
 - It was a silo or cistern built partly above ground and partly underground
 - It was huge, about 37 feet across and 35 feet above ground and forty-five feet underground
- Before they get very far in the peace talks, Abner suggests that they settle the conflict with a test of honor and strength
 - His idea was to pit the men against each other in a contest to the death, as a way of predicting who would win in a battle
 - The one who wins this contest would claim to rule all tribes
- So they select twelve men from the delegations of the north and the south, one man representing each tribe of Israel
 - And each pair engage in hand-to-hand combat to the death
 - After the 12 engagements, the side that won the most would claim victory
- But after 12 rounds, each round has been a draw with both men killing their opponent, which was an unexpected outcome
 - After both sides watch all the men die in this contest, passions are running high and tension boils over
 - And so after the contest ends with no winner, it turns into a battle between the two delegations
- In the ensuing combat, David's forces led by Joab get the upper hand and begin to chase Abner and his forces

2Sam. 2:18 Now the three sons of Zeruiah were there, Joab and Abishai and Asahel; and Asahel was as swift-footed as one of the gazelles which is in the field.

2Sam. 2:19 Asahel pursued Abner and did not turn to the right or to the left from following Abner.

2Sam. 2:20 Then Abner looked behind him and said, "Is that you, Asahel?" And he answered, "It is I."

2Sam. 2:21 So Abner said to him, "Turn to your right or to your left, and take hold of one of the young men for yourself, and take for yourself his spoil." But Asahel was not willing to turn aside from following him.

2Sam. 2:22 Abner repeated 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?"

2Sam. 2:23 However, he refused to turn aside; therefore Abner struck him in the

belly with the butt end of the spear, so that the spear came out at his back. And he fell there and died on the spot. And it came about that all who came to the place where Asahel had fallen and died, stood still.

- The delegation David sent consisted of three sons from the same family, Joab, Abishai, and Asahel
 - When Abner began to run away, one of these brothers, Asahel, took off in pursuit
 - Jewish folklore says that Asahel could outrun a horse, but he wasn't a particularly skilled warrior
- So as he was catching up to Abner, Abner tells the young man to find someone else to fight, someone he could actually defeat
 - Abner seems to be a little worried but he also seems to be telling the truth
 - He warns Asahel two times to turn left or right, meaning to pick a different target rather than attack Abner
- And when Asahel refuses to stop chasing Abner, the commander decided to stop Asahel by using the butt end of his spear
 - Abner's choice to use the blunt end of his spear may have been intended to avoid killing Asahel or perhaps it was just cruelty
 - Either way, the boy was running so fast that he literally impaled himself on the wood of Abner's spear and died
 - The rest of David's men went to where Asahel died and when they found him, they stood still meaning they stopped the pursuit
- But Asahel's brothers continued the pursuit of Abner

2Sam. 2:24 But Joab and Abishai pursued Abner, and when the sun was going down, they came to the hill of Ammah, which is in front of Giah by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon.

2Sam. 2:25 The sons of Benjamin gathered together behind Abner and became one band, and they stood on the top of a certain hill.

2Sam. 2:26 Then Abner called to Joab and said, "Shall the sword devour forever? Do you not know that it will be bitter in the end? How long will you refrain from telling the people to turn back from following their brothers?"

2Sam. 2:27 Joab said, "As God lives, if you had not spoken, surely then the people would have gone away in the morning, each from following his brother."

2Sam. 2:28 So Joab blew the trumpet; and all the people halted and pursued Israel no longer, nor did they continue to fight anymore.

2Sam. 2:29 Abner and his men then went through the Arabah all that night; so they crossed the Jordan, walked all morning, and came to Mahanaim.

2Sam. 2:30 Then Joab returned from following Abner; when he had gathered all the people together, nineteen of David's servants besides Asahel were missing.

2Sam. 2:31 But the servants of David had struck down many of Benjamin and Abner's men, so that three hundred and sixty men died.

2Sam. 2:32 And they took up Asahel and buried him in his father's tomb which was in Bethlehem. Then Joab and his men went all night until the day dawned at Hebron.

- By the end of the day, Joab and Abishai have pursued Abner north into the desert mountain wilderness of Gibeon which was in the territory of Benjamin
 - And in that area, the men of Benjamin rally to defend Abner, since Benjamin was part of the northern territory of Israel
 - They finally stage a defense atop a hill which gave them a tactical advantage over their pursuers
 - And from the position, Abner sees an opportunity to stop the fight by calling for a truce
 - Abner says further fighting will only create more loss and bitterness and he asks how much longer will Judah hold out in supporting Ish-bosheth?
 - Joab correctly responds that Abner began the current round of fighting when he proposed a contest to the death
 - Nevertheless, Joab realizes he can't defeat Abner under the current circumstances, so he retreats
 - Abner and his men move through the night until they crossed the Jordan and came to Mahanaim after walking all morning
 - After this encounter, David's delegation lost a total of 20 men while Abner lost 360 men
 - Joab took Asahel and buried him in Bethlehem and walked a full night to reach David in Hebron
 - And thus ended an attempt to reconcile the two sides, which only proved how irreconcilable they were
 - But this severe loss for Abner's forces begins the unraveling of Ish-bosheth's rule over the north and ultimately leads to Abner's death
 - So in effect, this terrible loss for both sides, but especially the north, becomes useful in God's hands to bring David to power
 - It began a period of open hostility between the north and south that allowed David's superior military might to win out
- And that conflict takes us to Chapter 3

2Sam. 3:1 Now there was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David; and David grew steadily stronger, but the house of Saul grew weaker continually.

2Sam. 3:2 Sons were born to David at Hebron: his firstborn was Amnon, by

Ahinoam the Jezreelitess;

2Sam. 3:3 and his second, Chileab, by Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third, Absalom the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur;

2Sam. 3:4 and the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital;

2Sam. 3:5 and the sixth, Ithream, by David's wife Eglah. These were born to David at Hebron.

- The conflict instigated by Abner's ill-advised combat contest turns into a long war between north and south, and every battle strengthens David's side
 - The house of Saul, a reference to Abner and Ish-bosheth, grows weaker as they lose men and materials and ground
 - Meanwhile David and his family live in Hebron and his family is growing
 - His first son is Amnon, born to his wife Ahinoam, who was a woman from the region of the Jezreel Valley in Israel
 - A second son Chileab is born to Abigail, and a third son, Absalom, is born to a third wife Maacah
 - A fourth son born to another wife and a fifth and sixth son each born to additional wives
 - David is collecting wives and sons annually in the years he's been waiting to be king over all Israel
 - Altogether the Scripture names at least 8 wives of David and says he had other wives and concubines unnamed as well
 - Most of these additional marriages were made to establish political alliances to shore up his power in the land
 - As we said before, these additional wives were evidence of a sinful pattern on David's part, since they were acts contrary to the Law
 - Moreover, the Lord specifically outlawed marrying for political advantage in Deuteronomy 7:3
 - So David is doing the wrong thing for the wrong reasons, rather than seeking the Lord's counsel and support
 - Nevertheless the Lord blesses David with sons from these marriages
 - The consequences of his sin eventually comes to bear upon David's life in other ways
 - But in the meantime, as He did with Jacob, the Lord extends David kindness in the form of many sons and daughters
 - Which reminds us that God's grace doesn't wait for our obedience
 - And as strange as that may sound, God blesses apart from our obedience to Him, at least in this life

- Remember God's grace can't be earned, because grace is unmerited favor
 - We are not blessed by God's grace because we deserve it...we're blessed by God's grace because we don't deserve it
 - So His blessing must be independent of our good behavior nor can it be lost by bad behavior, or else it wouldn't be grace
 - David was blessed with fertility and many sons, because it was part of how God blessed and supported the man He has chosen
- And that's the point of the story in this section...as David patiently awaits the day the Lord makes him king of all Israel, he is being blessed
 - And that same blessing will be extended to all Israel once all Israel embraces David as king
 - And in that way, we see already a connection between David and Jesus
 - As I mentioned in my introduction to this book, David is a well-known picture of Jesus in Scripture
 - Obviously, when someone is a picture of Jesus, that picture will, by necessity, be limited and incomplete
 - Every person apart from Christ has sin, so we can't compare to our Lord in every way
 - But in some aspects of a person's life, the Lord may direct events and circumstances to create a connection to teach us
 - And the Lord produces many such connections between David and Jesus, including this moment as David is producing sons while waiting
 - The Bible says that the Lord is waiting for His people Israel to receive Him as king over all Israel
 - They rejected Him when Jesus came to them the first time, and Jesus told them He will not return until all Israel receives Him
 - Just as David has offered himself to all Israel but most have rejected him for now, so he too awaits their acceptance
 - But in the meantime, David has many sons (and daughters) proving that God is prepared to make David's reign fruitful even as he awaits
 - And likewise, the Lord is bringing many sons and daughters to glory, the writer of Hebrews says
 - And Paul says this

Gal. 3:26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

Gal. 3:27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

Gal. 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

- So David pictures the way our Lord works to produce a family for His future kingdom as He awaits Israel's acceptance
 - And then in a future day we can all walk into the Kingdom on the same day to reign and live together
 - That's David's perspective...he's building his court even as he waits for the day he will rule his country
 - And the Lord's blessing of David suggests that the nation as a whole is to be blessed when they accept their king
 - And that too is a picture, since we know that when Israel finally receives their Lord, they will come into great blessing also

Rom. 11:11 I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.

Rom. 11:12 Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be!

- Israel's rejection of Jesus became opportunity for the Lord to bless the rest of the Gentile world
 - And so Paul asks, if Israel rejecting Jesus can lead to good things, then how much better things will result from their acceptance?
 - The good thing that results is Israel and all the world entering into the Kingdom, which is a very, very good thing
- And then comes the political shift that opens the door for David

2Sam. 3:6 It came about while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David that Abner was making himself strong in the house of Saul.

2Sam. 3:7 Now Saul had a concubine whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah; and Ish-bosheth said to Abner, "Why have you gone in to my father's concubine?"

2Sam. 3:8 Then Abner was very angry over the words of Ish-bosheth and said, "Am I a dog's head that belongs to Judah? Today I show kindness to the house of Saul your father, to his brothers and to his friends, and have not delivered you into the hands of David; and yet today you charge me with a guilt concerning the woman.

2Sam. 3:9 "May God do so to Abner, and more also, if as the LORD has sworn to David, I do not accomplish this for him,

2Sam. 3:10 to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and to establish the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beersheba."

2Sam. 3:11 And he could no longer answer Abner a word, because he was afraid of him.

- As the war between the north and south rages, Abner decides to strengthen his position within the house of Saul
 - Remember, Abner is the true power in the north, and Ish-bosheth, the man of shame, is merely a figurehead selected because he is Saul's son
 - Abner has allowed this man to have the title and rewards of power while he runs the country and makes the decisions
 - And at some point, Abner decides he needs an insurance policy against the chance that Ish-bosheth decides to push him out
 - In v.6 Abner seeks to make himself strong in the house of Saul, which refers to Abner having sexual relations with a royal concubine
 - Concubines were a type of wife taken by powerful men to help ensure an heir
 - They were slave wives who did not enjoy the freedom or privileges of true wives but had sexual relations with the king
 - They are baby-making machines, in a sense, so that the king would be assured of enough sons to continue his dynasty
 - So one day Abner decides to take one of Saul's concubines to produce his own heir, presumably so that he might one day contend for the throne
 - If he can produce a son from one of Saul's wives, then he might have a way to maneuver that son to the throne
 - And if that happens, Abner becomes even more powerful over the army and the nation
 - But the concubines of the dead king are inherited by the new king like any other property
 - So Abner was showing disloyalty to Ish-bosheth by taking the concubine in this way
 - So Abner's move is clearly a challenge to the king's right and authority
- When Ish-bosheth learns of Abner's act of betrayal, he confronts Abner over it in v.7 asking why Abner made this move?
 - The fact that Ish-bosheth challenges Abner rather than simply ordering his death is evidence of Ish-bosheth's weakness
 - And yet at the same time, Abner knows the game is up and his plot against Ish-bosheth's reign has been exposed
 - So at the very least, his influence over Ish-bosheth will be greatly reduced and any son born of that concubine will not live long
 - And at worst, Abner will always be looking over his shoulder waiting for Ish-bosheth to kill him
 - So caught red-handed, Abner makes a calculated decision to display indignation and claim to be the one insulted and mistreated
 - He doesn't deny the charges, but instead points to his efforts to support Ish-bosheth against David as proof of his loyalty

- Of course, they were nothing of the sort...he was simply acting in his own interests
 - And if anything, Abner had greatly *weakened* Ish-bosheth's position by losing battle after battle
- But Abner knows he must put this pretender king in his place or else Ish-bosheth might think he has the power to contend with Abner
 - So Abner asks if he's become a dog's head for Judah?
 - The term dog's head could be euphemism for a male prostitute
 - So Abner is saying he's being accused of being a prostitute for Judah sent to bed the concubine
- Of course, his indignation is entirely an act to protect himself from the truth, but his anger has the intended effect on the king
 - As Abner protests, he promises that in retaliation for the king's insult, he will ensure David will be installed as king over all Israel
 - Perhaps Abner saw the writing on the wall and realized David's victories on the battlefield meant it was only a matter of time
- So he uses this encounter as an excuse to shift his loyalties to David, and yet the man doesn't even bother to run away from Ish-bosheth
 - Ish-bosheth is so weak and scared of Abner that the king does nothing to counter Abner in the moment
 - And Abner clearly knew that the man was no threat to him
- So soon after Abner makes good on his promise by reaching out to David secretly to deliver the north into David's hands

2Sam. 3:12 Then Abner sent messengers to David in his place, saying, "Whose is the land? Make your covenant with me, and behold, my hand shall be with you to bring all Israel over to you."

2Sam. 3:13 He said, "Good! I will make a covenant with you, but I demand one thing of you, namely, you shall not see my face unless you first bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come to see me."

2Sam. 3:14 So David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, saying, "Give me my wife Michal, to whom I was betrothed for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines."

2Sam. 3:15 Ish-bosheth sent and took her from her husband, from Paltiel the son of Laish.

2Sam. 3:16 But her husband went with her, weeping as he went, and followed her as far as Bahurim. Then Abner said to him, "Go, return." So he returned.

- Abner sends messengers to David and says Israel is your land, so let's make a covenant and I'll make sure you receive it all

- The deal is essentially that David promises to protect Abner's life and position in return for Abner helping him defeat Ish-Bosheth
 - David leaps at the chance to gain the upper hand and put the seven year conflict to rest
 - But shrewdly, David puts forth a condition that would test Abner's sincerity and cement his control over the north
- David says he wants the wife he was given by Saul at an earlier time
 - Micah was one of Saul's daughters, who loved David truly and who David desired as well
 - Saul promised Micah to David as a wife if David delivered 100 Philistine foreskins to Saul
- David hit the goal and received Micah as wife, but later when Saul began chasing David, he was forced to leave Micah behind
 - She helps David escape without her as a sacrificial act, only to have her father Saul force her to marry another man later
 - Ever since, they have been apart and David has missed Micah
- So now he demands that she be sent to him, which will not only prove Abner's loyalty but also allow David to build an alliance with the north
 - By re-establishing his marriage to Saul's daughter, David can appease the north and lay claim to Saul's throne in their minds
 - So Abner agrees to the terms readily, proving that he truly was the power in the north
- We don't know how Abner worked to ensure this would happen, but we see David sending messengers to Ish-bosheth who agrees to the request
 - So clearly somehow Abner has made sure that the king said yes when the request came
 - And if Abner can arrange for this transaction to take place, then David knows that Abner can make anything happen in the court
 - So through this arrangement, David has proof that Abner is capable of delivering on his word
 - Meanwhile, we see Micah's situation and it's surprising...her new husband seems to genuinely care for his wife
 - He's distraught at seeing her taken from him and he follows her all the way to the border with Judah
 - He literally accompanies her as far as he can walk without entering enemy territory and he cries the whole way
 - Obviously, in the 17 years or so that these two have been married, the husband has formed a genuine bond with the woman and loves her
 - So David's request is hurting this man deeply, and yet David's interest in Micah at this point seems political, not romantic

- It's a cold-hearted move on David's part, and it's foreshadowing what David will do in even worse ways to another man
- Notice that we don't see David inquiring of the Lord on this move, and in fact, David is violating another law by bringing Micah back to himself
 - The Law says that a broken marriage cannot be restored if another marriage has taken place in the meantime

Deut. 24:1 “When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out from his house,

Deut. 24:2 and she leaves his house and goes and becomes another man's wife,

Deut. 24:3 and if the latter husband turns against her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her to be his wife,

Deut. 24:4 then her former husband who sent her away is not allowed to take her again to be his wife, since she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance.

- Once Micah married Paltiel, she could no longer go back to David as his wife, or else he commits adultery on Paltiel
 - And for that matter, once David took a new wife, he couldn't take Micah for the same reason
- But this is a central weakness in David's life, taking women when he wanted for any reason, and his conversations with God go conspicuously silent at this time
 - He acts in his flesh and though God will often bless the outcome to suit God's own purposes, there are consequences later
 - I think it's safe to say every believer has at least one area of weakness where we tend to act without seeking God's counsel
 - It's our secret (or not so secret) sin and it's where we go time and time again
 - Each time we find ourselves in that place, we know we should be there, and yet we let our flesh draw us in again
 - Like David, it might be the one thing that stands in contrast to our otherwise strong life of obedience
 - Or maybe it's the tip of an iceberg of sin, but either way, it's where we need to start in our fight against the flesh
 - Whatever is our central weakness is also our first opportunity
 - How much different would David's story be if he had taken his weakness with women to the Lord early in his life?
 - How many pains and sorrows might David avoided?

- And if you don't know his life story well, don't worry we will see it all play out in this study
- But even now we see David sowing the seeds of trouble, and even though God's grace continued, that doesn't stop sin's consequences
 - That's the place we end tonight...recognizing that David still received God's grace and blessing though he made mistakes
 - But those mistakes brought their own misery and God often allows those consequences to come so that we might learn
- That's David's story...incredible blessing because of the grace of God
 - And troubling consequences as a result of his own missteps
 - But the effect of great grace and great consequences in David's life was to make him a great man

- Let's jump right back into the intrigue as Abner, the commander of Ish-bosheth's army in the north, has decided to throw his support behind David in the south
 - He took the bold step of having one of the king's concubines for himself, and when Ish-bosheth found out, he confronted Abner
 - Abner responded indignantly and defensively, and he succeeded in intimidating Ish-bosheth into silence
 - But Abner knows his position advising the king is in jeopardy so Abner sends word to David that he's ready to switch sides
 - Abner says he will throw his support behind David and promises to deliver the loyalty of the northern tribes to David
 - David responds cautiously by asking Abner to prove himself first
 - David demands that Abner send David's first wife, Michal (*incorrectly stated in the audio as Abigail*), back to him as proof he has authority and influence in the north
 - Abner agrees and sends Michal back, so now it's time for Abner to make good on his promise to deliver the north to David
- That leads us to v.17 as Abner visits the elders of the northern tribes of Israel

2Sam. 3:17 Now Abner had consultation with the elders of Israel, saying, "In times past you were seeking for David to be king over you.

2Sam. 3:18 "Now then, do it! For the LORD has spoken of 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.'"

2Sam. 3:19 Abner also spoke in the hearing of Benjamin; and in addition Abner went to speak in the hearing of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel and to the whole house of Benjamin.

2Sam. 3:20 Then Abner and twenty men with him came to David at Hebron. And David made a feast for Abner and the men who were with him.

2Sam. 3:21 Abner said to David, "Let me arise and go and gather all Israel to my lord the king, that they may make a covenant with you, and that you may be king over all that your soul desires." So David sent Abner away, and he went in peace.

- Abner approached the elders of Israel, likely without Ish-bosheth knowing, to convince them to give their allegiance to David
 - Abner's primary argument was two-fold
 - First, Abner reminds them David was their first choice
 - Apparently, the northern tribes had been inclined to follow David rather than Ish-bosheth in the first place
 - And this makes some sense, because David was a hero in Israel

- David dominated Israel's chief enemy, the Philistines, and in the process he had earned the respect of the people
 - Moreover, everyone knew that the reverend prophet, Samuel, had anointed David to be Saul's successor
 - So when Saul died, many if not all the tribes in the north were prepared to throw their support behind David...until Abner intervened
 - And that makes this meeting especially ironic, because now it's Abner seeking to win them back to David
 - So Abner is working to undo what he previously worked to achieve
 - Secondly, Abner reminds them that David was God's anointed warrior to defeat the Philistines, after Saul failed in that regard
 - Abner was saying the way to defeating Israel's chief enemy was to support the one man who could beat them
 - And this comment leads Abner to now turn his attention specifically to the tribe of Benjamin
 - Notice in v.19 he addresses the elders of Benjamin because Saul was a Benjamite as was Ish-bosheth
 - So it was especially important to win them over
- The diplomacy works and the elders agree it's better to support David at this point than Ish-bosheth, and it's not a hard call
 - Remember, in v.1 we were told that the house of David was growing steadily while the house of Ish-bosheth was weakening
 - These men are nothing if not pragmatic
 - They do not want to back the losing side, and now that it seems clear David will prevail, they decide it's better late than never
 - So they are simply making a decision of self-preservation to support the winner while they still have time
 - Finally, the elders send a delegation to David under Abner's leadership to strike covenant with David
 - A covenant is always a life-long commitment which is punishable by death if broken
 - It is formally established with a blood sacrifice, and since an animal is killed in the process, it leads to a feast as well
 - So in v.20 we see the men sitting down with David to eat as part of the covenant ceremony promising David is their king
- And at the conclusion of the meal, David sends Abner away in peace, which is an important phrase
 - It means that David has now entered into a covenant with Abner obligating David to protect Abner in exchange for Abner's loyalty
 - Effectively, David has now promised that he will not harm the commander of his

enemy's army

- This is one of many head-scratching moments for those around David
- Who pledges to protect the leader of his enemy's military forces?
- And that's exactly what the leader of David's military forces asks when he finds out what David has done

2Sam. 3:22 And behold, the servants of David and Joab came from a raid and brought much spoil with them; but Abner was not with David in Hebron, for he had sent him away, and he had gone in peace.

2Sam. 3:23 When Joab and all the army that was with him arrived, they told Joab, saying, "Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he has sent him away, and he has gone in peace."

2Sam. 3:24 Then Joab came to the king and said, "What have you done? Behold, Abner came to you; why then have you sent him away and he is already gone?"

2Sam. 3:25 "You know Abner the son of Ner, that he came to deceive you and to learn of your going out and coming in and to find out all that you are doing."

- Joab is a chief commander of David's forces in the south, and we were first introduced to Joab in Chapter 2 at the pool of Gibeon
 - Joab was one of three brothers who joined together in battling Abner after a failed peace negotiation
 - In the course of that battle, Abner killed Asahel, Joab's brother, so naturally Joab wants his revenge on Abner
- But after returning from a raid of Amalekites bringing much spoil, Joab learns that Abner had just been in the camp with David
 - Joab is frustrated that he missed his chance to kill Abner
 - More than that, he learns that David entered into a covenant of peace with Abner, which makes him even angrier
- So Joab approaches David declaring that he has entered into the covenant by mistake and that Abner is just deceiving David
 - Abner was simply spying on David and his forces to learn his movements and strength of forces, Joab argues
 - And it's hard to tell if this is Joab's true concern or if he's simply making a case for killing Abner despite the covenant
 - Besides his anger at Abner for killing Asahel, Joab might also have been concerned about losing his job to Abner
 - Abner was likely expecting to be rewarded for brokering the peace with the position of commander of the army
 - That would have threatened Joab's job security
 - So Joab decides to take matters into his own hands

2Sam. 3:26 When Joab came out from David, he sent messengers after Abner, and they brought him back from the well of Sirah; but David did not know it.

2Sam. 3:27 So when Abner returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside into the middle of the gate to speak with him privately, and there he struck him in the belly so that he died on account of the blood of Asahel his brother.

- Joab sends messengers to Abner asking him to return, so Abner comes back thinking that the king has sent for him
- As he reaches Hebron, Abner is met by Joab at the gate of the city, where Joab stabs Abner fatally
- This is Joab's revenge for killing his brother, but in the process Joab has placed the southern kingdom and David's rule at great risk
 - David had entered into a covenant of peace with Abner, and now David's commander had killed Abner in violation of the covenant
 - Not only might David be accused of violating his oath to Abner but also of breaking his peace accord with the northern tribes
 - David's chance to be king of Israel is now suddenly in jeopardy because of the selfish actions of his commander
- The conflict between David and Joab illustrates the challenge David faces in governing the Israel he will inherit
 - Historically, this is an Israel that did what was right in its own eyes, going back to the days of Judges and ever before that under Moses
 - This nation is stiff-necked, rebellious, prone to wandering and generally unwilling to obey the Lord's commandments
 - They came out of Egypt worshipping idols and once in the land they came under the influence of Canaanite idolatry
 - So naturally when someone kills a man's brother, the only response the people understand is revenge killing
 - So clearly the people's ways are not God's ways, which means they also struggle to understand David, a man after God's own heart
 - David continually does the thing that the people wouldn't do, as in this case where David makes peace with his enemy
 - Of course, this is one of the primary ways King David pictures Jesus as King, as Jesus makes peace with His enemies too
 - Jesus forgives those who hate God, and He does so purely as an act of His grace
 - But Joab was like the people and not like God, so he couldn't understand David's ways nor was he willing to let David's decision stand
 - So now it's time to see how David responds to this egregious affront to David's power and authority
 - And once again, David does the unexpected

2Sam. 3:28 Afterward when David heard it, he said, “I and my kingdom are innocent before the LORD forever of the blood of Abner the son of Ner.

2Sam. 3:29 “May it fall on the head of Joab and on all his father’s house; and may there not fail from the house of Joab one who has a discharge, or who is a leper, or who takes hold of a distaff, or who falls by the sword, or who lacks bread.”

2Sam. 3:30 So Joab and Abishai his brother killed Abner because he had put their brother Asahel to death in the battle at Gibeon.

- And once again, David does the unexpected by not retaliating against Joab in the way most would have expected
 - First, David distances himself from Joab’s actions, and this was an absolute necessity
 - David must make clear to the northern tribes and even to his own tribe that he would not go back on his word to Abner
 - And to do that David issues a punishment for Joab but it isn’t the expected response
 - Typically, a king in David’s position would simply have taken Joab’s head and been done with it
 - And in fact, David’s son, Solomon, eventually does kill Joab after David dies in revenge for Joab’s actions
 - But David doesn’t take that route and instead allows Joab to live
 - Instead, David asks the Lord to bring Joab’s family to ruin through one calamity or another
 - Either they will die violently, live in poverty, suffer a chronic disease like leprosy, or they will take hold of a distaff
 - A distaff is a spindle for weaving cloth, which implies the work of a widows or a man in slavery
 - It’s a harsh curse that means the eventual wasting away of Jaob’s family tree
 - David apparently decided to indict the whole family because in v.30 we’re told Joab’s brother also conspired in Abner’s death
 - The brothers acted against the king’s authority so the entire family would pay a severe price
- In fact, David’s curse on Joab’s family is a much more devastating punishment than simply killing Joab outright would have been
 - And it’s also more purposeful because it creates a lasting testimony and witness
 - For as long as Joab’s family is around, people in Israel will be able to look at their circumstances and remember Joab’s sin
 - And by that testimony, Joab’s folly is remembered, David’s righteousness is acknowledged and the Lord’s power is seen
 - David is confident that the Lord can deal out justice in a better way, and here again

we see David acting after God's heart

- Because this is the way the Lord deals out revenge against His enemies
- It's how the Lord turns something evil into good for His purposes in Israel while holding the guilt under punishment
- This is what Paul means when he tells us to leave room for the wrath of God when confronting our enemies or adversaries
 - Appeal to the Lord for protection and let Him decide how it should be handed out and when
 - It's better for three reasons...first, we remain innocent having not sinned through retribution of one kind or another
 - Secondly, the Lord's style of punishment is always better than ours since He has far more options at His disposal
 - Thirdly, the Lord can turn the situation to good in ways we can't, perhaps even leading the person to repent and reconcile
- This principle lies at the heart of the Christian call to forgive our enemies
 - We don't take revenge because we are supposed to leave room for God to use our circumstances to further the Gospel
 - Every moment of our lives is supposed to be a Gospel advancing moment, including moments of conflict
 - We rob God of those moments when we take our own revenge
- David's willingness to leave revenge to the Lord was an example of David having a heart after God's own heart
 - But it confused and frustrated others around him who didn't know the Lord or understand the Lord's heart
 - So men like Joab couldn't understand David when he extended mercy to men like Abner
 - But ironically, that same heart of mercy came to Joab's aid in a moment like this as David allowed him to live
- So by the curse, David makes clear this was entirely Joab's family's doing, but to make sure everyone knew this was true, David conducts an elaborate funeral

2Sam. 3:31 Then David said to Joab and to all the people who were with him, "Tear your clothes and gird on sackcloth and lament before Abner." And King David walked behind the bier.

2Sam. 3:32 Thus they buried Abner in Hebron; and the king lifted up his voice and wept at the grave of Abner, and all the people wept.

2Sam. 3:33 The king chanted a lament for Abner and said, "Should Abner die as a fool dies?"

2Sam. 3:34 "Your hands were not bound, nor your feet put in fetters; As one falls before the wicked, you have fallen."

And all the people wept again over him.

2Sam. 3:35 Then all the people came to persuade David to eat bread while it was still day; but David vowed, saying, “May God do so to me, and more also, if I taste bread or anything else before the sun goes down.”

2Sam. 3:36 Now all the people took note of it, and it pleased them, just as everything the king did pleased all the people.

2Sam. 3:37 So all the people and all Israel understood that day that it had not been the will of the king to put Abner the son of Ner to death.

2Sam. 3:38 Then the king said to his servants, “Do you not know that a prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel?”

2Sam. 3:39 “I am weak today, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruiah are too difficult for me. May the LORD repay the evildoer according to his evil.”

- David directs Joab and everyone else with him in Hebron to engage in a period of public mourning for Abner
 - They tear their clothes and wear sackcloth as symbols of mourning
 - And when the funeral procession took place, David himself walked behind Abner’s bier carrying his body
 - Then when they reached the gravesite in Hebron, David wept loudly and publicly for Abner
 - And all the people at the funeral mourned as well, loudly proclaiming Abner’s death
 - Then David leads the eulogy for Abner with a chant
 - David laments Abner dying as a fool dies at the hands of criminals rather than as a war hero
 - David’s emphasizing that Abner’s death was not the result of a conflict between the north and the south
 - Rather his death was a criminal act of violence committed by an individual
 - Finally, in v.35 we learn David has been fasting, probably since Abner died, so now that he has been buried the people urge David to eat
 - But David refuses saying he will not eat until the end of that day
 - David’s devotion to mourning Abner strikes the people as admirable and praiseworthy
 - And in v.36 we’re told that this pleased the people as did everything David did in mourning Abner
- This entire episode was designed by David to convince everyone of his innocence and to distance himself from Joab’s actions
 - It was a public state funeral designed to honor Abner as a state hero in the hope of convincing the northern tribes to stay

- And when v.36 says it pleased the people, the point is that the funeral had the intended effect
 - In fact, notice in v.37 the writer tells us that all the people knew from that day forward that David was not responsible
- David pulled victory out of the jaws of defeat and has saved his kingdom from a disastrous start
 - David's mourning may have been over the top, but it wasn't insincere
 - Because in v.38 David acknowledges that Abner was a prince and a great man who has fallen
- And Abner was certainly that...a prince in the sense of a man of great authority working in support of kings
 - Despite having opposed David, he ultimately threw his support behind David
 - And as an advisor to David, Abner could have been a very powerful and useful counselor to the new king
- Finally, David says in v.39 that he is weak, perhaps a reference to having fasted but also to the weariness of starving for his throne
 - Joab and his brother are too difficult for David, meaning they are headstrong and unwilling to fall in line
 - So David repeats that he will wait on the Lord to deal with these evildoers
 - Ironically, David's personal weakness forced him to rely on the Lord to defend him
 - And in the long run, that dependence upon the Lord became a source of David's strength as a leader
- Now we move into Chapter 4, and as we do, we find the narrator planting seeds for important moments that follow later in the story

2Sam. 4:1 Now when Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, heard that Abner had died in Hebron, he lost courage, and all Israel was disturbed.

2Sam. 4:2 Saul's son had two men who were commanders of bands: the name of the one was Baanah and the name of the other Rechab, sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, of the sons of Benjamin (for Beeroth is also considered part of Benjamin,

2Sam. 4:3 and the Beerothites fled to Gittaim and have been aliens there until this day).

2Sam. 4:4 Now Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son crippled in his feet. He was five years old when the report of Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled. And it happened that in her hurry to flee, he fell and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth.

2Sam. 4:5 So the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, departed and came to the house of Ish-bosheth in the heat of the day while he was taking his midday rest.

2Sam. 4:6 They came to the middle of the house as if to get wheat, and they struck him in the belly; and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped.

2Sam. 4:7 Now when they came into the house, as he was lying on his bed in his bedroom, they struck him and killed him and beheaded him. And they took his head and traveled by way of the Arabah all night.

- Back in the north, Ish-bosheth hears the story of Abner and it disturbs him
 - Remember, he probably didn't know that Abner had been negotiating with David in the first place
 - So Ish-bosheth learned not only that his commander is dead but that before he died he had entered into a covenant with David
 - And even worse than that, he has heard that the elders of his tribes are ready to throw their support to David
- So naturally, all this news takes away Ish-bosheth's courage, which simply means the guy is afraid and panicked
 - Not only is his short-lived kingdom at risk, so is his life
 - Disposed kings typically don't live long, and he knows it
- In fact, the obstacles to David's rule over Israel are falling like dominos
 - Saul is dead, Jonathan is dead as are Saul's other two sons
 - And now the commander of the northern forces is gone
- So now there are only two possible heirs to Saul's throne; Ish-bosheth and Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth
 - Mephibosheth is briefly introduced in v.4 where we learn he was crippled from an early age
 - His nurse fled with the body when the news of Saul and Jonathan's death came from the Jezreel
 - She was afraid that with the king's passing, his family might be at risk
 - But in her haste, she dropped the baby and likely broke a limb, which caused him to be lame the rest of his life
 - We learn more about Mephibosheth in Chapter 9, but the point for now is that David's challengers for the throne are few and fading fast
 - A lame boy is no threat to David's rule, so if Ish-bosheth were to die, there would be nothing to stop David's ascent to the throne
 - That's why Ish-bosheth is troubled, as is all Israel because they wonder what Ish-bosheth might do to hold on to power
- And then in v.2 we hear of two brothers who decide to force the issue
 - We're introduced to two military commanders, Baanah and Rechab, from the tribe of Benjamin
 - They lived in Beeroth, which was a town outside the territory of Benjamin yet

these men were of the tribe of Benjamin

- These men begin to plot against Ish-bosheth
- In v.5 we're told they go to Ish-bosheth in the heat of the midday when it was customary for people to take an afternoon nap
 - The heat made everyone tired and made work hard, so people just went into the shade somewhere and slept
 - When the sun had dropped and the winds picked up, they re-emerged to finish the day
- This pattern gave these men the opportunity they needed to attack and since they were part of the army, they raised no suspicions
 - In v.6 we're told they came into Ish-bosheth's house pretending to come for a supply of wheat and attacked him with a knife
 - Then in v.7 we get the details...they found their way to his bedroom struck him and then beheaded him as well
 - They escaped taking the man's head and traveled through the Arabah, which is the Jordan river valley

2Sam. 4:8 Then they brought the head of Ish-bosheth to David at Hebron and said to the king, "Behold, the head of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, your enemy, who sought your life; thus the LORD has given my lord the king vengeance this day on Saul and his descendants."

- Having reached Hebron, they now complete their mission by bringing Ish-bosheth's head to the king
 - In v.8 they present it to David quite proudly declaring that the Lord has given David the head of Ish-bosheth
 - This is the son of the man who wanted to kill you, they say, and therefore you now have vengeance this day on Saul
 - Once again this is how the world thinks and sees the situation
 - They saw Saul attacking David, and so they thought that David would be happy to see that man and his son die
 - But remember that David did not view Saul as his enemy, because Saul was the Lord's anointed leader for Israel and David honored that
 - Moreover, David made a covenant with Jonathan before he died that when David became king he would protect Saul's house
 - David promised to protect Saul's descendants out of love for Jonathan, which was not typical when dynasties changed
 - But here again, David was doing what men didn't expect because he had a heart to do as God would do
 - So David was bound to honor Ish-bosheth and Mephibosheth by a covenant that

David took seriously

- But these men made the same mistake that the Amalekite made in assuming David wanted revenge
- So once more David has to teach these men the same lesson

2Sam. 4:9 David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said to them, “As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my life from all distress,

2Sam. 4:10 when one told me, saying, ‘Behold, Saul is dead,’ and thought he was bringing good news, I seized him and killed him in Ziklag, which was the reward I gave him for his news.

2Sam. 4:11 “How much more, when wicked men have killed a righteous man in his own house on his bed, shall I not now require his blood from your hand and destroy you from the earth?”

2Sam. 4:12 Then David commanded the young men, and they killed them and cut off their hands and feet and hung them up beside the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth and buried it in the grave of Abner in Hebron.

- David begins swearing by the Lord who has redeemed David’s life from all stress, and that’s an important preface for what follows
 - David is declaring that he doesn’t need rogues like these men seeking to avenge David, because the Lord has his back
 - The Lord has protected David from Saul for over a decade of running and David had plenty of chances to avenge himself
 - But he purposely declined to attack or harm Saul because David respected the Lord’s choice to allow the attacks
 - That’s a man after God’s own heart...a man who looked past the moment and tried to understand what God was doing through it
 - David knew the Lord had promised David the throne one day, and if the Lord promised it, David didn’t need to force it
 - Moreover, David trusted that the Lord had good purpose in holding the throne back from David for a time
 - In hindsight, David probably understood that those years running in the desert produced great maturity and understanding
 - David learned prayer, patience, resourcefulness, and leadership
 - He wrestled with his flesh and gained important skills
 - He wrote most of the psalms and most of all, learned to rely on the Lord in times of adversity
 - So now with that hindsight, David realizes it’s more important for him to keep his word and wait for God than to force his own outcomes

- And when he's confronted with men who act sinfully in his name, David is especially upset
 - So ironically, as these men claimed to be gaining David's revenge against Saul, in the end David executes Saul's revenge on them
- In v.10 David reminds these men of what he did to the Amalekite who came to report that Saul had died in battle
 - That news earned the man a death sentence, which David called his "reward"
 - So then David looks at these men and asks what will I do to those who kill a righteous man in his own bed?
 - David calls Ish-bosheth "righteous" by comparison to his attackers
 - Ish-bosheth had done nothing worthy of death, and yet they had betrayed his confidence by killing him in his bed
 - So David asks shouldn't they have expected him to do as much to them as David did to the messenger before?
 - And at that moment, David has the men taken, killed, their hands and feet removed, and their bodies hung in Hebron by a pool
 - Interestingly, the battle between north and south got started at a peace negotiation around a pool
 - And now the conflict ends with David's enemies hanging by a pool
 - Their bodies are a message that David doesn't want help in this way
 - He is bound to respect the Lord's anointed and will not reward those who do otherwise
 - Meanwhile, Ish-bosheth's head is buried with Abner in a grave of honor
 - Even as David's enemies fall and his path to the throne is cleared, David continues to respect the timing of the Lord in these things
 - Every time David resists the urge to force the outcome he wants or to reward those who act for him, the Lord blesses David
 - The more David seeks to keep his word to Saul's house, the more the Lord acts in keeping with His word to David
- Or to put it simply, the more David does the right thing, the more opportunity he gives God to bless David for doing so
 - I'm not saying that this was a *quid pro quo* relationship or even that David wouldn't be king if he didn't obey the Lord
 - I'm saying that there is an easy way to follow God or a hard way
 - When we obey the word of the Lord and keep our promises and live according to godliness, we follow the Lord closely
 - Like a child holding his father's hand, we stand nearby and the walk is gentle and easy and the relationship is rewarding
 - But when we live a worldly, disobedient and ungodly life, we're no longer walking side by side with the Father

- We're no less a child of the Father, nonetheless we've strayed away from His word and so we've left His company
 - He hasn't walked away from us, but we've put distance between us and Him
 - We've gone from holding His hand to being dragged on a leash, and the experience goes from gentle to painful
 - That's the hard way to follow the Lord, and though you still get to the place the Lord wants to take you, you won't like the trip
 - When we take the easy way of obedience, yielding and righteousness, the Lord is in a position to bless us even as He keeps His promises to us
 - He will ensure our life is directed at our spiritual benefit, building us up through those experiences as He did David
 - He fights our battles, so we can sit back and trust in His control in the midst of the storm
 - Then when the time is right, the Lord will elevate us into the place He has prepared for us
- So we have an easy way and a hard way to walk with Christ, and the difference is a matter of pride versus humility, trust versus control
 - David lived in an age when strong men took control, forced outcomes and killed anyone who stood in their way
 - But David was a man after God's own heart, and God doesn't work that way
 - The Lord doesn't destroy His enemies...He shows them mercy
 - The Lord doesn't break His promises...He keeps His word for generations and generations
 - The Lord doesn't seek to please men...He acts for His own glory
 - And David was a man who thought in similar ways
 - David didn't need to validate his authority and power by taking it from other men by force
 - David didn't destroy those who opposed him because he knew that true authority doesn't fear opposition
 - David kept his promises because he knew that if he protested his honor, God would protect him in all circumstances
 - And David often didn't do what others expected of him because he was more concerned with what God expected
 - David's patient, godly approach has brought him to this moment in God's timing and with his honor intact
 - David didn't need to grasp for the throne promised to him
 - He just needed to wait for God to give it to him
- So the time has come for David to receive what God gave him

2Sam. 5:1 Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, “Behold, we are your bone and your flesh.

2Sam. 5:2 “Previously, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and in. And the LORD said to you, ‘You will shepherd My people Israel, and you will be a ruler over Israel.’”

2Sam. 5:3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them before the LORD at Hebron; then they anointed David king over Israel.

2Sam. 5:4 David was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years.

2Sam. 5:5 At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.

- With Ish-bosheth gone and no one left to challenge David, all the elders of all the tribes come to David in Hebron to pledge their support and allegiance
 - They declare David is their flesh and bone, which is an important statement acknowledging David is king of all tribes, not just Judah
 - It’s a statement to the effect that Israel is one people, and it’s a temporary reversal of the north-south split that has emerged
 - David is reuniting the nation after seven years of rivalry
 - Secondly, they recognize that David has been the nation’s true shepherd even during Saul’s rule
 - David led Israel out and in, meaning in and out of battle successfully defeating Israel’s foes
 - And they recognized that the Lord had declared David would shepherd his people and be ruler over Israel
 - This is the first time in the Bible a human being is called a shepherd of people
 - So David’s right to rule Israel came down to three basic qualifications, which forevermore set the requirement to be king of God’s people
 - His human kinship with his people
 - His meritorious service to God’s people
 - And his divine election as shepherd
 - David met these qualifications in human terms, and Christ perfects them
 - Christ was born a man so He too is our flesh and bone
 - This allowed Jesus to take our place in God’s plan of redemption, to be our intercessor
 - Jesus rendered service to God’s people by living a perfectly righteous life in our place and giving Himself up to death for us
 - And He is divinely appointed as the Good Shepherd and the only name by which we may be saved

- So once again, David entered into a covenant with all the elders of Israel at Hebron, and he is anointed King of Israel
 - The year is 1004 BC and this was his third such anointing as King
 - The first time was done by the prophet Samuel when David was a young boy
 - The second time was done by the elders of Judah when Saul died
 - And now for the third time the entire nation embraces David as king
 - David is now 30 years old, an age considered the ideal minimum age for a person to assume a leadership position governing God's people
 - In fact, 30 is the age that several notable Bible characters assumed their first position of authority
 - Joseph was 30 when he ascended to the Pharaoh's court
 - Priests didn't begin their work in the tabernacle until age 30
 - Saul was 30 when he began to rule Israel
 - And of course, Jesus was 30 years old when He began His earthly ministry
 - Why is this the number God seems to prefer? It's probably for two reasons...
 - First, it's an age that generally means a person has moved beyond youthful ignorance and arrogance
 - Secondly, it's young enough to still be teachable so that experience can be gained and applied over the years
 - Having said all that, Scripture never makes that age a biblical requirement for any purpose in the church today
- Finally, David served a total of 40 years as king, including the seven years over Judah
 - This too is an interesting number, since we know the number 40 is the number of testing or trial
 - But it's also the length of time for many notable events involving leaders of the nation
 - Moses led Israel in the desert for 40 years
 - Saul rules for 40 years, David rules for 40 years and Solomon rules for 40 years
 - Beyond any specific meaning in the number 40 or 30, the fact that these specific numbers reappear so consistently is proof of one thing
 - God is in control of the lives of these men, and all men and women, raising them up to serve in places He chooses
 - And assigning them to their place according to His timing
 - Even as David lives his life respecting God's sovereignty, his life was itself a testimony to God's control over all events
 - And even the timing of David's ascent to the throne and the length of his service reflects God's sovereignty
 - Seeing God in control to that degree gives us confidence to acknowledge that

control in our lives

- And to live with the same patience and humility that drove David

- In the story of David as king of Israel, we're entering the golden era when everything is new and exciting and full of promise
 - Last week, David was finally accepted by all Israel as the true and rightful king of Israel
 - After seven years of struggle against the north, David's succeeded in winning over all the tribes and consolidating power
 - The writer introduces this period of success and prosperity with an overview summary of David's rule as king over Israel
 - We start in v.6 with David setting his sights on a new home for his reign as king

2Sam. 5:6 Now the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, and they said to David, "You shall not come in here, but the blind and lame will turn you away"; thinking, "David cannot enter here."

2Sam. 5:7 Nevertheless, David captured the stronghold of Zion, that is the city of David.

2Sam. 5:8 David said on that day, "Whoever would strike the Jebusites, let him reach the lame and the blind, who are hated by David's soul, through the water tunnel." Therefore they say, "The blind or the lame shall not come into the house."

2Sam. 5:9 So David lived in the stronghold and called it the city of David. And David built all around from the Millo and inward.

2Sam. 5:10 David became greater and greater, for the LORD God of hosts was with him.

- During Saul's reign, the capital of Israel was located in Gilbeah in the region of Benjamin, which was Saul's tribal affiliation
 - But David is from the tribe of Judah, so it makes sense that his new seat of power should be in that tribal area
 - Judah was a large territory, so David had many potential places to select as his capital city
 - But wisely, David decided not to move his seat of power too far away from the previous location in the tribe of Benjamin
 - Instead, David decides that a city called Jebus, later known as Jerusalem, should be his capital city and home of his throne
 - Jerusalem means foundation of peace, and it sat on the border of Benjamin and Judah making it the perfect choice politically
 - By sharing the border with Judah and Benjamin, Jerusalem became a compromise and an olive branch for the Benjamites
 - More importantly, it gave David the chance to make a statement to his subjects as he defeats Israel's long-time foe, the Jebusites
 - So in v.7 we're told that David invades the stronghold of Zion and defeats the

Jebusites and takes the City of David

- This text gives us none of the details of how that happens, and we get only slightly more in 1 Chronicles

1Chr. 11:4 Then David and all Israel went to Jerusalem (that is, Jebus); and the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, were there.

1Chr. 11:5 The inhabitants of Jebus said to David, “You shall not enter here.” Nevertheless David captured the stronghold of Zion (that is, the city of David).

1Chr. 11:6 Now David had said, “Whoever strikes down a Jebusite first shall be chief and commander.” Joab the son of Zeruiah went up first, so he became chief.

1Chr. 11:7 Then David dwelt in the stronghold; therefore it was called the city of David.

- Putting 2 Samuel 5 and 1 Chronicles 11 together gives us a little better understanding of how the battle took place
- But a finer understanding depends on some understanding of the city’s history and geography
- Jerusalem began as a settlement on the southeastern slope of a mountain the Bible calls Mt. Zion
 - In David’s day, the city was in the possession of the Jebusites, who had occupied the city for 515 years going back to before Joshua
 - The Jebusites descend from the third son of Canaan, Jebus, who settled it after the flood and named the city after himself
 - In fact, in David’s day the city was called Jebus, and before that, it had been called Salem, meaning peace
 - Archaeologists estimate that about 2,500 people lived inside the city walls
 - When Joshua entered the land, he commanded the Benjamites to defeat the Jebusites in Jebus, but they did not obey the command
 - Then years later under the Judges, the tribe of Judah tried again but the Lord did not give Judah favor at that time either
 - So up to David’s day, the Jebusites held Jebus, protected by high walls set atop steep valleys making attack nearly impossible
 - To the west of the city sat a peak called Mt. Zion, and over time this city took also took on the name of the mountain
 - To the north was Mt. Moriah, the peak known to the Jews as the location that Abraham took his son, Isaac, to be sacrificed
 - And to the east stood the mountain that came to be known as the Mt. of Olives
- Between Mt. Zion and Mt. Moriah was a valley later called the Tyropoeon and between Mt. Moriah and the Mt. of Olives was a valley called Kidron

- The city was built between these valleys and against these three mountains for two reasons
 - First, the valleys were very steep making an attack against the city very difficult
 - Secondly, the city was built beside the only supply of fresh water in the region: the continuously running spring of Gihon
- The spring emerges along the side of the Kidron Valley, which made it vulnerable to attack
 - So to secure this important resource, the Jebusites built the city wall around it with a large watch tower to guard it from attack
 - Even though the spring itself was protected by walls, the residents were still vulnerable when they went to retrieve water
 - So the Jebusites tunneled a shaft underground from the city down to the source of the spring
 - That allowed residents to draw water up into the city without being exposed to an attacking enemy
- And David decides this shaft could be his way into the city, so he goes with his men to Jebus to seize the city
 - In v.6 David brings his fighting men to the walls of Jebus to inform the Jebusites he will conquer them
 - Keep in mind that over the past five centuries, the Jebusites had seen army after army come threatening to invade their city
 - And each time, the city walls held, so of course this time they expect the result to be the same
- They shout down from the walls to David and his men saying they shall not enter the city
 - Moreover, they declare that they can successfully defend the city with only their blind and lame residents
 - This a severe and embarrassing rebuke reflecting the confidence of the city and David's small force
- They think "David cannot enter here" but David is led by the confidence of a man walking in the will of God
 - David's confidence in this situation is an example of what Jesus meant when He told us

Matt. 17:20 And He said to them, "Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.

- When we know we're walking in the Lord's will, we can move with courage and confidence that believes mountains will move

- This isn't wishful thinking or arrogance...it's confidence in what God intends to do
- And that allows us to take bold action others see as impossible
- David is confident that this city will be his, and therefore we must assume that a man after God's heart had heard from God on the matter
 - Perhaps David understood the importance of the city from its time as Salem under Melchizedek, who was the king of Salem
 - The order of Melchizedek ran through David's line on its way to Jesus, the Son of David, so perhaps God told David to take Jebus
 - Or perhaps it was the significance of Mt. Moriah nearby which led David to take the city
- Whatever the reason David was confident that the Lord intended to give him that city, and so David knew this city was to be his capital
 - When you know what God is going to do, you can engage in that work confidently
 - And when it comes to pass, your faithful anticipation of the outcome becomes a testimony of God's faithfulness
- So Jebus' record of impenetrability didn't dissuade David from moving ahead, and when the occupants taunt him, it just provided added motivation
 - In v.8 David adopts the term "lame and blind" for his own purposes to refer to all the occupants of the city
 - And he tells his men they will defeat the city by entering through the water tunnel
- According to 1 Chronicles 11, David offers a reward to the first man who makes his way into the city and kills a Jebusite that they will be commander
 - And Joab, the man who David spared for his earlier misdeed, decides this is his chance to win back David's trust
 - So Joab enters the city via the water tunnel and initiated the battle
- Then once the city was taken, it becomes known as the city of David, the stronghold of Zion
 - And David lived there his whole reign, building a palace on the northern end of the city just below Mt. Moriah
 - To protect his palace, David built a terraced wall down the side of the valley, which is called the Millo (mil' - o)
 - This feature is called out in Scripture because it was unique and prominent and marked the location of David's residence
- Recent excavations of the City of David have helped us learn a little more about how David took the city
 - In 1867, Sir Charles Warren was excavating near the Temple Mount in Jerusalem when he discovered a shaft 230 ft long
 - It connected the Spring of Gihon in the Kidron with a settlement on the hill above, which was the location of the city of David
 - This is now believed to be the shaft that David's men climbed to reach inside

the city

- We don't know how David's men gained access to the shaft itself, but perhaps they dug underground from outside the walls to reach it
 - Once they reached the shaft, they could climb the narrow walls by pressing against both sides as they made their way up
 - It would have been an arduous and risky climb, which is why David had to offer such a generous reward to the first one
- In v.9, we're told David lived in Jerusalem and built it up leading to it being called the city of David
 - Today the ancient city of David is buried under a mostly Arab settlement called Silwan
 - But Israel is busy uncovering as much of it as they can, including the area of the Spring and parts of the original wall
 - In fact, the Millo is now almost completely exposed, proving that David did exist but also that the Biblical record is accurate
- David's conquest of Jerusalem also gave rise to a saying
 - Israel would say that the blind and lame do not enter the house
 - The term "blind and lame" became a euphemism for the ungodly Gentiles of the land, like the Jebusites
 - And "house" was a reference to the temple of the Lord, located in Jerusalem
 - So this phrase was a way of saying that ungodly Gentiles may not enter the temple
 - And from this place, David became greater and greater because the Lord was with him in that place, we're told in v.10
 - This is the writer's key point as he reflects on David's time in the city
 - David's rise to power was nothing if not a testimony of God's grace
 - David was the youngest shepherd boy of an insignificant family, and yet God selected him to be king
 - Later, David was tested during a decade of preparation on the run, and David grew more mature and powerful as a leader
 - Men came out to find David and support him in the desert
 - And then as his adversaries died off, David eventually found a clear path to the throne
 - And now, David defeats a city that stood undefeated for over 500 years, which leads to a period of unprecedented growth
- This remarkable rise to power and wealth and security could only be explained, as the writer did, as God being with David
 - And yet when we look at David's life in detail, we can see that his rise to this moment wasn't a fairytale or a bed of roses

- David was severely tested during his decade in the desert, and he often lamented his situation
- We can find David often crying out to God in the Psalms like this:

**Psa. 6:1 O LORD, do not rebuke me in Your anger,
Nor chasten me in Your wrath.**

**Psa. 6:2 Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am pining away;
Heal me, O LORD, for my bones are dismayed.**

**Psa. 6:3 And my soul is greatly dismayed;
But You, O LORD — how long?**

**Psa. 6:4 Return, O LORD, rescue my soul;
Save me because of Your lovingkindness.**

- So David's rise to prominence and power and greatness included many years of low points and sadness and even humiliation
 - And yet God declared from the beginning that David would be king
 - Which means God was always with and for David despite those difficult moments
- At this point as David sits on a throne in a city by his name and presides over a period of prosperity for his people, he can see God is for him
 - But did he see and trust that God was with him in the low points?
 - Listen to how Psalm 6 ends

**Psa. 6:6 I am weary with my sighing;
Every night I make my bed swim,
I dissolve my couch with my tears.**

**Psa. 6:7 My eye has wasted away with grief;
It has become old because of all my adversaries.**

**Psa. 6:8 Depart from me, all you who do iniquity,
For the LORD has heard the voice of my weeping.**

**Psa. 6:9 The LORD has heard my supplication,
The LORD receives my prayer.**

**Psa. 6:10 All my enemies will be ashamed and greatly dismayed;
They shall turn back, they will suddenly be ashamed.**

- This is what Paul means when he describes the state of every believer

Rom. 8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

- Paul isn't talking about a life of fairytales for the Christian, for if your life is going well,

you never worry about problems

- But when you are in the valleys of life, then you are prone to ask where is God and does God care and why won't God fix this?
- Paul says that when we face those moments, we should ask if God is for us (and He is), then who can be against us?
- In other words, why do we worry over our difficult circumstances knowing God is using them for some good purpose?
 - Instead, we should think like David who argued his case before God but always trusted something good would come from it
 - The issue is one of time and perspective...knowing that time is on our side because God is for us
 - In time, the problems go away...in time, the solutions will come
 - In time, we will escape our adversaries, we will overcome our sin nature and we will leave this world behind
- And who or what can stand in the way of that plan? If it's God's plan, then there is no one or nothing that can stop it
 - David lived a life that reflected that level of dependence and trust in God's intentions
 - He didn't always know God's plans but he always knew God's intentions
 - You may not always know what God is planning to do in your life or even why some particular event is happening to you
 - But you always know God's intentions, and that's enough by itself to be patient through the trials
- Then in v.11 and on we receive summaries of David's life as king over Israel

2Sam. 5:11 Then Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David with cedar trees and carpenters and stonemasons; and they built a house for David.

2Sam. 5:12 And David realized that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, and that He had exalted his kingdom for the sake of His people Israel.

2Sam. 5:13 Meanwhile David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he came from Hebron; and more sons and daughters were born to David.

2Sam. 5:14 Now these are the names of those who were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon,

2Sam. 5:15 Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia,

2Sam. 5:16 Elishama, Eliada and Eliphelet.

- What follows here and in the next few chapters are the writer's proof to support his statement in v.10 that the Lord was with David as king
 - In effect, v.10 is the topic sentence of an essay of David's success as king
 - And then what follows is a summary of David's personal, military, religious

accomplishments

- All of these accomplishments are a testimony that the Lord was with David and that David was king because God made him so
- Starting here with David's family blessings starting with the riches of his home, built from the finest materials available in that day
 - Tyre was an extremely wealthy trading port where the finest goods flowed from east to west and vice versa
 - The king of Tyre offered to build David's house for him, probably as a gesture of peace and goodwill
 - He hoped to coexist with David and trade with Israel more than likely
- Later this relationship between Israel and Tyre becomes a corrupting influence for future kings
 - Which is a vivid example of two biblical principles...first, bad company corrupts good morals as Paul says
 - And secondly, no godly person should choose to be unequally yoked with the ungodly, since it brings potential for compromise
- Beyond his home, David continues to grow his household, and this too he does through unwise compromise
 - David takes additional wives and slave wives for himself, ultimately leading to a harem and a large family of children
 - As we addressed in an earlier lesson, the Bible records that David takes additional wives to be *descriptive*, not *prescriptive*
 - We are reading a description of what David did, however we are not reading a prescription for what we should do
 - And it's safe to assume that David's habit of taking additional wives when it pleased him was largely responsible for his most serious sin
 - Because of this sin in David's life, he became a man accustomed to having women when it pleased him
 - As someone once said, "a man who has broken down the fence will wander endlessly"
 - I should add that if someone today believes David's example allows us to take multiple wives, he should remember polygamy is against the law
 - And the Bible also commands believers to obey the governing authorities over us
 - And so for that reason alone a Christian is prohibited from practicing polygamy
- But here's the hardest part we must also accept...even though David was wrong to have multiple wives, God blesses the result
 - David is blessed to have a large family with many children, even though he produces those children from multiple wives
 - In that sense, David's situation is no different than that of Jacob

- Jacob had four wives and God used those four women to produce 12 sons in a much quicker period of time
 - As a result, all 12 sons were able to grow up together and live side-by-side long enough to establish twelve tribes
 - Without multiple wives, it's hard to see how Jacob could have raised twelve sons fast enough for all of them to work together as they did
 - Here again, the fact that God used multiple marriages to His advantage doesn't become a prescription for us
 - God has the power to cause bad things to work to good, but that doesn't give us license to do as many bad things as we wish
 - Conversely, God's blessings to His children do not turn on whether we are perfectly obedient or not
 - And in this case, the prosperity that God granted David was for God's own purpose in blessing Israel
 - And God blesses us even though we sin, for if He made perfect behavior a prerequisite for blessing us, we could never have it
 - So a blessing from God is His grace to His sinful children, but that does not make it an endorsement of our sin
- Looking at the list of sons born to David, we find eleven more sons born to him in Jerusalem to add to the six David had in Hebron
 - The tenth son is Solomon, who will ultimately succeed David as king
 - Solomon's mother is not named in this list, but she is Bathsheba
 - David's ninth son is Nathan, and interestingly both Nathan and Solomon are listed in the genealogy leading to Jesus
 - Jesus' earthly father, Joseph, was descended from Solomon while Jesus' mother, Mary, was a descendant of Nathan
 - And even later other sons are mentioned in 1 Chronicles, so David had a large family and many descendants in Israel
 - This helped cement his rule and his dynasty, at least in Judah
 - And we will learn more about his dynasty in coming chapters
 - Meanwhile, the writer now moves from David's family prosperity to his military success

2Sam. 5:17 When the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to seek out David; and when David heard of it, he went down to the stronghold.

2Sam. 5:18 Now the Philistines came and spread themselves out in the valley of Rephaim.

2Sam. 5:19 Then David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You give them into my hand?" And the LORD said to David, "Go

up, for I will certainly give the Philistines into your hand.”

2Sam. 5:20 So David came to Baal-perazim and defeated them there; and he said, “The LORD has broken through my enemies before me like the breakthrough of waters.” Therefore he named that place Baal-perazim.

2Sam. 5:21 They abandoned their idols there, so David and his men carried them away.

2Sam. 5:22 Now the Philistines came up once again and spread themselves out in the valley of Rephaim.

2Sam. 5:23 When David inquired of the LORD, He said, “You shall not go directly up; circle around behind them and come at them in front of the balsam trees.

2Sam. 5:24 “It shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then you shall act promptly, for then the LORD will have gone out before you to strike the army of the Philistines.”

2Sam. 5:25 Then David did so, just as the LORD had commanded him, and struck down the Philistines from Geba as far as Gezer.

- Here we’re told of two battles that took place early in David’s reign
 - They are not the only battles David fought, so we should see them as examples of why and how David fought
 - First, David fought the Philistines as a matter of economic necessity and for national pride
 - Every world superpower has been born on the battlefield and David’s military success was key to Israel as a superpower
 - In fact, Israel is among the first great superpowers of history, second only to Egypt
 - Victory in battle is the basis for establishing peace in the land, and peace is the foundation for economic prosperity
 - When a land is at war, it must divert people and materials into war fighting efforts, which lowers wealth for all
 - When the land is at peace, people and resources are invested in development of the land, which returns a harvest
 - And developed, producing land leads to prosperity for all
 - So David’s military successes set the stage for tremendous economic growth which led to population growth and the expansion of the tribes
 - As the tribes expanded, they took over more land, which led to more production, which led to more prosperity
 - When drought and other disasters hit one part of the land, other parts could compensate with greater production
 - The nation was able to stabilize its economy, drive out competition and enemies, and so on
 - Moreover, David’s relentless pursuit of his enemies was cathartic for a nation that

- struggled against the Philistines under Saul
- Many Jewish lives had been lost over the decades of Saul's rule, but now David is defeating larger forces everywhere he tries
 - This is a huge boost to national pride and to the nation's identity as a power in the land, something not seen since Joshua
- Secondly, notice how the writer explains David's success...each time David asks the Lord how to proceed into battle
 - We don't know exactly how these exchanges took place, whether by prayer or through the high priest's divining stones
 - But I believe it was most likely through prayer, something David learned while he spent years in the desert depending on God
 - David was a man who knew that God hears and answers prayers, so David took full advantage of that opportunity
 - This also was a stark departure from Saul, who rarely if ever consulted with God before battle
 - And at the end of his life Saul was seeking wisdom from witches
 - In both battles, God not only approves of the engagement but even gives tactical plans to David
 - The first battle is retold in Chapter 23 and was probably a battle early in David's reign as king
 - The location Raphaim means valley of the giants and is unknown except it's probably south of Jerusalem
 - We assume the Philistines were hoping to defeat a new king before he had consolidated power
 - But the Philistines didn't account for David's God Who went before Israel into battle and so they were defeated
 - In the second battle, the Lord told David to attack and even how to prosecute the battle, coming from the rear
 - They were to lie in wait until the Lord gave the troops a signal which was a sound of marching from the tree tops
 - When the Lord created this supernatural sign, the troops would move out and catch their enemy by surprise
 - This second battle took place near Geba, which was also near Gibeon northwest of Jerusalem
 - These two battles were highlighted here because they were important to establishing the city of Jerusalem as a Jewish stronghold
 - And were probably the most remarkable since they were defeats won when David's forces were smallest
 - It showed the Lord's favor upon David that he could defeat such powerful foes even at the beginning of his reign

- So based on David's military success having trusted in the Lord and having taken His counsel, the people and the land are safe and prosperous
 - Now the writer turns his attention to David's impact on the religious life of Israel

2Sam. 6:1 Now David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand.

2Sam. 6:2 And David arose and went with all the people who were with him to Baale-judah, to bring up from there the ark of God which is called by the Name, the very name of the LORD of hosts who is enthroned above the cherubim.

- With peace assured, David is ready to install the ark of the Lord in its proper place
 - David goes up to retrieve the ark from Kiriath-jearim, also called Baal-judah
 - Interestingly, Baal-judah means master of Judah, which means it a center of Baal worship
 - So the ark of the Lord has been sitting in a town known as the center of pagan worship of the Canaanite god Baal in Judah
 - But now it will move to the city where it will become the center of worship of Yahweh, the true living God
- And to understand why the ark is moving here, we need to understand a little of its history
 - About twenty years earlier, Saul had gone against the Lord's wishes by taking the ark from the tabernacle in Shiloh into battle
 - Saul wanted to assure his success by having his troops enter battle with the ark going before them
 - Since Saul tried to force God's hand, the Lord allowed the ark to fall into the hands of the Philistines who took it away in victory
- For a time, it circulated among various Philistine cities causing mayhem and severe discomfort until finally they decided to return it to Israel
 - When the ark was returned in 1 Samuel 6, it first came to a place called Bet Shemesh
 - There the men of Bet Shemesh violated the word of God by opening the ark and looking inside, which no man may do
 - And the Lord responded by killing more than 50,000 men in Israel on that day
- After that slaughter, Israel was so afraid of the ark that they sent it to a small mountain village in Judah called Kiriath-jearim
 - There it stayed in the home of a man named Abinadad, where it was cared for by that man and his son for the next 20 years
 - But that's not where the ark should be, and David is determined to return it to the tabernacle
- The fact that the ark has been away for so long also means the people of Israel have not

been following the Law's requirements very closely

- Without the ark in the tabernacle, the priests couldn't perform the sacrificial responsibilities properly
 - And the presence of the Lord was not in the tabernacle as well
 - And given that Saul was in power during those days, it's logical to assume that the entire Mosaic system was out of fashion
- So this move on David's part isn't just about bringing an artifact home, it's also about re-establishing the importance of worship
 - The return of the ark to the tabernacle is the return of the Mosaic system in a sense
 - And that system would now be centered on the city of Jerusalem as well, where before it had moved around the land
 - David is consolidating the seat of political power with the place of religious authority in the land of Israel
- Unlike Saul, David isn't working to return the ark on the basis of superstition but rather to defend the honor and name of the Lord
 - Notice in v.2 we're told that the ark is called by God's name in that day, the very name of the God of Heaven
 - And that means something to David, and he dearly wants to ensure that something representing God's name is honored
- While David clearly wants to do the right thing here, as this chapter plays out, we shall see that David does it in the wrong way
 - And doing the right thing in the wrong way isn't God's way
 - And so the events of this chapter serve as counter argument of sorts to the previous chapter

2Sam. 6:3 They placed the ark of God on a new cart that they might bring it from the house of Abinadab which was on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were leading the new cart.

2Sam. 6:4 So they brought it with the ark of God from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill; and Ahio was walking ahead of the ark.

2Sam. 6:5 Meanwhile, David and all the house of Israel were celebrating before the LORD with all kinds of instruments made of fir wood, and with lyres, harps, tambourines, castanets and cymbals.

- David instructs the men to load the ark on a cart likely pulled by oxen
 - David appears to be trying to honor God, because he chooses a new cart, which means one consecrated to the Lord
 - A new cart is reserved for royal or holy purposes to ensure it was never used for lesser purposes

- So clearly, David is trying to honor the Lord run his heart
 - And while David was trying to honor God, he was ignoring God's word
 - Specifically he was ignoring the Law of God, which stipulated in Numbers how the ark was to be moved
 - The Law required that only priests move the ark on foot by using poles inserted into rings along its side
 - Nevertheless, either out of ignorance or disobedience, David chose to move the ark on a oxen-drawn cart
- I wonder where David got the idea to bring the ark to Jerusalem in that way?
 - There were likely two reasons, beginning with the simple reason that it was easier to move it on a cart
 - It would have been very difficult for a small group of men to carry the heavy ark the 9 miles through difficult terrain
 - By comparison, it was much easier to place it on a cart drawn by oxen
 - I can hear David's men saying, "Oh the pole method went out of fashion long ago. Everyone is using oxen and carts these days."
 - The second reason is probably because of precedent
 - The Philistines used a cart to return the ark years earlier
 - But of course, the Philistines were not Jews and did not possess the Law of God
 - And had David consulted the word of God, he would have known that God expected him to do something entirely different
 - In fact, if ANYONE in Israel knew the Law, they could have informed David of his mistake, and David would have listened
 - Which tells you that there was a general ignorance of the Law in that day, and this was a problem going back generations
- After the time of Joshua, a generation rose up that did not know or care to follow the law of God
 - And that led to each man in Israel doing what was right in his own eyes
 - After generations of wandering away from the Law of God, Samuel tried to bring obedience back to the people
 - For a time he succeeded, but under Saul's leadership, the people reverted to disobedience and disinterest in the word of God
 - Since their leader was not a man to follow the Law of God, neither did the people
 - So by David's time, the nation was in a bankrupt state, morally speaking, and even David himself was not a man schooled in the word of God
 - Nevertheless, David did have a heart after God and a desire to honor God and a pattern of seeking God
 - Therefore, we might assume God will give David a pass on knowing and

following His word

- After all, David acted with good intentions
- This is a classic problem in the life of any follower of God who is not well acquainted or attentive to the word of God
 - Out of ignorance, we mix good intentions with bad methods which leads to sin and consequences
 - And when the consequences come, we blame God for not honoring our good intentions
 - Meanwhile, God is rightly blaming us for not honoring His word
- We know David relied heavily on prayer and godly intuition to make his decisions, and certainly that's a good and necessary thing for every believer
 - But there is more to pleasing God than having good intentions or even a robust prayer life

Luke 11:27 While Jesus was saying these things, one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed."

Luke 11:28 But He said, "On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it."

- The call of Scripture is to obey the word of God, and answering that call depends on consulting what God has told us when we have questions
 - But that requires studying and remembering what we learn, and many believers resist doing that work
 - We find it easier to substitute our own ideas or our intuition for study
 - Or we expect God to tell us personally what to do in prayer or otherwise rather than consulting what He already gave us
- This is lazy discipleship: expecting the Lord to deliver every instruction we need for life just in time, when we need it, automagically
 - "Lazy discipleship" assumes you don't need to study because you can make direct appeals to God for answers whenever
 - It's like a student who sets his or her textbook aside expecting the teacher to explain everything already given in the book
 - Or a man going to God in prayer asking for marital help after the marriage is on the rocks rather than studying the Bible before
- But that is not how a relationship with God works
 - Yes, we are supposed to pray and we can certainly ask God to help our marriage or anything else, and He will hear and answer
 - But the answer you're likely to receive is, "Read My book"

- As Jesus said, the blessed are those who hear the word of God and do it
- We aren't supposed to replace study of God's word with the expectation of personal revelation for matters already addressed in the Bible
 - For example, there is never a need for someone to pray on whether to have sex before marriage or cheat on their taxes
 - Those questions are clearly answered in the word of God, and because they are in the word of God, we are accountable to God
- Asking God for a "personal" answer in prayer to such questions is simply someone looking for a different answer
 - And if you reject the answer given in God's word, you will not receive a different answer in your prayer time or in your heart
 - Playing games with God or ignoring His word won't be an acceptable excuse when we fall into sin
 - We will be forgiven for our sins by Christ's blood, but that doesn't mean our sin won't bring consequences
 - David was ultimately forgiven for his sins too, but his mistakes often cost him dearly
- The Lord had already instructed the people of Israel on how to move the ark of the Lord, but David seems to be ignorant of that fact

- We're in the middle of studying several chapters in 2 Samuel that summarize the success David had in ruling Israel during the early years of his reign
 - God was working to bless David personally and He was at work blessing the nation through David both militarily and religiously
 - David's family is growing stronger and he's moved into his new home in Jerusalem
 - The nation is defeating its long-time foes, the Philistines, and expanding into new territory
 - And the nation is returning to observance of the Law, including moving the ark back to its proper place in the tabernacle
 - David is so blessed because he is the man God raised up to show His people how life can be when led by a man after God's heart
 - This must seem like nothing less than a miracle for the people of Israel, who have been ruled poorly for hundreds of years
 - The time of Judges was a disaster, and the rule of Saul wasn't much better
 - But now things are looking up for Israel as David unifies, strengthens and grows the nation
 - But David is not perfect, of course, and there will be moments when David takes a misstep, and when he does, the nation will suffer too
 - In short, the nation will rise or fall based on David's obedience to the Lord
 - And today we open with an early example of this relationship as David orders the ark moved to Jerusalem
- Last week we introduced this story with David and his men going to Baal-Judah to retrieve the ark
 - In the Law, the Lord had instructed the people of Israel to move the ark of the Lord in a very specific way, carried by priests on long poles
 - Furthermore, the Law required that only priests could handle the ark and that if anyone else dared to do so, it meant death
 - Earlier in Israel's history, 50,000 Israelites died after the men of Beit Shemesh dared to open the ark and look inside
 - It was that mistake that led to the ark being hidden away in Baal-Judah until this day
 - And now ironically, as David prepares to move the ark to Jerusalem, he's in danger of making a similar mistake
 - Let's re-read the opening verses of Chapter 6 as we return to our story

2Sam. 6:1 Now David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand.
2Sam. 6:2 And David arose and went with all the people who were with him to Baale-judah, to bring up from there the ark of God which is called by the Name, the very name of the LORD of hosts who is enthroned above the cherubim.

2Sam. 6:3 They placed the ark of God on a new cart that they might bring it from the house of Abinadab which was on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were leading the new cart.

2Sam. 6:4 So they brought it with the ark of God from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill; and Ahio was walking ahead of the ark.

2Sam. 6:5 Meanwhile, David and all the house of Israel were celebrating before the LORD with all kinds of instruments made of fir wood, and with lyres, harps, tambourines, castanets and cymbals.

- David assembles an immense crowd of 30,000 men to accompany the transfer of the ark from Kiriath-jearim to Jerusalem
 - And whether out of ignorance or carelessness, David decides not to follow the Law's requirements for moving the ark
 - Instead, David arranges for his men to transport the ark on an ox cart accompanied and protected by his military
 - As we said last week, David has good intentions, and in fact notice that David and all the people are worshipping the Lord
 - They have instruments of various kinds in hand, and a crowd of 30,000 engages in loud, heart-felt praise of God
 - It's a heart-warming scene, but good intentions are not a substitute for obedience to God's word
 - And eventually, when we do the wrong things, even when we do them with good intentions, consequences follow
 - And King David's mistakes always bring consequences for God's people

2Sam. 6:6 But when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out toward the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen nearly upset it.

2Sam. 6:7 And the anger of the LORD burned against Uzzah, and God struck him down there for his irreverence; and he died there by the ark of God.

- The road between Kiriath-jearim and Jerusalem was a narrow and rocky path that snaked through the hill country of Judea
 - At a certain point along the way, the ark rolled over the threshing floor in a town called Nacon
 - The name Nacon means to be firm, which suggests that the land there was especially rocky or hard
 - So as the wooden cart rolls over this rocky terrain, the ark is tossed back and forth in the cart, and eventually tips
 - One of the men protecting the Ark as it travels was a man named Uzzah, whose name strong or mighty

- Clearly, David chose Uzzah for this duty because Uzzah had the strength to steady the ark
 - But God's word in Numbers 4 says that a non-priest could not touch the ark or he will die
 - And although *we* may choose not to keep God's word, *He* always keeps His word
- So as Uzzah reached out to steady the ark, the Lord's anger burned against this act of disobedience and God struck Uzzah down
 - Notice the writer says that this striking was for irreverence, but the Hebrew word found here is only used this one time
 - And irreverence is not the right way to translate the word, because it suggests that Uzzah was being irreverent
 - And that leads to confusion, because everyone can see that the man was trying to honor God by protecting the ark
- No, that wasn't the problem...the problem was David's mistake in ordering Uzzah and the other men to do what they are doing
 - And that means the word is probably better translated "the error" referring to David's error in judgment, not Uzzah's act
 - David made an error in judgment, and the Lord takes Uzzah's life to make a point concerning His law and David's leadership
- Uzzah was an innocent victim, but God had no choice but to strike Uzzah down
 - If God had not acted against Uzzah, then God would be violating His own word in Numbers 4
 - And though we might argue this is a situation when God should have gone against His word, you don't want God to do that
 - If God could violate His own word when it suited Him, then you would have no reason to trust in the promises of God
 - Because faithfulness works both ways...if you want God to be faithful to His promises of good for you, then He must be faithful to all His word
 - If God could overlook His promise that only priests touch His ark, then how do you know God won't forget His promises to you?
 - You can't have it both ways...either God is faithful to everything given in His word or He's not to be trusted in anything He's said
 - So because God's word command a death when a non-priest touches the ark, Uzzah must die as collateral damage over David's error
 - And can you imagine the scene...30,000 people singing, dancing and worshipping the Lord around the ark
 - And then instantly, the Lord strikes down one man for touching the ark and suddenly the worship stops and the people scatter
 - It's such an ironic scene that proves the truth of one of Samuel's better remembered statements

1Sam. 15:22 Samuel said,

“Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices

As in obeying the voice of the LORD?

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,

And to heed than the fat of rams.

1Sam. 15:23 **“For rebellion is as the sin of divination,**

And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry.

- Samuel says that insubordination to God, meaning disobedience, is equal to idolatry and divination
 - So ironically, while David and the people were worshipping the Lord with their voices and instruments, they were practicing idolatry
 - By disobeying the word of God, they were acting contrary to worship, because true worship is obedience
 - We would do well to remember that truth as we seek the Lord in worship too
 - Coming to church to sing and raise our hands in worship is important and necessary
 - But it’s also nullified if at the same time we live in ways that we know are contrary to the word of God
 - And as we see in David’s situation, neither good intentions nor ignorance of the word of God will acquit us
 - Consider Uzzah...he acted in ignorance and with good intentions, nevertheless he died as the word of God required
 - And David too will suffer consequences as a result of his poor leadership

2Sam. 6:8 David became angry because of the LORD’S outburst against Uzzah, and that place is called Perez-uzzah to this day.

2Sam. 6:9 So David was afraid of the LORD that day; and he said, “How can the ark of the LORD come to me?”

2Sam. 6:10 And David was unwilling to move the ark of the LORD into the city of David with him; but David took it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.

2Sam. 6:11 Thus the ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months, and the LORD blessed Obed-edom and all his household.

- David becomes angry at the Lord after His destruction of Uzzah, resulting in that place coming to be known as Perez-uzzah
 - The name roughly translates as the place of Uzzah’s breaking or destruction, but it was actually the place of David’s folly
 - And David’s anger at God is evidence of how little David understands the word of God at this point
 - And it’s also an excellent example of what happens to believers commonly

when we live without an understanding of the Bible

- The pattern goes something like this: we have desires and plans and assumptions and beliefs about how we live and serve God
 - Some of those ideas are correct, but often many of them are misinformed
 - And unless we consult the word of God in a systematic, consistent fashion, we remain trapped by those errors
 - But we never stop to question whether our assumptions might be wrong, much less that we might be offending God
- Then the Lord moves in our life to address our sin by bringing a reminder from a pastor or friend, or correction through a new teaching
 - Or maybe in the worst case, the Lord takes action to discipline our sin as He did here with David and Uzzah
 - And when that reminder, or correction or discipline comes, we react in anger as David did
- We react angrily to someone daring to suggest we are doing something wrong or to a new teaching that implies we have wrong thinking
 - So we lash out at God's discipline believing we're being unfairly treated
 - Or as David did in v.9, we become afraid of God thinking He's unpredictable or capricious in His anger
 - But the truth is that we were at fault for acting contrary to His word, whether out of ignorance or neglect
- Like David, we are already on notice of what God expects, but understanding what He has said requires taking time to study it
 - That's the key reason why Bible studies in general exist, and to a large extent, why VBVM and VBF were founded
 - All Christians are called to obey the whole counsel of God's word but you cannot obey what you do not know
- In v.9 as David sees Uzzah's death and becomes afraid of God, he asks "how can the ark come to me?"
 - You should detect a little self-pity in that statement, because David is essentially saying, "It's impossible for me to please God in this way"
 - David's implying there's no way to move the ark without God getting upset, but that's not the truth at all
 - God very much desires that His ark be reunited with the tabernacle as He intended it to be
 - But the same word of God that called for the construction of an ark and for its location in the tabernacle also stipulated how to move it
 - And David's predicament and despair are the result of ignoring those instructions
 - And this will not be the last time David makes this mistake

- As David acts outside the counsel of God's word, he will occasionally find himself stumbling into serious sin
 - And when he goes astray, so will the people under his charge, and both suffer consequences
 - This is a basic Biblical principle and it's been a pattern in Israel virtually since the beginning of their history
 - David is just the latest (but not the last) example of this truth
- That's why the Bible places such high demands for the character and knowledge of anyone who would lead God's people
 - The fruit of a competent and godly leader will be knowledgeable and obedient followers of Jesus
 - Conversely, unqualified and untrustworthy leaders invariably yield ignorant and disobedient followers
- The Lord will use David's life as an example of both sides of this relationship, and this incident will be the first major error of David's leadership
 - In each case, the mistake has implications for David and the people, and in the end David learns from each mistake he makes
 - In this case, it takes David a few months to absorb and accept the Lord's discipline and to understand the lesson
 - And in the meantime, the ark sits in another home for a time, this time in the home of a Gittite living just outside Jerusalem
 - A Gittite is the name given to someone who comes from the region of Gath, which is Philistine territory in the Shephelah
 - But according to 1 Chronicles 15 he appears to have been a Levite
 - So this Levite offers (or is made) to store the ark in his home after David and the people abandon their attempt to move it
 - This too is an example of consequences of ignorant leaders over God's people
 - When poor leaders lead God's people astray and consequences follow, the people often distance themselves from God
 - Believers "walk away" from practicing their faith, churches decline, and in the worst cases they disappear altogether
 - That's how many old churches became museums or community centers
 - The faithful were misled by poor leaders and poor teaching, the church declined and disappeared and the world filled the space
 - David misled the people, the people suffered and abandoned this work of God and the testimony of God went under cover
 - It's a cycle that happens over and over in Israel's history and it happens still today
- So David's leadership resulted in Uzzah's death and frightened the people and distorted their view of God's character and led them to abandon the work

- Then for three months David apparently engaged in Bible study and eventually learned the proper method for moving the ark
 - Can you imagine the “Ah hah!” moment when David came across this passage in the Law:

Num. 4:5 “When the camp sets out, Aaron and his sons shall go in and they shall take down the veil of the screen and cover the ark of the testimony with it; **Num. 4:6** and they shall lay a covering of porpoise skin on it, and shall spread over it a cloth of pure blue, and shall insert its poles.

Num. 4:15 “When Aaron and his sons have finished covering the holy objects and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, when the camp is to set out, after that the sons of Kohath shall come to carry them, so that they will not touch the holy objects and die. These are the things in the tent of meeting which the sons of Kohath are to carry.

- David discovers there is a proper method for moving the ark and it wasn’t on a cart
- Which means he also realizes that Uzzah’s death was entirely unnecessary and entirely his fault
- That must have been a humbling and intensely convicting moment for David and it gave him an appreciation for the importance of God’s word
 - And in typical fashion, David double-downs on obedience from that moment forward
 - David returns to move the ark properly, and when he does, he doesn’t just follow the Law’s requirements, he goes beyond
- It starts with assembling the necessary team:

1Chr. 15:1 Now David built houses for himself in the city of David; and he prepared a place for the ark of God and pitched a tent for it.

1Chr. 15:2 Then David said, “No one is to carry the ark of God but the Levites; for the LORD chose them to carry the ark of God and to minister to Him forever.”

1Chr. 15:3 And David assembled all Israel at Jerusalem to bring up the ark of the LORD to its place which he had prepared for it.

1Chr. 15:4 David gathered together the sons of Aaron and the Levites:

1Chr. 15:11 Then David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel and Amminadab, **1Chr. 15:12** and said to them, “You are the heads of the fathers’ households of the Levites; consecrate yourselves both you and your relatives, that you may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel to the place that I have prepared for it.

1Chr. 15:13 “Because you did not carry it at the first, the LORD our God made an outburst on us, for we did not seek Him according to the ordinance.”

1Chr. 15:14 So the priests and the Levites consecrated themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel.

1Chr. 15:15 The sons of the Levites carried the ark of God on their shoulders with the poles thereon, as Moses had commanded according to the word of the LORD.

1Chr. 15:16 Then David spoke to the chiefs of the Levites to appoint their relatives the singers, with instruments of music, harps, lyres, loud-sounding cymbals, to raise sounds of joy.

1Chr. 15:25 So it was David, with the elders of Israel and the captains over thousands, who went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the house of Obed-edom with joy.

- Notice the extent that David goes to follow the Law this time, including assembling representatives from all the priestly families
 - David is careful to instruct them in the Law and he explains their previous disaster was a result of disobedience not God’s fault
- Finally, as the ark is moved in the right way, there is renewed celebration and praise with shouts of joy
 - This is true worship...praising God in the midst of obedience to His word
 - And the result is God is pleased and the people are edified
- Back in 2 Samuel we’re told that the trigger that gets David moving again in obedience to God’s word is the prospect of blessing

2Sam. 6:12 Now it was told King David, saying, “The LORD has blessed the house of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, on account of the ark of God.” David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladness.

2Sam. 6:13 And so it was, that when the bearers of the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling.

2Sam. 6:14 And David was dancing before the LORD with all his might, and David was wearing a linen ephod.

2Sam. 6:15 So David and all the house of Israel were bringing up the ark of the LORD with shouting and the sound of the trumpet.

- After the three month delay David hears that the man who took the ark into his home was blessed by the Lord during that time
 - We don’t know what that blessing included but we can assume it was the enlarging of his household in various ways

- Whatever it was, it caught people's notice and when David hears about it, it changes his attitude toward God and this work
- David realizes that Obed-edom's prosperity is an indication that if the ark was in the tabernacle, blessing would come to the entire nation
 - Moreover, it reminded David that God is good to His people, if only they would hear and obey His word
 - So after coming to that realization and armed with the knowledge of how to move the ark properly, David is ready
- David moves the ark as we learned in 1 Chronicles 15, and because he does it according to the word, God is with the people
 - In fact, David has the priests sacrifice an ox and a cow for each six paces they walked
 - Starting from Obed-edom's home, the ark is within sight of Jerusalem, so thankfully they don't walk that far
- This was a very powerful display of repentance on David's part, but it also reminds us of Samuel who said to obey is better than sacrifice
 - No matter how hard we work to show God we're repentant, it's still a reminder that we sinned in the first place
 - The best path is to avoid sin in the first place
- Interestingly, we're told in v.14 that David wore a priestly garment, a linen ephod
 - A linen ephod is a sleeveless white garment prescribed for priests
 - David wore it over his usual tunic, but the question is why did David don a priestly garment since He wasn't a Levite?
 - There are a couple of possible answers
 - First, a non-Levite wearing a linen ephod is not against the Law, so there is no sin in doing so necessarily
 - Had David performed sacrifices then he would have sinned, but there is no indication that he is sacrificing
 - In fact, v.14 says David was busy dancing before the procession, and the word for dancing is literally whirling
 - So David didn't assume any priestly functions on that day
 - So, it's likely that David put on the linen ephod to identify with the rest of the procession of priests, who would have been wearing the same
 - Remember the last time he tried to move the ark, David's mistake led to a man in his service being killed
 - So by wearing the same uniform as the men this time, David identifies with them as one of them
 - And in that sense, David puts himself in the place of Uzzah to show his men that he will take the fall this time should God act
- Secondly, David is a priest of a different order, the order of Melchizedek

- The order of Melchizedek is the priestly order of our Lord, which is a different order than the Levitical priesthood
 - Like any order, the office is handed down from father to son
 - Leading up to Christ, there was only one priest officiating from the order of Melchizedek on earth at any given time
 - And when that priest died, his son inherited the position
- The first priest in this order was Adam and the line of succession passed from father to son until it reached Jesus
 - As Hebrews teaches us, Jesus lives forever so He holds the office of Melchizedek forevermore
 - But in David's day, he was the Melchizedek, having received the position when his father, Jesse, died during Saul's reign
- So when David put on priestly garb, he was in effect acting as the priest Melchizedek, not as a Levitical priest under the Law of Moses
 - And in that respect, David offers us another clear picture of Christ, Who is both King and Priest in the order of Melchizedek
 - A Levite could never be king, since kings come from the tribe of Judah, not Levi
 - And a king like David from the tribe of Judah could never be a Levitical priest, since they must come from the tribe of Levi
 - But David (and Jesus, the son of David) can be both so long as they are priests of the order of Melchizedek
- So the ark arrives in Jerusalem, and with it comes the blessing of the Lord upon David and the people, who celebrate with David
 - But the pattern of David's sin having consequences for him and the people will continue, and in fact a previous sin raises its head

2Sam. 6:16 Then it happened as the ark of the LORD came into the city of David that Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart.

- Michal was David's first wife and a daughter of Saul which David left behind when he fled from Saul
- Later, Michal was wed to another man, whom she loved, so when David negotiated her return, he ripped Michal away
- And now we see that this experience has caused Michal to despise David and really who can blame her
 - David's selfish choice has set him with an adversary in his own home
 - She witnesses David's joy over the ark and his willingness to express that joy outwardly by dancing, and Michal disapproves
- But in v.16 we see that her disapproval was a result of deeper-seated dislike for David

- In fact, the writer calls her the daughter of Saul to link her attitude with her father's dislike of David
- Just as Saul was jealous of David's relationship with the Lord and the people, so now is his daughter following in Dad's footsteps

2Sam. 6:17 So they brought in the ark of the LORD and set it in its place inside the tent which David had pitched for it; and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.

2Sam. 6:18 When David had finished offering the burnt offering and the peace offering, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts.

2Sam. 6:19 Further, he distributed to all the people, to all the multitude of Israel, both to men and women, a cake of bread and one of dates and one of raisins to each one. Then all the people departed each to his house.

- David completes the process of moving the ark by preparing a tent to protect the ark, though the tabernacle itself still resides in Gibeon for now
 - David celebrates the day by speaking a blessing on the people in the name of the Lord, which means in keeping with the will of the Lord
 - So that means the Lord has moved David's heart to issue this blessing, which the Lord intends to fulfill in His purpose
 - This is the blessing for obedience to the Law and to the word of God, which the people will see in coming years
 - And in a gesture of kindness, David has gifts given to the people from his own storehouse
 - Each person present receives a cake of bread, a cake of dates and a cake of raisins
 - These were precious and prized treats in that day, and the people would have been thankful for them
 - David's gifts commonly represented prosperity and fertility, and they follow in a long tradition of the Jewish people celebrating with food
 - Perhaps more than any other culture, Jewish culture revolves around food and feasts
 - And we see that tradition reflected here
 - But in the background, Michal is fuming at her husband and sees opportunity to lecture him upon his return

2Sam. 6:20 But when David returned to bless his household, Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David and said, "How the king of Israel distinguished himself today! He uncovered himself today in the eyes of his servants' maids as one of the foolish ones shamelessly uncovers himself!"

- Michal’s complaint boils down to dignity...she complains that David acted in an undignified way leading the ark in the way that he did
 - So we need to read between the lines in Michal’s complaint to understand the real issue
 - Because as so often happens in marriages, the real complaint is something other than what’s being argued
 - She begins sarcastically saying “How the king distinguished himself today!”
 - Her specific charge is that David uncovered himself in the eyes of the servants, which refers to David’s men in general
 - Keep in mind, David was not dressed immodestly, so we must understand her complaint in relative terms
 - She’s upset that a king would dress at a level equal to his subjects rather than to maintain a superior, regal appearance
 - So she speaks in exaggerated terms about being “uncovered” and shameless
 - In truth, Michal despises David not for the way he dressed or danced
 - Most likely, she probably hated David because he abandoned her years ago and never returned for her when he had chances
 - Instead, he marries other women while on the run
 - And finally, David took her away forcibly from the husband who remained devoted to her even to the point of chasing her
 - And now that David has taken her father’s place as king, she can’t view him with respect, and watching his dance was just the last straw
- David immediately recognizes that Michal’s true concerns were not with his dignity as king but with his relationship with her and with the Lord

2Sam. 6:21 So David said to Michal, “It was before the LORD, who chose me above your father and above all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel; therefore I will celebrate before the LORD.

2Sam. 6:22 “I will be more lightly esteemed than this and will be humble in my own eyes, but with the maids of whom you have spoken, with them I will be distinguished.”

2Sam. 6:23 Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death.

- David corrects his wife saying that he was dancing not before his servants but before the Lord
 - And it was that same Lord who appointed David as king in place of Saul and his family
 - And for that reason David was celebrating before the Lord he says
- Then importantly, David adds that his dignity (or being esteemed) before the Lord is not his first concern

- David says he will be more lightly esteemed than this, which means that he has even less reason to be esteemed
- Dancing before the people is the least of his faults, in other words, and for that reason David will remain humble
- And as he remains humble in his own eyes, he expects the Lord to make David distinguished before the people of Israel
- These are remarkable words spoken by a powerful man who had every reason to be prideful and to demand respect from the people
 - And had David demanded that respect, he no doubt would have received it
 - But if you have to demand respect and authority, then you truly have neither
- David displays perhaps his single greatest quality as a leader: humility
 - So many leaders (and individual Christians) would do well to remember David's example and follow it
 - How many ministries have fallen to pride because of a prideful leader who forgot to please God and began to please himself?
- This split between Michal and David led to their estrangement it would seem
 - In v.23 the writer gives us a footnote on her life saying she never had children with David
 - Given David's fertility with his other wives, it seems that either David and Michal were never intimate again
 - Or else the Lord prevented her from conceiving
 - But what's also clear is that David had a relationship with the Lord that Michal lacked
 - She couldn't celebrate with David in his joy over the Lord, nor did she respect his relationship in that regard
 - Alexander Whyte said this about David and Michal

Never, surely, were man and wife more unequally yoked together than was David, the man after God's own heart, with Mical, Saul's daughter. What was David's meat was Michal's poison. What was sweeter than honey to David was gall and wormwood to Michal. The things that had become dearer and dearer to David's heart every day, those were the very things that drove Michal absolutely mad; furiously and ungovernably mad that day on which the ark of God was brought up to the city of David.

- David did Michal wrong, and the consequence for David was to find a woman in his home who didn't know the Lord or love him
 - And David's right to the throne didn't justify his domestic neglect
 - As the anointed monarch of Israel, he cared for God's people with tenderness

- But as husband to Michal, he was a harsh and unfeeling husband to the woman who loved him and saved his life
- In the end, Michal's barrenness was a blessing for David and the nation because any son born to a daughter of Saul might have been a rival
 - But since none of Saul's sons survived and his daughters had no children, Saul's line comes to an end
 - And the dynasty of Saul ends here
- Moving into Chapter 7, the writer continues with the theme of David's blessing on the religious life of Israel

2Sam. 7:1 Now it came about when the king lived in his house, and the LORD had given him rest on every side from all his enemies,

2Sam. 7:2 that the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells within tent curtains."

2Sam. 7:3 Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your mind, for the LORD is with you."

- This scene takes place much later in David's life as king, and we know this because of the circumstances
 - Earlier in Chapter 5 we were told that David's palace was built with the help of Hiram, the king of Tyre who provided cedar trees
 - History records that Hiram ruled only during the last part of David's reign, and yet here we're told David is in his cedar home
- So this moment takes place late in David's life after the Lord had given David victory over all his enemies
 - That may have explained why Tyre was so generous to David
 - With the Philistines defeated along the coast, the Tyrians undoubtedly benefited from the lack of trading rivals
- So now David reflects on his position of wealth and safety living in a fine palace, and it dawns on him that the Lord's ark still dwelled in a tent
 - And so David consults with the prophet of that time, Nathan, suggesting that David should build a temple for the ark
 - Nathan responds to the suggestion by simply saying the king should do what he feels is best
 - That is the proper response for a prophet who hasn't heard from the Lord
 - Remember prophets were required by God to speak only what they were given to speak, for to do otherwise meant risking error
 - And if a prophet spoke error, it invalidated their ministry and required that they be killed under the Law
 - That rule was as much to protect the prophet from the people as it was to protect

the people from the prophet

- When a prophet knew that the penalty for speaking in error was death, it caused every prophet to pick his words carefully
 - So if he hadn't heard from the Lord on a matter, he declined to express an opinion to avoid being wrong
- So Nathan lets the king make his own decision telling David that since the Lord is with him, he can make the decision on his own
 - So David goes off thinking he has a splendid idea, but before he could act upon it, the Lord comes to Nathan with the answer

2Sam. 7:4 But in the same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying,

2Sam. 7:5 “Go and say to My servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD, “Are you the one who should build Me a house to dwell in?”

2Sam. 7:6 “For I have not dwelt in a house since the day I brought up the sons of Israel from Egypt, even to this day; but I have been moving about in a tent, even in a tabernacle.

2Sam. 7:7 “Wherever I have gone with all the sons of Israel, did I speak a word with one of the tribes of Israel, which I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, ‘Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?’”

- The Lord comes to Nathan that same night telling the prophet to remind David that the Lord never asked him to build a house
 - The Lord says that for all the years He has been with Israel since the time in the desert he has lived (contently) in a tent
 - That was all that God required for Himself, and as such He didn't need David to build God a house of cedar
 - This is such an interesting moment because it's God demonstrating the humility that David once possessed himself
 - How do we know the greatest of God? Is it from the greatness of the buildings that we build to honor God?
 - Isn't that just a demonstration of our own pride, especially when God Himself hasn't asked for such
 - Instead, God dwelled in tents because His greatness was self-evident and didn't depend on externals
 - Moreover, the Lord adds in v.7 that He never instructed any of the tribes of Israel to build Him a house
 - And when you think back to the years in the desert, the Lord gave Israel a lot of instructions on what to build and how
 - So if the Lord wanted something more impressive for Himself, He had plenty of chances to demand it
 - The point is the Lord has no need for our buildings and His honor was not

determined by them nor did He command that any be built

- Once again, good intentions do not substitute for obedience
 - And a good rule of thumb for knowing what God wants is to simply do the last thing you heard God tell you
 - And keep doing it until He tells you something new
- So then the Lord give Nathan the reason why He had not yet told anyone in Israel to build a permanent structure to house the ark

2Sam. 7:8 “Now therefore, thus you shall say to My servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, “I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people Israel.

2Sam. 7:9 “I have been with you wherever you have gone and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make you a great name, like the names of the great men who are on the earth.

2Sam. 7:10 “I will also appoint a place for My people Israel and will plant them, that they may live in their own place and not be disturbed again, nor will the wicked afflict them any more as formerly,

2Sam. 7:11 even from the day that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. The LORD also declares to you that the LORD will make a house for you.

2Sam. 7:12 “When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom.

2Sam. 7:13 “He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

2Sam. 7:14 “I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men,

2Sam. 7:15 but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you.

2Sam. 7:16 “Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.””

- This is an important passage in Scripture is commonly known as the Davidic Covenant, a special promise made to David
 - We’ll come back to this next week and discuss the context and content of the passage
 - And learn why a tent is the right thing for God now

- Last week we stopped our study in Chapter 7 as God was speaking to the prophet Nathan with a important promise for David
 - Earlier, David had suggested to the prophet that he should build a house for the Lord in Jerusalem
 - In effect, David was proposing to build God a temple in place of the tents that housed the tabernacle and the ark
 - David took note of his impressive home and felt self-conscience
 - And though certainly David's heart is in the right place, more or less, once more good intentions are not an excuse for disobedience
 - In this case, David was acting in ignorance of God's plan for his temple and for His people Israel
 - So the Lord sends Nathan a word for David to correct him and to inform David of God's plan for Israel
 - Let's re-read last week's text beginning at v.4 as the Lord speaks to Nathan

2Sam. 7:4 But in the same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying,

2Sam. 7:5 “Go and say to My servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD, “Are you the one who should build Me a house to dwell in?”

2Sam. 7:6 “For I have not dwelt in a house since the day I brought up the sons of Israel from Egypt, even to this day; but I have been moving about in a tent, even in a tabernacle.

2Sam. 7:7 “Wherever I have gone with all the sons of Israel, did I speak a word with one of the tribes of Israel, which I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, ‘Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?’”

- The Lord begins by chastising David for presuming he had the right to decide for God when and how He would build a house for His glory
 - The Lord rebukes David with three observations
 - First, in v.6 the Lord reminds David that He has been content to dwell in a tent for hundreds of years since the Exodus
 - So there was no pressing need for David to change that situation now
 - In fact, the only reason David has for improving God's lifestyle was because he felt guilty over his own lavish lifestyle
 - Secondly, in v.7 the Lord reminds David that God never commanded Israel to build His house in any form *other* than a tent
 - This comment supports one of my favorite pieces of advice for any Christian
 - When you wonder what you should do to obey God, always do the last thing He told you
 - And keep doing it until you hear the Lord clearly tell you to do something else
 - The last thing God told Israel was to build a tent, and until they heard

- something new from the Lord, that's what He wanted
- Finally, back in v.5 the Lord asks rhetorically are *you* the one to build Me a house?
 - The Lord is intimating that David was not going to be the one God choose to accomplish that task
 - Later, the Lord will tell David that He has someone else in mind
 - But clearly David assumed a privilege for himself that he shouldn't
- So altogether David made three errors: he ignored history, acted without God's direction and presumed too much for himself
 - Those three mistakes are almost always at fault when a believer acts outside God's will yet with good intentions
 - We overlook the history of God's work, we act without a specific word of instruction and we assume God will use us for the work
 - And because of those errors, we move against the counsel of God, and the solution is very simple
 - We just need to ask the Lord for direction *before* we act, both in prayer and by consulting His word
 - Did you notice that David never thought to ask God directly about his idea to build a temple?
 - Earlier, David sought the Lord's will time and time again, as when he asked about engaging in battles with the Philistines
 - Nor did David review the Lord's instructions in Exodus, where he would have been reminded that the Lord only asked for a tent
 - And in particular, David thought too well of himself when he assumed he would be chosen for such a task
 - The Lord corrects David's presumption but He does it gently

2Sam. 7:8 “Now therefore, thus you shall say to My servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, “I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people Israel.

2Sam. 7:9 “I have been with you wherever you have gone and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make you a great name, like the names of the great men who are on the earth.

2Sam. 7:10 “I will also appoint a place for My people Israel and will plant them, that they may live in their own place and not be disturbed again, nor will the wicked afflict them any more as formerly,

2Sam. 7:11 even from the day that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. The LORD also declares to you that the LORD will make a house for you.

2Sam. 7:12 “When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will

establish his kingdom.

- In this passage the Lord makes promises to David and to Israel that we call the Davidic Covenant, and the Lord begins by reassuring David of his importance
 - The Lord reminds David that He took the boy from a pasture, literally shepherding, to make him king and shepherd over God's people
 - And in v.9 the Lord tells David that He's been with David throughout everything that's happened since then
 - And the Lord cut off all of David's enemies and will make David's name great throughout history
 - Indeed, David's name is counted among the greatest men who have ever lived, even among those who never read a Bible
 - Simply put, there is no leader of Israel held in higher regard even after all these years
 - The Lord is reassuring David that even though he won't build the temple, David will still play an important part in God's plan
 - And in fact, David's greatness will supersede the construction of a temple
 - David and his line are key in God fulfilling His promises to the people of Israel concerning a Messiah and a Kingdom
- In v.10 the Lord begins to lay out that plan in the form of specific promises, which both repeat earlier promises God gave Israel and add new promises
 - First, the Lord says He will appoint a place for His people to be planted, a land of their own where they will dwell in peace
 - This is a continuation of a promise God gave to Abraham and his descendants in the Abrahamic Covenant

Gen. 26:3 “Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham.

Gen. 26:4 “I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed;

- God promised Abraham his people would have a land to call their own, and now the Lord repeats that promise to David
- But notice the verb tense in v.10 is future tense, so clearly David's achievements are not the fulfillment of God's plan
 - And the key distinction outlined here is living “in peace” and without being disturbed (meaning uprooted) again
 - The people of God would one day occupy the land God gave them in peace never to

leave again

- But no one could say that had come true in David's day, and the Lord reminds David of that fact in v.11
 - The Lord says Israel has lacked peace in the land ever since the time of Judges, when Joshua completed conquest of the land
 - So yes, Israel is in the land, but their occupancy couldn't be considered a fulfillment of what God promised
 - There was still more history to follow
- I believe the Lord clarified these promises to David because he is in danger of assuming those promise were already fulfilled in his time
 - And it would have been natural for David to make that assumption given his situation
 - Under David Israel had grown much larger and had become much safer than it ever was under Saul or before
 - Saul's kingdom consisted of just a narrow strip of land from the tribe of Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south
 - And Saul never conquered the coastal plain because the Philistines held that land
- But by David's time, the nation had expanded several times over stretching from present-day Syria to the Sinai of Egypt
 - It also included the coastal plains, the Arabah and the area of present-day Jordan... all lands Saul could never conquer
 - So from David's perspective, his kingdom seemed to be the safe and secure place God promised to Abraham and his descendants
 - And that's also why David began assuming he should build a house to the Lord... because David assumed the kingdom had come
- To interpret the covenants of God properly, including the Davidic Covenant here, we must understand an important principle of Scripture
 - I call this principle the Law of Suggested Fulfillment
 - The Law says that certain events may appear to fulfill a promise of God, yet upon closer examination they fall short in some way
 - These earlier events merely hint or suggest the eventual fulfillment of a covenant but they are not the actual fulfillment
 - For example, the Lord promised Abraham that his descendants would occupy the land of Canaan one day
 - Four hundred years later, Joshua crossed the Jordan and the people entered the land of Canaan
 - By the time of Judges, the people had set up residence in the land in tribal territories
 - And then by David's day the nation possessed virtually everything that the Lord promised to Abraham

- But those events were not a fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant because they fell short of addressing all the terms God set forth
 - First, the people of Israel were not able to hold the land, yet the promise to Abraham was that Israel would have it forever
 - Secondly, they were constantly fighting off enemies and losing ground at time, but the promise was to live in peace
 - So scripture and history prove the Abrahamic covenant has yet to be fulfilled
 - And those earlier events merely suggested the way that God will one day fulfill His promises
- If we overlook the law of suggested fulfillment, we can become guilty of adopting an “over-realized eschatology”
 - That’s the theological term for mistakenly assuming a prophecy has been fulfilled before its time
 - And I believe David made that mistake when he offered to build the house of God
 - David may have assumed that his reign was the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham and therefore the kingdom had come
 - As a result, David sought to build a house for the Lord to equal the grandeur of the Kingdom itself
 - That’s why the Lord appears to Nathan and says (in my own words)...
 - “Yes David, you are important to the Kingdom, but you are getting ahead of my plan...”
 - “In a future day, the people of Israel will dwell in their land as I promised, free from all enemies and never to leave again...”
 - “And in that day I will build a house for myself, and I will have a house for you as well (v.11)...”
 - “But you will not build that house, nor will it come about in your lifetime”
 - In v.12 the Lord tells David his days will come to completion before these things come to pass
 - And then after David, the Lord will raise up a descendant Who will establish the throne of his kingdom forever
 - So David isn’t going to be king over the Kingdom, because that awaits a future King Who comes after David is gone
- Before we move ahead in the passage, we can already clearly see that the Lord is speaking about the future Kingdom of the Messiah, the Millennial Kingdom
 - The Bible promises that a Kingdom is coming, a worldwide empire that Jesus Himself will rule over as King
 - The first mention of a future ruler over Israel comes as a prophecy about Judah spoken by Jacob

Gen. 49:10 “The scepter shall not depart from Judah,
Nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet,
Until Shiloh comes,
And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

- The right to rule over Israel will belong to Judah until Shiloh comes, which is a reference to the Messiah
 - And then to him shall be the obedience of all nations, referring to the Messiah’s Kingdom
- This Kingdom will begin at Jesus’ return, and Revelation 20 tells us this Kingdom will last 1,000 years
 - A well-known passage in Isaiah describes this Kingdom

Is. 2:2 Now it will come about that

In the last days

The mountain of the house of the LORD

Will be established as the chief of the mountains,

And will be raised above the hills;

And all the nations will stream to it.

Is. 2:3 And many peoples will come and say,

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,

To the house of the God of Jacob;

That He may teach us concerning His ways

And that we may walk in His paths.”

For the law will go forth from Zion

And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Is. 2:4 And He will judge between the nations,

And will render decisions for many peoples;

And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.

Nation will not lift up sword against nation,

And never again will they learn war.

- Isaiah describes a time to come when the highest mountain on earth will be in Jerusalem
 - And on that mountain will sit the house of God, the house that the Lord tells David will be built by a future King
 - The nations of the world will come streaming to Israel to hear the word of the Lord and Israel will live there in peace
 - Again, this matches what the Lord tells David in 2 Samuel 7:10
- Elsewhere, Isaiah gives us even more details...

Is. 11:10 Then in that day

**The nations will resort to the root of Jesse,
Who will stand as a signal for the peoples;
And His resting place will be glorious.**

Is. 11:11 Then it will happen on that day that the Lord
Will again recover the second time with His hand
The remnant of His people, who will remain,
From Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath,
And from the islands of the sea.

Is. 11:12 And He will lift up a standard for the nations
And assemble the banished ones of Israel,
And will gather the dispersed of Judah
From the four corners of the earth.

Is. 11:13 Then the jealousy of Ephraim will depart,
And those who harass Judah will be cut off;
Ephraim will not be jealous of Judah,
And Judah will not harass Ephraim.

- At this time the world will look to the root of Jesse (i.e., Jesus) who will rule from a glorious place in Israel
 - And at that time the Lord will recover or regather His people in the land, which implies He scattered them outside the land
 - And finally, they will live without jealousy and hatred, so that all Israel will be at peace together in the land
- So in the Kingdom, Israel receives everything God promised to Abraham, including living in the land, permanently and in peace along with a king and a house
 - First, notice in v. 11 the Lord says that He will provide a house for David
 - This conversation got started when David offered to build a house for God, but now God says He will make a house for David
 - In other words, the Lord says He will do the work to bring about a Kingdom and home for His people Israel, including David
 - David isn't the one who brings the Kingdom into existence nor is David the one who can fulfill God's promises
 - God alone fulfills His promises by His own might and power and in His timing, and we merely receive the blessings of God
 - Remember, the covenant God gave Abraham was a suzerainty covenant, which is a grant from a greater to a lessor
 - God granted certain promises to Abraham, and Abraham was never asked to accept or reject them
 - God alone decided what He would do and the fulfillment of those promises didn't depend on Abraham in any way

- God even put Abraham to sleep when the covenant was established to emphasize Abraham played no part in it
 - Similar, the covenant God makes with David here is a suzerainty covenant, because the promises are unconditional
 - David isn't asked to agree or accept this covenant, because God has decreed it unilaterally
 - Moreover David has no obligations under this covenant, and in fact the Lord is emphasizing that David can't do anything
 - The Lord will do everything to bring about the fulfillment of these promises, including building David a house
- Now up to about this point in the text, we can clearly see the Lord has been talking of fulfilling the Abrahamic Covenant in the Kingdom
 - But all of this was background to the main part of the Davidic Covenant, which comes in the form of new promises made to David and Israel
 - These new promises are built upon the earlier promises made to Abraham, so that they depend on that earlier covenant
 - But the Davidic Covenant adds new details that were never given previously to Abraham

2Sam. 7:13 “He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

2Sam. 7:14 “I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men,

2Sam. 7:15 but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you.

2Sam. 7:16 “Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.””

- In v.13 the Lord says this future descendant of David will build a house for God and God will establish his throne of his kingdom forever
 - Given what we have studied already, this verse appears to refer to Jesus building the temple in the Kingdom and ruling forever
 - But there is a problem with that interpretation, because the next verse (v.14) says this ruler will commit sin and be disciplined
- Since we know Jesus commits no sin, this leads most scholars to conclude the text switches from Jesus' Kingdom to Solomon's kingdom
 - Solomon did come forth from David, of course, and he built the first temple
 - And while Jesus doesn't have sin, Solomon certainly had plenty of sin
- But other details in the passage *don't* fit Solomon yet they *do* fit Jesus

- For example, in v.12 Solomon was not raised up after David dies, neither in the sense of being born nor in the sense of becoming king
 - First, we know Solomon wasn't born after David died, and in fact he was already a grown man by this time
 - But neither was Solomon installed as king after David died

1Kings 1:32 Then King David said, “Call to me Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada.” And they came into the king’s presence.

1Kings 1:33 The king said to them, “Take with you the servants of your lord, and have my son Solomon ride on my own mule, and bring him down to Gihon.

1Kings 1:34 “Let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there as king over Israel, and blow the trumpet and say, ‘Long live King Solomon!’

1Kings 1:35 “Then you shall come up after him, and he shall come and sit on my throne and be king in my place; for I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and Judah.”

- David moved to have Solomon anointed as king before David died because he worried about contention for his throne
- So Solomon can't be the descendant that is raised up after David has died...only Jesus fits that description
- Then in v.13 it says that Solomon's throne will go on forever, but that's clearly not true
 - Solomon's throne didn't even last one generation after he died, being split into two kingdoms instead
 - Only Jesus' throne goes on forever
- And in v.14 the Lord says He will be a father to this future king and this king will be a son to God
 - But nowhere does God ever call Solomon His son nor does Solomon call God His Father
 - Only Jesus is called the Son of God the Father
- Finally, although Solomon had sin, the Bible never reports Solomon being corrected for His sin by the rod or strokes of men
 - But Jesus was struck by rods and the strokes of the sons of men
 - And that detail leads us to our solution to resolve this dilemma
- I believe the transition we have in English for v.14 has missed the nuance intended by the context
 - A more literal rendering of the Hebrew of v.14 would be:
 - “Because of sins committed, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the wounds of the sons of men”

- God the Father will chasten this future King He calls Son with the rod of men and the wounds of the sons of men because of sin
- Isaiah later says the same thing about this King to come

**Is. 53:5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions,
He was crushed for our iniquities;
The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him,
And by His scourging we are healed.**

- The Lord is revealing that this future Kingdom can only come because a King is willing to take the penalty of sin upon Himself
 - Obviously neither David nor Solomon could qualify to do that
 - And though the Father subjects His Son to this penalty, the Lord says in v.15 that His lovingkindness will not depart from Him
- So now with that change the entire passage fits Jesus perfectly, Who is the King to come and rule the Kingdom forever
 - And in that future Kingdom, all the promises given to Abraham and David will be fulfilled
 - And that's the key here...remembering this entire passage is an elaboration on the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant
- So if we say the text is speaking of Solomon, then we would also be saying that the Davidic Covenant was fulfilled in Solomon's time
 - And if that were true, then it means the Abrahamic Covenant is likewise fulfilled in that time...except we know that is not true
 - So here again, by forgetting the Law of Suggestive Fulfillment we adopt an over-realized eschatology
- Instead, we understand that the passage is speaking of promises that will be fulfilled by Jesus in the Kingdom
 - As the New Testament affirms to us:

Luke 1:31 “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.

Luke 1:32 “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David;

Luke 1:33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.”

- In the meantime, Solomon's kingdom and the temple he builds are not the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant
 - They are simply earlier events that suggest the later fulfillment, which is an example

of the Law of Suggestive Fulfillment at work

- Solomon's Kingdom suggests or hints of Jesus' Kingdom, and it serves to show David and Israel that God will keep His promises
- And that is why the Lord appears to David in the first place...to give David perspective on what's coming so David doesn't run ahead
 - Notice in v.16 the Lord sums up everything He's spoken to David saying your house and your kingdom and your throne shall endure forever
 - This is the essence of the Davidic Covenant...a three-part promise that David's dynasty would be permanent
 - Unlike Saul, who saw God's lovingkindness depart and his dynasty end, the Lord would never allow David's dynasty to end
 - David's descendant would forever occupy the temple of God and rule over Israel
 - But the permanence of that dynasty was not established in David's longevity or Solomon's longevity but by Christ's longevity
 - Jesus being a descendant of David fulfills this promise when He assumes the throne in the Kingdom
 - Moreover, as David goes, so goes the nation of Israel, as I mentioned in a prior week
 - So because David was blessed to see his dynasty continue, so the nation of Israel is richly blessed by the Messiah's rule
 - As Isaiah says, in the Kingdom their nation will be the chief nation on the earth because the King dwells in Jerusalem
 - Until that time, the promise awaits to be fulfilled, so in the meantime the Lord revealed these details so David would be patient
 - Being patient to see the promises of God fulfilled in their proper time is considered a testimony of faith
 - The Bible points us to the patriarchs who received the original promises of God as examples of such patience
- Like David, they too heard they would receive an inheritance in the land, and like David they knew it would come only after they died
 - In the book of Hebrews, we're told that Abraham and his sons lived as wanderers in tents in the land rather than putting down roots

Heb. 11:8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.

Heb. 11:9 By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise;

Heb. 11:10 for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

Heb. 11:13 All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

Heb. 11:14 For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own.

Heb. 11:15 And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return.

Heb. 11:16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.

- Abraham lived as a nomad as a testimony to the world that he knew God's promise of the land awaited a future kingdom
 - Abraham, Isaac and Jacob knew they would die and be resurrected
 - And only then in the resurrected life would they receive the promised land permanently
- So in their first earthly lifetime, the writer says they refused to establish a permanent home in the land that God gave to them
 - Since they knew God's plan wasn't to give them that land in this lifetime, they didn't bother trying to take it for themselves
 - They were content to live as wanderers, which made clear to everyone that they didn't expect to receive anything now
 - It was the ultimate demonstration that they were waiting for God to fulfill His promises after the resurrection
- At the end of that chapter, the writer concludes that our lesson should be to think in the same way

Heb. 11:39 And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised,

Heb. 11:40 because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.

Heb. 12:28 Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;

- We've gained God's approval by our faith alone, yet we will not receive what He has promised in this lifetime
- God has provided something better for us, something better than you can't find in this world

- And we will all receive it when we are made perfect in the Kingdom after our resurrection
 - Until then, we show our gratitude to God with acceptable service done in reverence and awe
 - We are saved by our faith, but we serve Him because of His love for us
- That's the kingdom God is talking to David about now
 - But for the same reason, the Lord chose for His ark to dwell in tents also, to offer the same testimony to Israel
 - The permanent home for God to dwell among His people had not yet arrived
 - And it won't arrive until the Kingdom comes
- Now the chapter ends with David's response to the Lord's revelation through the prophet

2Sam. 7:17 In accordance with all these words and all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.

2Sam. 7:18 Then David the king went in and sat before the LORD, and he said, "Who am I, O Lord GOD, and what is my house, that You have brought me this far?"

2Sam. 7:19 "And yet this was insignificant in Your eyes, O Lord GOD, for You have spoken also of the house of Your servant concerning the distant future. And this is the custom of man, O Lord GOD.

2Sam. 7:20 "Again what more can David say to You? For You know Your servant, O Lord GOD!"

2Sam. 7:21 "For the sake of Your word, and according to Your own heart, You have done all this greatness to let Your servant know.

2Sam. 7:22 "For this reason You are great, O Lord GOD; for there is none like You, and there is no God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

2Sam. 7:23 "And what one nation on the earth is like Your people Israel, whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people and to make a name for Himself, and to do a great thing for You and awesome things for Your land, before Your people whom You have redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, from nations and their gods?"

2Sam. 7:24 "For You have established for Yourself Your people Israel as Your own people forever, and You, O LORD, have become their God.

2Sam. 7:25 "Now therefore, O LORD God, the word that You have spoken concerning Your servant and his house, confirm it forever, and do as You have spoken,

2Sam. 7:26 that Your name may be magnified forever, by saying, 'The LORD of hosts is God over Israel'; and may the house of Your servant David be established before You.

2Sam. 7:27 “For You, O LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have made a revelation to Your servant, saying, ‘I will build you a house’; therefore Your servant has found courage to pray this prayer to You.

2Sam. 7:28 “Now, O Lord GOD, You are God, and Your words are truth, and You have promised this good thing to Your servant.

2Sam. 7:29 “Now therefore, may it please You to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue forever before You. For You, O Lord GOD, have spoken; and with Your blessing may the house of Your servant be blessed forever.”

- David’s response to the Lord’s revelation is exactly as you might expect and hope it would be...astonishment at God’s grace and humility over God’s choice
 - David asks who am I and who is my family that you would bring me this far?
 - This is always the first and right response to someone receiving God’s grace... how did I deserve what is undeserved?
 - When you realize that God chose you to be part of the family of God for no reason except His grace, it leaves you in awe
 - Secondly, David says the wonderful things God did for David and his family are insignificant compared to the honor of receiving God’s revelation
 - And this is the second response to God’s grace
 - Naturally, we give thanks for the many ways God confirms us in this life but none can compare to the blessing of God’s word
 - And new Christians may struggle to appreciate this truth, but the longer you walk with Jesus the more the word means
 - And David’s third response is to say he is speechless in v.20, because he says the Lord knows his heart
 - When you have heard from God as David did or learned from God’s word as we do, what can you say in response?
 - Every mouth is shut in the presence of the truth of God
- Next, David praises the name and glory and work of God
 - In v.21 says that God has done these great things not for David’s sake but for the sake of God’s word and God’s heart, meaning His desires
 - God’s word is the most powerful force in the Universe
 - In fact, it is infinitely more powerful than the Universe itself, since the Universe was created by it
 - So when the word of God goes forth, it becomes a force of its own
 - And when God made promises to Abraham, nothing could stop them from coming to pass
 - And David now sees that truth at work through the details God has revealed to him

- You will have the same response when you see the word of God working itself out in your life
- God does as His will desires and nothing in the Universe can change it, and that's a great thing for those who are covered by His promises
 - Notice David says in v.21 that the Lord has done all this greatness to let David know the future...
 - In other words, God didn't have to reveal anything to David, yet He did so as an act of His love, and David marvels at that
 - How often do you marvel at the great things God has done to reveal His word to you?
- And in v.22 David sums it up saying God is great, there is none like you and no God besides you
 - And David says this is all according to what we have heard
 - David's referring again to the word of God which was mostly an oral experience in that day since written text was rare
 - Today we would say God is exactly as the word of God says
- Have you noticed a pattern so far? God's love and mercy and greatness is directly associated with Him revealing and keeping His word
 - The word of God is how we come to know God and how we learn of God
 - And it's proof of God's love for us and the evidence of His greatness
 - It's His power to do all that we hope and the thing that distinguishes Him from all false gods
- Having asked "why me" to being awestruck by receiving God's word, having nothing to say in response and then praising God's greatness...
 - Now David recognizes the importance of Israel in God's plan
 - In vs.23-26 David says that there no other nation on the earth like Israel nor will there ever be
 - Israel is central to God's plan, which is now plainly and clearly evident in the Davidic Covenant promises
 - Israel was created by God, redeemed from Egypt and made into a nation so that He could bring about the promises He made to the world
 - Those promises are sure and cannot change, for if God could go back on His promises to Israel, then He could do the same to you
 - And notice in v.26 David declares that God will forever be known as the God over Israel
 - Remember, the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants are both suzerainty covenants, which means unconditional covenants
 - They are not dependent on Israel's obedience in any way, so they will come to pass for Israel without question
 - Israel's disobedience under the Law brought certain consequences spelled out

in the Law

- But the nation's unfaithfulness could not lessen God's faithfulness...He is forever the God of Israel
- Finally, David says in v.27 that the revelation of God gave him the courage to pray this prayer
 - Your courage to pray or testify or do anything in the name of Christ will grow as you devote yourself to the study of His word
 - It's not simply the transfer of information...it's the way we build a relationship with God
 - And that relationship changes us on the inside bringing us, among other things, courage to speak and act in His name
 - And David now rests in the promises he's heard and he knows they will come to pass without a doubt
 - If you've ever heard someone say they rest in the word of God, this what they mean
 - Resting in the word isn't feeling drowsy or comforted...though you may experience those feelings too
 - I once shared a plane flight with Henry Blackaby
 - He was seated next to me, but I didn't recognize him at first so we passed most of the flight in silence
 - It was night, and I started reading my Bible and soon fell asleep
 - As we were preparing to land, I finally recognized Blackaby and introduced myself and apologized for not speaking earlier
 - He responded it was OK, since he could see I was resting in the Lord
 - But truly resting in the word means relying upon it and depending upon it
 - Knowing it's the rock and the enduring thing in the universe gives us confidence when everything else is falling apart
 - And now David knew that his future and the future of his dynasty and the nation itself was assured
 - And that gave David rest

- Tonight we cover the final summary chapter in the section chronicling David's successes and blessings upon the nation of Israel
 - Beginning in Chapter 5, the writer has shown us the magnitude of David's impact on the nation of Israel
 - A nation that had previously been a small, weak and persecuted people surrounded by enemies were now turning into a superpower
 - As a result of God's anointing upon David and his rise to power as king, he has seen blessing as have the people of Israel
 - And those blessings have come in the form of David's growing family and wealth, and the nation's military, economic and religious strength
 - In the chapters we've studied already, we've watched as David has established the nation's capital in Jerusalem
 - He has moved into a place and fathered many sons and daughters
 - He has brought the ark to Jerusalem, expanded the borders of the nation and defeated many of its enemies
 - The nation is growing in number, prospering in the land and establishing a peaceful existence in the land
 - And then last week, we studied the moment the Lord blessed David and the people with blessings that will extend far beyond David's lifetime
 - The Lord established a covenant with David promising to preserve David's dynasty forever through a ruler to come
 - And under that ruler, the world will experience a kingdom that never ends and fulfills the promises God gave to Israel
 - This Kingdom is many years away, but David is overwhelmed at the grace of God and expressed his thanks at the end of Chapter 7
- And now in the final chapter in this section, we return to where we started: a review of David's military success against Israel's enemies
 - We start with the description of a series of conquests that David accomplished early in his reign as king

2Sam. 8:1 Now after this it came about that David defeated the Philistines and subdued them; and David took control of the chief city from the hand of the Philistines.

2Sam. 8:2 He defeated Moab, and measured them with the line, making them lie down on the ground; and he measured two lines to put to death and one full line to keep alive. And the Moabites became servants to David, bringing tribute.

2Sam. 8:3 Then David defeated Hadadezer, the son of Rehob king of Zobah, as he went to restore his rule at the River.

2Sam. 8:4 David captured from him 1,700 horsemen and 20,000 foot soldiers; and David hamstringed the chariot horses, but reserved enough of them for 100 chariots.

2Sam. 8:5 When the Arameans of Damascus came to help Hadadezer, king of Zobah, David killed 22,000 Arameans.

2Sam. 8:6 Then David put garrisons among the Arameans of Damascus, and the Arameans became servants to David, bringing tribute. And the LORD helped David wherever he went.

- As I mentioned at the start of this section of 2 Samuel, Chapters 5-8 are a summary of David's impact on the nation as king
 - As such, they are organized topically, not chronologically, so these scenes jump around in time
 - Last week in Chapter 7 we studied an event that took place near the end of David's life
 - He was in his palace, wealthy and at peace having defeated all Israel's enemies in his day
 - And now the writer takes us back to the beginning of David's reign to learn how David defeated those enemies
 - But the opening of v.1 is confusing because it starts with "now after this..." indicating these battles came after Chapter 7
 - But the opening verse of Chapter 7 says specifically that chapter happened *after* David defeated his enemies
 - The most logical explanation is that the writer is referring back to his prior chapter on military conquests, which is Chapter 5
 - Notice how Chapter 5 ends...

2Sam. 5:25 Then David did so, just as the LORD had commanded him, and struck down the Philistines from Geba as far as Gezer.

- As Chapter 5 ends, David has defeated the Philistines throughout the land
- And now jumps to the start of this chapter, and the action picks up right where it left off in Chapter 5...

2Sam. 8:1 Now after this it came about that David defeated the Philistines and subdued them; and David took control of the chief city from the hand of the Philistines.

- So the writer has doubled back to the topic of David's military victories, and picks up again where he left off with the Philistines defeated
 - David has taken control of the Philistine's greatest city, Gath, and is now the undisputed leader of the land previously held by the Philistines
 - This was no small thing in that day nor in the annals of history

- The land of Canaan had been largely under Egyptian rule for the better part of 500 years
 - As Egyptian control waned, the Philistines exerted their power hoping to fill the vacuum left by the Egyptians
 - But now David has defeated the Philistines and established Israel as the emerging superpower in the fertile crescent, and successors to Egypt
 - The Philistines had occupied the lands directly west of Israel along the Mediterranean coast and coastal plains
 - Now Israel's western border was free of any enemy
 - From here the writer describes additional campaigns that took place in the east, north and south, removing Israel's enemies from all sides
 - We already see the Philistines mentioned in v.1, and they were the power along the western coast
 - Then in v.2 the writer describes the battle against the Moabites
- When David defeated the Moabites, he employed an unusual method of determining who to allow to live and who to execute
 - David had the men of Moab lie down on the ground and measured their height according to a "line"
 - Those men measuring one "line" were allowed to live, while those that measured more than one line (i.e., two lines) died
 - The point being that David allowed young men, probably under the age of adulthood, to live while killing all full grown males
 - Those left alive became servants of David, subjects of his kingdom, and brought tribute
 - Now as we hear this, we might think this was cruel or unnecessary on David's part
 - But we need to see it in light of the customs of warfare in that day
 - Customarily, a defeated enemy was entirely wiped out by the victors leaving no one left alive, not men or women or children
 - The defeated nation was eradicated so that they could never again threaten the victors
 - So in allowing young men to live, David was showing unusual restraint and kindness toward Moab
 - Perhaps David did this because his grandmother, Ruth, was a Moabite
 - It was also a risky move on David's part, because it opened the possibility the Moabites would rise up in a future generation
- Next, in vs.3-11 we're told of David's victories in the north against Zobah and Aram
 - It started with David defeating Hadadezer, the king of Zobah near the river Euphrates
 - His name means "Hadad is help", and Hadad was a chief god of the Arameans

- After defeating Hadadezer, David makes a point of dismantling their means of waging war against Israel
 - In v.4 we're told that David captured 1,700 horseman and 20,000 foot soldiers
 - But in 1 Chronicles 18, the same story reports 7,000 horsemen with 1,000 chariots
 - Because we have 1 Chronicles, we can know that the text in 2 Samuel was miscopied
 - So since the actual number was 7,000 horsemen with 1,000 chariots, that means at least 7,000 horses
 - David "hamstrung" those horses, which means he cut tendons in their legs rendering the horses useless as an animal of war
 - These animals could still live in this condition though they could never support a rider again
 - Once more, David shows restraint and mercy while ensuring that an enemy of Israel couldn't prosecute war again
- As David was engaged in battle against Hadadezer, we're told in v.5 that the king called for help from an ally, Aram
 - Aram had been a long-standing negative influence on Israel and an enemy
 - In the time of Judges, the people of Israel followed after the idols of Aram among other nations
 - And so Aram's allegiance with Zobah gave David the opportunity to defeat Israel's enemy on the north
 - David defeats Aram as well and kills 22,000 Arameans, which was essentially their entire standing army
 - David then stationed garrisons of Jewish soldiers in the land of Aram to subdue the people and guard the territory
 - And in v.6 we're told that these too became servants of David and brought tribute to David
 - At this point, the writer felt the need to emphasize that these amazing military victories were evidence of the Lord helping David
 - David gained these incredible victories over great distances and against powerful enemies because God wanted David to win
 - The Lord was bringing about a result that served His purpose in blessing David and Israel
 - But the Lord was also producing a picture of Jesus through David, which He does time and again
 - Once more, we have a picture of what God will do for Israel in the times of the Kingdom
 - When the Kingdom arrives on earth, the enemies that surround Israel will become servants of Israel

Deut. 30:4 “If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back.

Deut. 30:5 “The LORD your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.

Deut. 30:6 “Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live.

Deut. 30:7 “The LORD your God will inflict all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you.

- And in the book of Ezekiel, we’re given specific prophecies concerning how the Lord will deal with Moab, Aram and others
- So in David’s day, the Lord shows a picture of what the Messiah will do in His day, though in a greater and permanent way

2Sam. 8:7 David took the shields of gold which were carried by the servants of Hadadezer and brought them to Jerusalem.

2Sam. 8:8 From Betah and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, King David took a very large amount of bronze.

2Sam. 8:9 Now when Toi king of Hamath heard that David had defeated all the army of Hadadezer,

2Sam. 8:10 Toi sent Joram his son to King David to greet him and bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer and defeated him; for Hadadezer had been at war with Toi. And Joram brought with him articles of silver, of gold and of bronze.

2Sam. 8:11 King David also dedicated these to the LORD, with the silver and gold that he had dedicated from all the nations which he had subdued:

2Sam. 8:12 from Aram and Moab and the sons of Ammon and the Philistines and Amalek, and from the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

- Not only did the Lord grant David military success, but He also blessed Israel with considerable wealth as a result of these victories
 - Each victory yielded David and Israel something of value
 - The shields captured from Hadadezer were gold (likely gold plated or embossed)
 - The cities of Hadadezer provided a very large amount of bronze
 - And then other nations began to send David wealth as tribute
 - In v.9 we hear of Toi of Hamath, which was northeast of Aram, who had long been at war with the Arameans

- So when David defeats Aram, Toi sends his son to David to bless David with silver, gold and bronze
 - This gift probably came as part of a covenant of peace between David and Toi
- Then in vs.11-12 David takes all that he obtained through the defeat of various enemies and dedicated it to the Lord
 - This probably means it was set aside for use in a future temple, though when that time came God told David to wait
 - This comment tells us that these campaigns in the north probably took place late in David's reign
 - They happened as David was contemplating building a temple, and after the events that we will cover in Chapters 10-12
- The author's tendency to move events around in time can be confusing for someone reading the book straight through
 - But remember the author is arranging the content to summarize David's impact on the nation of Israel
 - When you consider that David ruled 40 years, you quickly realize that a 24 chapter book isn't nearly enough to contain everything
 - So the author selected key moments and achievements in David's life and arranged them by theme

2Sam. 8:13 So David made a name for himself when he returned from killing 18,000 Arameans in the Valley of Salt.

2Sam. 8:14 He put garrisons in Edom. In all Edom he put garrisons, and all the Edomites became servants to David. And the LORD helped David wherever he went.

- While David was fighting in the north, the Edomites in the south tried to take advantage of David's absence and invade Israel
 - And in this verse we find another copyist error, which we again discover because we can compare it to 1 Chronicles 18

1Chr. 18:12 Moreover Abishai the son of Zeruiah defeated 18,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt.

1Chr. 18:13 Then he put garrisons in Edom, and all the Edomites became servants to David. And the LORD helped David wherever he went.

- David was fighting the Arameans in the north, where he killed 22,000 men according to v.5
 - Meanwhile, in the Valley of Salt, which is south of the Dead Sea, David's commander, Abishai killed 18,000 invading Edomites

- Once defeated, Israel established garrisons of Jewish soldiers in Edom, a longtime historical enemy of Israel going back to Jacob
- Once again, this remarkable victory showed that the Lord was helping David even in places where David was not present
- Back to the error, v.13 says David killed 18,000 Arameans in the Valley of Salt, but that's not what we know happened according to 1 Chronicles 18
 - 1 Chronicles 18 says that while David was away killing Arameans, 18,000 Edomites died in the Valley of Salt
 - A copyist inadvertently ran the two thoughts together at this point, combining "18,000" with "David away fighting Arameans"
 - We know that both 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel suffer from a number of these minor copyist errors, more than any other book
- And this fact reinforces our trust in the accuracy of the Bible, because it highlights the degree of precision in the manuscripts we possess today
 - The copies of Scripture are so meticulously preserved even to this day that even small differences like this catch our attention
 - And the Lord has provided a way for us to know these errors exist and to find correction through other texts of Scripture
 - So that even when errors are introduced as we see here, they only serve to reinforce our trust in the text
- When someone suggests we can't know what the Bible said because it's been changed throughout history, they show their ignorance
 - The Bible has been so carefully preserved throughout history that we know when even one word has been changed
 - Those changes are easy to detect by comparing one manuscript against the tens of thousands of copies that exist
 - And even then, the differences are so minor (as in this case) that they do nothing to change the general meaning or teaching
- So David has subdued enemies in the west, east, north and now the south, with garrisons stationed in all directions
 - The only major enemy not mentioned here are the Ammonites, because David's battle with them is part of the story of Bathsheba
 - But clearly, this is a new age for Israel, a time when the nation casts off fear, oppression and weakness
 - It ushers in a time of plenty and carefree living in the land

2Sam. 8:15 So David reigned over all Israel; and he administered justice and righteousness for all his people.

2Sam. 8:16 Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the army, and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder;

2Sam. 8:17 and Zadok the son of Ahitub and Abimelech the son of Abiathar were priests, and Shavsha was secretary;

2Sam. 8:18 and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites, and the sons of David were chiefs at the king's side.

- As the writer concludes this multi-chapter section summarizing David's many achievements, he lists the key leaders in David's government
 - In v.15 we're told David reigned and administered justice and righteousness for all his people
 - That's a very ambitious statement, and we wonder just how true it could have been?
- Clearly, there could not be total righteousness and justice in Israel in that day, and therefore it must be an allusion to the Kingdom again
 - David's rule was a suggested fulfillment of things to come in the Kingdom under Jesus, where true justice and righteousness lives
 - Later, Isaiah makes this connection for us

Is. 9:6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;
 And the government will rest on His shoulders;
 And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
 Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

Is. 9:7 There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace,
 On the throne of David and over his kingdom,
 To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness
 From then on and forevermore.
 The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

- Jesus' reign in the Kingdom will bring a government of peace and justice and righteousness for all people
 - But in David's day, the phrase is speaking only in relative terms
 - In comparison to previous times in Israel, the times under David were just and righteous
 - And these outcomes were the direct result of the Lord working through David and David walking closely with the Lord
- Finally, we see in vs.15-18 the leaders and their areas of responsibility in David's government
 - Among those listed is Joab, the one who entered Jerusalem to become the commander
 - David also had a secretary who recorded the events of his reign, and a private security guard made up of Gentiles
 - Both the Cherethites and Pelethites immigrated from the island of Crete, and as

- such they were related to the Philistines
 - It was not uncommon to choose body guards from foreigners since they were less likely to sympathize with Jewish rivals
 - David also installed his sons as ministers in his government
- Altogether, David has refashioned the entire nation and brought it very nearly to the height of all God had promised though only as a picture
 - The kingdom of David now stretched far and wide and included capture or subjugation of many of Israel's traditional enemies
 - And up to this point, 2 Samuel has described a remarkable turn for the nation overall
 - It's turned from Saul's rebellion and failures to David's obedience and successes
 - It has defeated enemies that usually got the best of the nation, it's seen its ark returned and land expanded
- The sense we're left with at the end of Chapter 8 is that there is nowhere left to go but down (at least until Messiah arrives)
 - And so we now enter a longer section running from Chapter 9 to Chapter 20 chronicling David's troubles
 - In some ways, David's story parallels the story of Saul in 1 Samuel
 - The start of Saul's reign showed such promise but then it came crashing down
- But Saul's achievements were never so great as David's, nor were David's troubles nearly as great as Saul's
 - Still the story of David's troubles serve to define him and his reign more than the story of his achievements
 - And that's in keeping with how most believers' testimonies follow
 - Our victories walking with the Lord may be glorious, but our stumbles echo louder
- The first of these chapters, Chapter 9, may seem like an odd chapter to include in a section on David's stumbles, because it tells of David's faithfulness
 - In fact, Chuck Swindoll called this chapter the greatest illustration of grace in the Old Testament
 - But as we will see later in the book, it also reflected David's weakness in seeking approval from Saul's allies
 - And that tendency later gets him into trouble and leads to rebellion in the nation
 - We'll cover the impact of this chapter later in the study, so for now we will simply study the good aspects of David's faithfulness

2Sam. 9:1 Then David said, "Is there yet anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

- We can safely date the events of this chapter to very early in David's reign, probably soon after consolidating his power
 - After receiving the loyalty of all tribes, David asks if there is anyone left of the house of Saul to whom David can show kindness?
 - David is thinking back to the covenant he established with Jonathan before Jonathan died
 - David and Jonathan entered into a covenant back in the day when David was under attack from Jonathan's father Saul
 - Jonathan was the heir to Saul's throne, but rather than contend with David for the seat of power, Jonathan gave his support to David
 - They entered into a covenant together

1Sam. 18:1 Now it came about when he had finished speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as himself.

1Sam. 18:2 Saul took him that day and did not let him return to his father's house.

1Sam. 18:3 Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself.

1Sam. 18:4 Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, including his sword and his bow and his belt.

- The covenant established here isn't described in detail, though by the circumstances we know what it's about
- Jonathan promises to support David, and David is promising to protect Jonathan when David becomes king
- We get those details in a later moment

1Sam. 20:12 Then Jonathan said to David, "The LORD, the God of Israel, be witness! When I have sounded out my father about this time tomorrow, or the third day, behold, if there is good feeling toward David, shall I not then send to you and make it known to you?"

1Sam. 20:13 "If it please my father to do you harm, may the LORD do so to Jonathan and more also, if I do not make it known to you and send you away, that you may go in safety. And may the LORD be with you as He has been with my father.

1Sam. 20:14 "If I am still alive, will you not show me the lovingkindness of the LORD, that I may not die?"

1Sam. 20:15 "You shall not cut off your lovingkindness from my house forever, not even when the LORD cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth."

1Sam. 20:16 So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "May

the LORD require it at the hands of David's enemies.”

1Sam. 20:17 Jonathan made David vow again because of his love for him, because he loved him as he loved his own life.

- Jonathan asks David to reaffirm their earlier covenant, and in the process we get to hear the details of their agreement
 - Jonathan will help David remain alive despite his father's attempt to find and kill David
 - In effect, Jonathan is agreeing to become a spy for David and to rebel against his own father, the king
 - Jonathan is taking a serious risk here, since he could be put to death for this action
 - In return, Jonathan asks David to preserve Jonathan's life once David assumes power, and this too was a significant request
 - Jonathan would be seen forever more as the rightful heir to the throne, and as such he serves as threat to David
 - So for a new king like David to leave his rival alive was a significant and unusual promise
 - But Jonathan goes a step further in v.15 asking that David not cut off anyone in Saul's household even after David has taken full control
 - Hypothetically, had all of Saul's sons survived, David would have been obligated to leave them all alive
 - Here again this is a bold and unusual request, because David would have been weakening his position tremendously
 - But David has entered into this covenant, so he is bound by his life to keep this agreement
 - We know that in the end Saul and all his sons die before David assumes the throne, the last being Ishbosheth
 - And by that fact, we get the sense that God didn't want this agreement to stand
 - In fact, it's reasonable to assume that David may have been wrong to enter into it in the first place
 - The Lord clearly didn't want any rival competing with David for this throne that God gave David alone
- And that's probably why this chapter falls in the section on David's troubles...David is now bound by an agreement he didn't need
 - And now that David has reached full authority, he remembers Jonathan's words asking David not to cut off Saul's house
 - Until recently, Ishbosheth was Saul's only surviving son, and though David tried to protect that man, he failed
 - David did execute the two men who murdered Ishbosheth in his home, but still

David wants to be faithful to his covenant

- So now David asks his court is there anyone from Saul's house that David can show himself faithful to Jonathan's covenant?

2Sam. 9:2 Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and they called him to David; and the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" And he said, "I am your servant."

2Sam. 9:3 The king said, "Is there not yet anyone of the house of Saul to whom I may show the kindness of God?" And Ziba said to the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan who is crippled in both feet."

2Sam. 9:4 So the king said to him, "Where is he?" And Ziba said to the king, "Behold, he is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel in Lo-debar."

- A servant of David, Ziba, reports that there was one remaining male heir to Saul, a son of Jonathan
- But Ziba quickly adds that this surviving grandson of Saul is crippled in both feet
- We studied briefly about this boy back in Chapter 4 where we studied possible successors to Abner and Ishbosheth in the north

2Sam. 4:4 Now Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son crippled in his feet. He was five years old when the report of Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled. And it happened that in her hurry to flee, he fell and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth.

- This son is called Mephibosheth, and the name literally means the dispeller of shame or the one cutting shame into pieces
 - We learned then that this crippled son was quickly shuffled out of public view because he could never be king
 - He is now about 20, and by preserving him for this moment, the Lord has done David a small favor
 - He has kept a relative of Saul alive who couldn't threaten David and yet allowed David to fulfill His ill-advised promise
- So as David learns of this man's existence, he is excited to know he can fulfill his word to Jonathan and calls for Mephibosheth to be brought to him

2Sam. 9:5 Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar.

2Sam. 9:6 Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and prostrated himself. And David said, "Mephibosheth." And he said, "Here is your servant!"

- Imagine what this young man thinks when he hears that his grandfather's rival who replaced his uncle has called for him
 - We can safely assume that Mephibosheth assumes the worst, because naturally the new king always kills his rivals
 - He goes to the palace fully expecting he is going to die for being a threat to David
- In v.6 he falls on his face before David prostrate when David calls his name, Mephibosheth answers that he is David's servant
 - Mephibosheth is trying to make sure that David knows he's not a rival to David's authority, but David already knows that
 - David hasn't called Mephibosheth here to test his loyalty, but rather to show Mephibosheth that David will be loyal to him

2Sam. 9:7 David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will surely show kindness to you for the sake of your father Jonathan, and will restore to you all the land of your grandfather Saul; and you shall eat at my table regularly."

2Sam. 9:8 Again he prostrated himself and said, "What is your servant, that you should regard a dead dog like me?"

- David tells Mephibosheth not to fear, because David called him to show kindness for the sake of Jonathan and Saul
 - David says this man will from this point forward eat at the king's table
 - To eat with another person in that culture held great significance
 - It was a place of fellowship and privilege and implied protection
 - Covenants were usually established with meals, because you don't eat with enemies, you eat with friends
 - And to eat at the king's table was the highest privilege in any kingdom, since it implied friendship with the king
 - Ironically, David had the same privilege at Saul's table when Saul was king, and yet Saul was the epitome of unfaithfulness
 - So when Saul grew jealous of David, he began to treat David as an enemy though David was a friend and servant of Saul
 - And David almost lost his life eating with Saul when Saul threw a spear at David
 - Now David is going to great lengths to do the opposite...he calls a potential enemy to his table so he can show him friendship
 - We should ask why is David going through with his arrangements on behalf of Mephibosheth?
 - Clearly, Mephibosheth did nothing to deserve it...the decision was merely dropped in Mephibosheth's lap
 - And in fact, David never even asks Mephibosheth whether he wants to sit at the table...he is simply placed there by the king

- Obviously, Mephibosheth knows he is receiving something he shouldn't receive nor had any expectation it could be his
 - Mephibosheth asks a rhetorical question...why are you showing regard for a dead dog like me?
 - The dog was the worst creature in Jewish eyes, and so the worst insult you could give was to call someone a dog
 - Mephibosheth knows that as a crippled man he has no worth to David, so he calls himself a dog
 - But more than that, David could reasonably see him as an enemy which makes him worse than useless
 - So Mephibosheth calls himself a dead dog, because the only thing lower than a dog would be a dead dog
 - David is showing Mephibosheth grace, undeserved favor, giving the man something that he did not deserve
 - This situation is grace for Mephibosheth because nothing he did brought it about
 - But that doesn't mean it's happening without cause or that David isn't obligated to do it
 - David is obligated to do this for Mephibosheth, but the things that obligates David is not Mephibosheth's behavior but David's word
 - David promised to show lovingkindness to Jonathan's house
 - And the word lovingkindness is a special word in Scripture...it always refers to a covenant promise
 - It's how the Lord describes His own character to keep promises

Ex. 34:6 Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth;

Ex. 34:7 who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations."

- The Lord tells Moses and the people of Israel that He is a God who keeps lovingkindness, meaning keeps covenant
- He does this for those in covenant with Him, and we know He will keep His word because of His character
- Mephibosheth is the recipient of grace made possible by David's faithfulness to a covenant he established with Jonathan
 - But notice the form this grace takes:

2Sam. 9:9 Then the king called Saul's servant Ziba and said to him, "All that belonged to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's grandson.

2Sam. 9:10 "You and your sons and your servants shall cultivate the land for him, and you shall bring in the produce so that your master's grandson may have food; nevertheless Mephibosheth your master's grandson shall eat at my table regularly." Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

2Sam. 9:11 Then Ziba said to the king, "According to all that my lord the king commands his servant so your servant will do." So Mephibosheth ate at David's table as one of the king's sons.

- First, Mephibosheth receives an inheritance in the land, specifically, all that belonged previously to Saul's house
- So the man will instantly become rich in property in the tribe of Benjamin
- Secondly, Ziba's family has been reassigned to work the land on behalf of Mephibosheth since obviously he couldn't work the land himself
 - Why did David reassign his court servant, Ziba, to a lessor post like this?
 - Perhaps it was because the man had fifteen sons and twenty servants, which meant a lot of labor available
 - Or maybe David wanted an ally close to Mephibosheth, and if so, this strategy pays off later for David
- So in v.11 we're told that Mephibosheth goes from dead dog to being treated like a son of the king eating at the table
 - All this because of the king's grace based on his word in covenant
 - And we all have much in common with this man, of course
- The parallels start easily enough with David picturing Jesus as our king
 - And of course, we are like Mephibosheth, probably in more ways than we prefer
 - First, we are born an enemy of the king, because we are part of a family that wanted to take the throne from Jesus
 - The Bible says we are all descended from Adam, and as such we share in Adam's nature at our birth
 - When Adam sinned, he rejected God's word and God's rule and instead was seeking to be like God, to rule himself
 - That rebellion became part of Adam's spiritual nature and he passed that nature on to all who descend from him, including you and me
 - In that sense, we're like one of Saul's relatives desiring to compete with David for the right to the throne
 - And if Jesus did what was easiest, He would just wipe out all His enemies, and Scripture says He has that right

Is. 59:17 He put on righteousness like a breastplate,
And a helmet of salvation on His head;
And He put on garments of vengeance for clothing
And wrapped Himself with zeal as a mantle.

Is. 59:18 According to their deeds, so He will repay,
Wrath to His adversaries, recompense to His enemies;
To the coastlands He will make recompense.

Is. 59:19 So they will fear the name of the LORD from the west
And His glory from the rising of the sun,
For He will come like a rushing stream
Which the wind of the LORD drives.

- God is prepared to repay His adversaries harshly as David did his at times, as is the right of the King and Judge
- But there is more to the story of Jesus' reign
- Even as the Lord destroys His enemies, He also remembers those who will receive His grace and mercy based on a covenant
 - And those who receive His mercy are those who are dead dogs, and lame in both feet
 - Interestingly, the Bible describes Gentile believers as “dogs”

Matt. 15:25 But she came and began to bow down before Him, saying, “Lord, help me!”

Matt. 15:26 And He answered and said, “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.”

Matt. 15:27 But she said, “Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.”

- And we are also described as being “dead” in our sins

Eph. 2:1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,

Eph. 2:2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world,
according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working
in the sons of disobedience.

- Finally, we are lame or crippled because of a “fall” in the sense of being spiritually fallen and useless...

Rom. 3:12 ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS;
THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD,

THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.”

- So truly we are unable to help ourselves unless the King calls us into His presence by His Spirit and we receive His grace
 - We reach that moment through a covenant, which itself was made possible in death
 - Without Jonathan’s death, Mephibosheth would never have been blessed in the way that he was
 - And without Jesus’ death for sin, we couldn’t receive God’s mercy either
- Finally, we come into our blessing because of Christ’s faithfulness to His word, specifically His word to Israel and to us
 - Those who have been included in a covenant with the Lord are granted an inheritance and the right to eat at the Lord’s table

Eph. 2:4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,

Eph. 2:5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

Eph. 2:6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

Eph. 2:7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Rev. 3:20 ‘Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.

Rev. 3:21 ‘He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

- David’s choice to fulfill his word to Mephibosheth is a beautiful picture of Christ’s faithfulness to us
 - And the Lord has turned David’s mistake into a blessing for both David and Mephibosheth

- Last week we started into a new section of 2 Samuel where the writer details David's failings as king of Israel
 - Our new section runs from Chapter 9-20 and chronicles David's failures, which is considerably longer than the first section on David's successes
 - But that's not because David failed more often than he succeeded or even that his failures were more prominent
 - Rather, a deeper examination of David's failings are more instructive for us spiritually
 - David's successes are a reminder of the Lord's faithfulness to His children
 - But a study of David's failures gives opportunity to learn from David's mistakes so we can improve our own faithfulness
 - Last week we began this new section in Chapter 9 as David extended grace to Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son
 - The story is a heartwarming picture of God's grace to us
 - Just as Mephibosheth was crippled by a fall, so are we crippled spiritually by a fall into sin
 - Just as Mephibosheth couldn't stand in David's presence, neither can we stand in the presence of God by our own efforts
 - So when David showed Mephibosheth grace because of a covenant made with Jonathan, it pictures God showing us grace because of Jesus
 - When David looked at Mephibosheth, he saw his friend, Jonathan, and when the Father looks upon us, He sees Jesus
 - God shows us mercy because of a covenant made in Jesus' blood, and we receive it because the Father granted it to us
- So David's decision to seek this man out was not a problem in itself, but the problem was in how David used this man to appease the Benjamites
 - David gave Mephibosheth his grandfather's inheritance of land in the tribe of Benjamin, and this set the stage for future conflict
 - David was mixing his desire to keep his word to Jonathan with his personal desire to be popular and accepted by his enemies
 - Later a man from Mephibosheth's household, Sheba, will rebel against David's dynasty
 - And that rebellion was made possible because of David's desire to placate the Benjamites
 - This leads us into a three chapter section that centers on David's defeat of the Ammonites and David's fall into adultery
 - Back in Chapter 8 we heard a summary of David's successes on the battlefield at the end of his reign
 - And his victory over the Ammonites was mentioned only briefly

2Sam. 8:11 King David also dedicated these to the LORD, with the silver and gold that he had dedicated from all the nations which he had subdued:

2Sam. 8:12 from Aram and Moab and the sons of Ammon and the Philistines and Amalek, and from the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

- But now the writer goes back to that time to explain the circumstances that surrounded their defeat, which includes David's greatest personal failing

2Sam. 10:1 Now it happened afterwards that the king of the Ammonites died, and Hanun his son became king in his place.

2Sam. 10:2 Then David said, "I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, just as his father showed kindness to me." So David sent some of his servants to console him concerning his father. But when David's servants came to the land of the Ammonites,

2Sam. 10:3 the princes of the Ammonites said to Hanun their lord, "Do you think that David is honoring your father because he has sent consolers to you? Has David not sent his servants to you in order to search the city, to spy it out and overthrow it?"

2Sam. 10:4 So Hanun took David's servants and shaved off half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle as far as their hips, and sent them away.

- There are several details in this chapter that tell us this event happened relatively early in David's rule
 - First, the king of Ammon who dies is King Nahash, who ruled during Saul's entire reign as king
 - We read about Saul's conflict with this man in 1 Samuel 11, when Nahash tried to take Jabesh-gilead from Saul
 - Saul responded with a stunning victory over the Ammonites, which led to Saul's anointing as king over Israel
 - Now the king of the Ammonites has died, which means this must have been early in David's reign because Nahash couldn't reign much longer
 - And now his son Hanun is ready to assume power in his father's place, and he is ready to challenge David probably for revenge
 - And that leads to our second reason to know this must be earlier in David's reign
 - Certainly, no one would have thought to challenge David at the end of his reign after his power was well known and respected
 - But David is willing to seek some kind of peace with the new king, so he sends representatives to Hanun
 - The new king decides to respond in spite by challenging David's rule

- Jews didn't shave their beards or heads because the Law prohibited such things
- The Ammonite king probably knew this, so he has their heads and beards shaved to humiliate them among their people
- He also cuts their garments to the point that they are barely clothed, another embarrassment
- Clearly the new Ammonite king wants to send David a message that he will not be afraid of David, but again this is early in David's reign
 - In time, men like Hanun learned not to challenge David and instead they sought peace agreements and paid tribute
 - But those lessons had to be learned through experience, and Hanun was one of those early examples
- So these men return to David humiliated and David reassures them

2Sam. 10:5 When they told it to David, he sent to meet them, for the men were greatly humiliated. And the king said, “Stay at Jericho until your beards grow, and then return.”

2Sam. 10:6 Now when the sons of Ammon saw that they had become odious to David, the sons of Ammon sent and hired the Arameans of Beth-rehob and the Arameans of Zobah, 20,000 foot soldiers, and the king of Maacah with 1,000 men, and the men of Tob with 12,000 men.

- David deals sensitively with his men telling them they can stay out of sight at Jericho until their beards grow back, which would be some months
 - Jericho had never been rebuilt since Joshua's day, so it was the perfect hiding place for these men
 - Meanwhile, the word gets back to Ammon that David is none too pleased with their treatment of his men
 - So the Ammonites prepare for the inevitable war that their king invited by seeking allies from the surrounding nations
- Primarily, the Ammonites seek help from the Arameans along with Zobah, Tob and others
 - These are the men that we heard David defeated in Chapter 8's summary of David's victories
 - So now we learn that these nations were targeted by David because they had become allies against Israel
- The king's actions were a clear provocation intended to test David's new leadership and Israel's strength
 - So David has little choice except to respond
 - David orders his forces into battle against the Ammonites

2Sam. 10:7 When David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the army, the mighty men.

2Sam. 10:8 The sons of Ammon came out and drew up in battle array at the entrance of the city, while the Arameans of Zobah and of Rehob and the men of Tob and Maacah were by themselves in the field.

2Sam. 10:9 Now when Joab saw that the battle was set against him in front and in the rear, he selected from all the choice men of Israel, and arrayed them against the Arameans.

2Sam. 10:10 But the remainder of the people he placed in the hand of Abishai his brother, and he arrayed them against the sons of Ammon.

2Sam. 10:11 He said, “If the Arameans are too strong for me, then you shall help me, but if the sons of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will come to help you.

2Sam. 10:12 “Be strong, and let us show ourselves courageous for the sake of our people and for the cities of our God; and may the LORD do what is good in His sight.”

- David’s commander Joab and “all the army” are sent to fight the Ammonites
 - But notice that we don’t see David consulting the Lord before going to war as he once did, and that’s a bad sign
 - So often when we’re new in our walk with the Lord or weak in the face of our challenges, we turn to Him and ask Him for help
 - But as we mature and strengthen or as our battles lessen, we ease off that dependency
 - When our maturity should be driving us deeper into a relationship, it can lead us to say to God, “I’ve got this...”
 - So, David has committed his entire army to this battle and in the first engagement they meet at Medeba (1 Chronicles 19)
 - The first encounter was led by Joab and his brother Abishai, who move Jewish forces across the Jordan from Judah
 - The Arameans have agreed to fight with Ammon and have joined the battle coming down from the north
 - While the Ammonites have come from the east and south to form a pincer movement against Joab’s forces
 - So in v.9 Joab sees that he will have to fight on two fronts simultaneously, so he divides his forces and gives half to his brother
 - Abishai will take the Ammonite front and Joab will take the Aramean front
 - And then they agree that whoever falters first will receive help from the other force
 - In this initial conflict David has not joined in the battle himself
 - Finally, Joab commendably encourages his men to be courageous knowing the Lord is in control and trusting Him

2Sam. 10:13 So Joab and the people who were with him drew near to the battle against the Arameans, and they fled before him.

2Sam. 10:14 When the sons of Ammon saw that the Arameans fled, they also fled before Abishai and entered the city. Then Joab returned from fighting against the sons of Ammon and came to Jerusalem.

- The battle isn't described in much detail, but it's clear enough that the Lord brings Israel the victory
 - Joab and Abishai engaged on two fronts against two greater forces and yet both run fleeing from the battle with hardly a fight
 - After seeing his adversaries run off so easily, Joab declines to chase them down
 - Instead, he returns to Jerusalem which means the battle isn't over

2Sam. 10:15 When the Arameans saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they gathered themselves together.

2Sam. 10:16 And Hadadezer sent and brought out the Arameans who were beyond the River, and they came to Helam; and Shobach the commander of the army of Hadadezer led them.

- The Arameans retreated into a city stronghold called Rabbah, while the Arameans fall back across the Euphrates river in the north
 - Nearby was the king of Zobah, Hadadezer, who sees opportunity to strengthen his own rivalry with David
 - So he offers his commander and army to join with the Arameans against David
 - This conflict is widening and sucking in more of Israel's enemies

2Sam. 10:17 Now when it was told David, he gathered all Israel together and crossed the Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Arameans arrayed themselves to meet David and fought against him.

2Sam. 10:18 But the Arameans fled before Israel, and David killed 700 charioteers of the Arameans and 40,000 horsemen and struck down Shobach the commander of their army, and he died there.

2Sam. 10:19 When all the kings, servants of Hadadezer, saw that they were defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel and served them. So the Arameans feared to help the sons of Ammon anymore.

- David sees Joab return with the job unfinished against the Ammonites and hears that the Arameans are regathering, and he takes charge
 - David brings all of Israel's army and heads north to put down the Arameans and Hadadezer's army

- With the Lord's help, David destroys the army of Shobach, and destroys their ability to wage war
- And now the king of Zobah has no choice but to become a vessel of David and pay tribute to Israel
- This was the victory that we heard about briefly in Chapter 8
- Now the Ammonites have lost a powerful ally, which makes them a much less powerful threat to David, but he's not done fighting them
 - Having shown his commander how to vanquish an enemy, David returns to Jerusalem and allows his commander to take charge again

2Sam. 11:1 Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him and all Israel, and they destroyed the sons of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed at Jerusalem.

- This verse has a measure of foreshadowing by suggesting that David was wrong to remain in Jerusalem
- When he commands the army, his wisdom leads the people and the Lord blesses the outcome
- But when David sits back and allows others like Joab and Abishai to fight these battles, the results are less conclusive
 - The sense we get is that the Lord intended David to lead, which is why the Lord anointed him and gave him the role of king
 - David wasn't a figurehead or an administrator behind a desk
- David was to be a hands-on leader who set an example for the people
 - So when David steps away from this role, bad things happen
 - And that's the sense we get from the opening verse of the chapter, as David sends others to lead and fight his battles
- God raises up leaders for a spiritual purpose, and that purpose can't be delegated
 - A man or woman raised up and gifted to lead can't delegate that leadership to others
 - No more than a prophet or teacher can delegate the giving or prophecy or the teaching of God's word
 - Obviously, a leader can delegate the performance of many tasks to others, for that is part of being a good leader
 - But the essence of a person's call from God cannot be delegated to another
 - A man who has the gift to lead or pastor must remain in a position to oversee all the leadership or pastoring duties
 - Or a woman with a gift to teach or encourage others shouldn't step back from teaching to managing a staff of teachers

- Let someone with the gift to lead manage while those with the gift to teach continue in the study and teaching of God's word
- Remember what the apostles said when someone suggested that they should "move up" to a management position?

Acts 6:2 So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables.

- We remember they said "it is not desirable" to neglect teaching
- Who wouldn't desire it? God, the One Who gifted them to teach
- And if they had moved to other duties, they would have been neglecting what God called them to do, they said
- When we delegate our role to others, we are neglecting our gift and abdicating our responsibility to serve God in our calling
 - And those God intended to serve through us receive less than the Lord intended
 - David delegated his God-given role as the leader of Israel in battle which was abdicating his responsibility
 - And it resulted in Israel receiving less than God intended
- God does not desire we hand off our area of ministry to someone else so we can climb a ladder of personal success
 - It never feels that way in the moment because we tell ourselves we've taken on other responsibilities that are more important
 - And a man or woman raised up to a certain purpose shouldn't turn that responsibility over to another
 - And ministry shouldn't be viewed as a career nor is serving God a means to climbing a ladder
 - We receive a gift and a calling, and the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable
- So because David delegates his battlefield leadership again and stays in Jerusalem, it opens opportunity for the idle king to get into trouble

2Sam. 11:2 Now when evening came David arose from his bed and walked around on the roof of the king's house, and from the roof he saw a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful in appearance.

2Sam. 11:3 So David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?"

2Sam. 11:4 David sent messengers and took her, and when she came to him, he lay with her; and when she had purified herself from her uncleanness, she returned to her house.

- The story of David and Bathsheba is one of the best known from the Old Testament and

it is certainly his weakest moment

- What starts as lust becomes adultery and eventually leads to murder
- It may be the second most notorious sin in the whole Bible after the Fall of the Garden
- It's a classic example of how sin works in a person's heart when it's allowed to mature and progress
 - Augustine once wrote that David's fall with Bathsheba was a warning to all who haven't fallen that they should be on guard
 - And it's an encouragement to save from despair all those who have fallen
- The story spans Chapters 11 and 12, and it's organized in a chiasmic structure with the turning point of the chiasm between chapters
 - It starts with David sending Joab to Rabbah and it ends with Joab sending David to Rabbah
 - It starts with David sleeping with Bathsheba, Bathsheba getting pregnant, and then her husband dying
 - It ends with David's son dying, followed by David sleeping with Bathsheba and Bathsheba getting pregnant with Solomon
- This chiasmic structure reminds us these events happen according to a plan of God to accomplish a good purpose in David and Israel
 - And like most stories of this kind, it starts innocently enough with David taking a nighttime stroll on the roof of his palace
 - The roofs of homes in that day were a living space where families gathered in the evenings
 - Daytime heat was absorbed by the clay and stone walls of homes, so families cooled off on the roof at night
 - David is having trouble sleeping one night, perhaps because it was hot, and he ends up on his roof overlooking the city
 - And from that vantage point, he sees a young woman bathing, perhaps through a window or in the courtyard around her home
 - At seeing Bathsheba bathing, David is instantly taken by her beauty, and he has servants inquire about the woman
 - David is told her name is Bathsheba, which means "maiden of an oath"
 - After learning her name, David sends for her, and of course she must respond to the king's request for an audience
 - And in v.4 the text simply says David lay with her and after she purified herself ritually and returned home
 - And just like that, David commits adultery as does Bathsheba
 - David has committed adultery through additional marriages, which was culturally acceptable in that day
 - But now he has take the step of adultery without even the pretense of a

marriage because the woman was already married

- So what do we make of what David and Bathsheba did? For example, is this just David's sin?
 - Most assume Bathsheba never intended to be seen bathing, yet Jerusalem was not a very large place and she lived very near the palace
 - So she must have known she was in sight of David's roof while she bathed, which suggests she was toying with the king
 - That doesn't mean she was seeking to sleep with David, of course, and the text never explicitly blames Bathsheba
 - But there is also no evidence that she ever tried to resist David's advances in the way Joseph resisted Potiphar's wife
 - So Bathsheba seems to have played with fire and been burned
 - Nevertheless, David deserves the bulk of blame, both because he was king, but also because he knew the importance of keeping a covenant
 - His problems began in the way that sin often starts: with the lust of the eyes
 - Humanity's sin began when the Woman saw that the fruit was good, and her lustful sight led her down a self-destructive path
 - James describes that path this way

James 1:13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

James 1:14 But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.

James 1:15 Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

- We are carried away and enticed (or lured) into sin by a lust or fleshly desire
 - The flesh is programmed from birth to want for the wrong things, and that desire can carry us away
 - We are carried away from sanity, from sensibility, from reasonable thinking, from what we know to be true
 - And as we're carried away, it's like a magnet...the closer we get to that thing we desire, the stronger the pull
 - That lustful desire just keeps growing until it conceives and gives birth to a sinful act
 - And when that sinful act is accomplished it will bring forth death, James says
 - Ultimately, he's talking about the death that we all experience because we all have sin
 - But it's also an allusion to the small deaths that we die every time we sin
 - The sins we commit in chasing after lust kill relationships, ruin fortunes, destroy

- peace, and wreck families and careers
- In David's case the pattern fits literally, as David sees a naked woman, is drawn in by his lust, conceives a child and that leads to two deaths
 - And it all starts with eyes lusting for something
 - Spying a naked woman naturally incites lust in any man's heart, and the same is true for women of course
 - David knew that he was experiencing lust, and it should have caused him to avert his eyes to stop lust from carrying him away
 - Then David could have sent messengers to Bathsheba ordering her to bathe inside out of sight in the future
 - Instead David allowed his gaze to linger, and once aroused he felt compelled to act on his lust by ordering her to his side
 - Scriptures' command to all of us is to guard our eyes, erect barriers against things that entrap us and lead us away from godliness
 - These "fork in the road" moments exist in every journey toward sin and we need to learn how to recognize them
 - Sight leads to lust leads to conceiving plans to sin leads to birth of sin and the resulting death of something we love
 - It's also interesting that Bathsheba makes a point of engaging in a ritual cleansing in one of David's *mikvahs* (or ritual baths)
 - She was concerned about keeping the law's requirements for ritual purity, but she appears willing to violate the Law's demand for purity
 - This is a classic example of how God's people live in rebellion
 - We sin on Saturday, we go to church on Sunday
 - It's not fooling anyone, especially not God
 - God wanted her to observe the Laws on ritual cleansing and to observe the Law concerning marital purity
 - But she used one against the other...she committed adultery but then used ritual cleansing to "offset" the sin
 - It's like when we choose to sin but then excuse it to ourselves by giving more to the church or saying additional prayers
 - You can't ignore one of God's commands and then offset it by doubling down on another of His commands
 - God doesn't play those games and He doesn't credit us when we try to do it
 - He wants us to obey without exception, and the fact that we are forgiven for all sin shouldn't give us comfort when we sin
 - In this case, the mention of ritual washing is also a clue of the consequences that were soon to follow, because it means she was menstruating
 - And that can only mean one thing...there are consequences for sin, and in David's case, the Lord visits severe consequences on David

2Sam. 11:5 The woman conceived; and she sent and told David, and said, “I am pregnant.”

- Bathsheba informs David that she is pregnant...she knows the baby belongs to David since her husband is away fighting the war with the Ammonites
 - This is the consequence that the Lord has brought to David, and the question is how did the Lord expect David to respond at this point?
 - The Law in Leviticus 20:10 demanded death both for David and Bathsheba, which is probably why she came to David
 - Her pregnancy would become known soon, and when it was people would know she had committed adultery
 - And although David’s role in the matter might be concealed, she knew she would surely be put to death
 - So the proper thing for David to do would have been to confess his sin to Bathsheba’s husband and ask his forgiveness
 - And in addition David could have thrown himself on the mercy of God, asking the Lord to spare his life and Bathsheba’s life
 - We can logically assume the Lord would have granted David mercy especially since his heir hadn’t yet been born
 - Perhaps the Lord would have spared Bathsheba too
 - But David never considers that option it seems...he proves James true by following the path of sin that James described
 - David is carried away by sin going deeper and deeper into the trap he set for himself
 - David hatches a plan to conceal his sin by bringing Bathsheba’s husband back from the front

2Sam. 11:6 Then David sent to Joab, saying, “Send me Uriah the Hittite.” So Joab sent Uriah to David.

2Sam. 11:7 When Uriah came to him, David asked concerning the welfare of Joab and the people and the state of the war.

2Sam. 11:8 Then David said to Uriah, “Go down to your house, and wash your feet.” And Uriah went out of the king’s house, and a present from the king was sent out after him.

2Sam. 11:9 But Uriah slept at the door of the king’s house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house.

- David sends word to Joab to return Uriah from the battlefield
 - When Uriah arrives, David plays his request off as nothing more than a desire to receive a report from the battlefield

- Uriah reports as required, and then David sends Uriah home on a bit of R&R from the war
- David also sends Uriah with extra food and drink rations as a gift to encourage a celebration at home that evening
- Of course, David's intended purpose was to ensure Uriah spent a night with his wife, which would then explain her baby
- But Uriah is a man of honor and integrity, so much so that he declines the opportunity to have relations with his wife that night
 - Instead, the man chooses to sleep with the servants in David's house, frustrating David's plan
 - When David hears, he confronts Uriah:

2Sam. 11:10 Now when they told David, saying, "Uriah did not go down to his house," David said to Uriah, "Have you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?"

2Sam. 11:11 Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in temporary shelters, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field. Shall I then go to my house to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife? By your life and the life of your soul, I will not do this thing."

2Sam. 11:12 Then David said to Uriah, "Stay here today also, and tomorrow I will let you go." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next.

- Incredulously, David asks Uriah why he didn't go to his wife?
 - Uriah answers that he couldn't bring himself to enjoy things that others couldn't enjoy under the circumstances
 - He says if the ark isn't in a proper home, and his commander and comrades are living in a field, then he can't do better for himself
 - He wants solidarity with those making sacrifices for God, so Uriah swears he won't enjoy an advantage
- Nothing convicts a person living in sin more than another person refusing to join them in sin for righteous reasons
 - Those moments either become opportunity to repent or they harden hearts
 - David chose the latter and doubled down on his path of sin
- In v.12 David tells Uriah to stay in Jerusalem a little longer, because David has another plan to get the man to sleep with his wife before leaving

2Sam. 11:13 Now David called him, and he ate and drank before him, and he made him drunk; and in the evening he went out to lie on his bed with his lord's servants, but he did not go down to his house.

- David calls Uriah to a feast and gets the man to drink so much he becomes drunk
 - Of course, David hopes that as he drinks too much he will lose his inhibition and succumb to a desire for his wife
 - This is such classic sin behavior it should be a law of the universe
- When we sin, we expect others to join us in that sin, and in fact we encourage others to do so
 - It's an instinctive response and we see it at work even in the very first sin of the Garden
 - What did Woman do immediately after she ate the fruit and sinned?

Gen. 3:6 When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

- The instinct to share our sin with others is universal, and in this case David invites Uriah into the sin of drunkenness to cover his own sin
 - But Uriah's integrity can't be taken from him that easily, so we're told in v.13 that Uriah still refuses to see his wife
 - A drunk Uriah had more integrity than a sober David, as Wiersbe once observed
- You get the sense at this point that the Lord has prevented David from getting what he wants because He's working to expose him
 - And this is another classic pattern of sin...when we try to hide it, we may succeed for a time or even forever
 - But the Lord is always capable of exposing our sin when it suits Him, and sometimes He does, and other times He waits
 - But just because we get away with something for a time doesn't mean He doesn't care
 - And if you test Him long enough, He will eventually let our mistakes come to light to encourage us to repent
- When you have the king of Israel and a man in the line of the Messiah engaging in adultery and fathering illegitimate children, the stakes couldn't be higher
 - So the Lord will not turn a blind eye to this situation, and so as David tries to make it go away, the Lord stops his plans at every turn
 - You wonder when David was going to wake up and recognize that the Lord was trying to tell him something
 - But it takes one more sin and one more consequence before David gets the point

2Sam. 11:14 Now in the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah.

2Sam. 11:15 He had written in the letter, saying, “Place Uriah in the front line of the fiercest battle and withdraw from him, so that he may be struck down and die.”

2Sam. 11:16 So it was as Joab kept watch on the city, that he put Uriah at the place where he knew there were valiant men.

2Sam. 11:17 The men of the city went out and fought against Joab, and some of the people among David’s servants fell; and Uriah the Hittite also died.

2Sam. 11:18 Then Joab sent and reported to David all the events of the war.

2Sam. 11:19 He charged the messenger, saying, “When you have finished telling all the events of the war to the king,

2Sam. 11:20 and if it happens that the king’s wrath rises and he says to you, ‘Why did you go so near to the city to fight? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall?

2Sam. 11:21 ‘Who struck down Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? Did not a woman throw an upper millstone on him from the wall so that he died at Thebez? Why did you go so near the wall?’ — then you shall say, ‘Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.’”

- David knew he could depend on his commander to do as he ordered and to do it discreetly, so David devises a plan to have Uriah killed in battle
 - Once Uriah was dead, David could quickly marry Bathsheba and then the child could be his and no one would be the wiser
 - So David sends Joab a letter with Uriah asking that Uriah be placed at the front so he can die in battle
 - In fact, to ensure his death, Joab was to order that the rest of the men retreat during the fight leaving Uriah alone to die
 - This is a plot to murder Uriah, pure and simple, yet to have it happen in such a way that no one would know David’s part
 - Joab places Uriah in the place of strongest resistance at Rabbah, and when the battle ensued, as expected, Uriah was killed
 - But did you notice that others also died unnecessarily as part of Joab’s plot, which means David is also guilty of their murder
 - All this bloodshed is on David’s head
 - Then Joab finishes the conspiracy by informing his messenger how to break the news to David about Uriah’s death
 - If Joab had sent a messenger with a word saying Uriah is dead, it would have been obvious that David had ordered his death
 - For there would have been no other reason why a king would have taken interest in an ordinary soldier’s death
- So Joab creatively decides to send a report of a bad loss on the battlefield, knowing that it would incite David’s legitimate anger

- So when David reacted as expected by second guessing the commander's choice to attack so foolishly, he could sneak in the news
 - The messenger would respond that Uriah was also dead, and Joab knew this would accomplish two purposes
 - It would calm David's anger because David would instantly understand why Joab pursued such a foolish maneuver
 - Secondly, it would make the announcement of Uriah's death seem natural and unassociated from David
- So Joab is complicit in the death of Uriah and the messenger goes to report as ordered

2Sam. 11:22 So the messenger departed and came and reported to David all that Joab had sent him to tell.

2Sam. 11:23 The messenger said to David, "The men prevailed against us and came out against us in the field, but we pressed them as far as the entrance of the gate.

2Sam. 11:24 "Moreover, the archers shot at your servants from the wall; so some of the king's servants are dead, and your servant Uriah the Hittite is also dead."

2Sam. 11:25 Then David said to the messenger, "Thus you shall say to Joab, 'Do not let this thing displease you, for the sword devours one as well as another; make your battle against the city stronger and overthrow it'; and so encourage him."

- The messenger reports what Joab said, more or less, and that Uriah is dead
- David is clearly pleased and tells the messenger to report back to Joab that the message has been received
- And David encourages Joab by saying he will not hold Joab accountable for the stinging loss in battle
 - He says don't let this "displease" you, but in Hebrew it literally means don't see this as evil
 - David is telling Joab that what is clearly evil is not actually evil
 - David tries to explain it away to soften his own guilt and Joab's guilt
- This is a first-rate conspiracy and corruption of leadership resulting in many deaths to conceal an act of adultery
 - David's actions have gone from bad to worse at each step and it's a warning sign for anyone who would play with sin
 - If you think you can keep it under control, then you are a bigger fool than you even know
- With David's plan having succeeded, all that remains is to marry Bathsheba

2Sam. 11:26 Now when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband.

2Sam. 11:27 When the time of mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house and she became his wife; then she bore him a son. But the thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the LORD.

- Soon Bathsheba hears that her husband has died in battle, and we can only assume she wasn't stupid, so she knows David had a part in it
 - And so she mourns for her husband, which seems to be a genuine response on her part
 - Obviously, when she elected to bath outdoors that night, she never imagined how that moment would impact her life
- Few if anyone imagines the ramifications of a single poor decision, much less a series of such decisions
 - But the chain of events unfolds eventually and sin has the power to carry us away into places we never imagined we would go
 - Had someone asked Bathsheba if she was willing to participate in the murder of her husband, she would have said no instantly
 - If someone had asked her if she wanted to commit adultery on her husband, she no doubt would have sworn "never"
 - But when she thought it might be fun to give the king a thrill on bath night, she started down that path
- And when David looked down on a naked woman and allowed his eyes to take it in, he never considered that one day he would commit murder
 - Had someone suggested the king would get another man's wife pregnant, he would have had that person killed for slander
 - And had David's commander suggested they kill a righteous man to protect David's reputation, David would remove him
 - Yet here David was at the end of a chain of events, because that's always how sin works...one link at a time
- Never give the devil a ride...he'll want to drive...and that's what's happened to our good king, a man after God's own heart
 - In these chapters, David has left that heart behind for a time and followed after his own corrupt heart
 - After Bathsheba's appointed time of mourning, David takes her as his wife, which must have raised a few eyebrows
 - And certainly when Solomon was born so soon after, it may have raised suspicions
 - Regardless of what people thought, the Lord knew the whole story and in v.27 we're told the Lord saw it as evil in His sight

- That verse uses language similar to David with Joab, saying the Lord saw this as evil even if David thought they shouldn't
- And this verse is the turning point in the chiasm and therefore it's the point of the chiasm
- The Lord knew this was evil from front to back, and though He gave David opportunity to repent and cease in the sin, David persisted
 - And now that lust has given birth to sin and to death, the Lord will respond to David in the strongest possible terms
 - He does so to discipline David and to ensure we don't see God as complicit in David's actions
 - And it's a reminder that God disciplines those He loves...but we would do better not to give reason for such discipline

- We're studying the story of David's fall into sin with Bathsheba and Uriah
 - This story is the second installment in the section of the book devoted to chronicling David's failings, and it's easily David's lowest point
 - This moment comes relatively early in David's reign as king at a time while the nation was still battling the Ammonites
 - And as I've said before, as David goes, so goes the nation of Israel, so these circumstances also impact Israel tremendously
 - As we'll see today, the Lord's penalty against David is also a penalty against the nation
 - Last week we ended at the conclusion of Chapter 11, with David taking Bathsheba as his wife after having conspired with Abner to kill Uriah
 - This allowed pregnant Bathsheba to escape the penalty of adultery, which was death
 - And it protected David's reputation by concealing his affair...or so David thinks
 - But the Lord knows what happened, so eventually He brings it to light because the Lord won't allow sin to remain secret
 - That brings us to Chapter 12 and the climactic conclusion of these sad events
 - And with it comes a whole lot of lessons learned, both for David and for us

2Sam. 12:1 Then the LORD sent Nathan to David. And he came to him and said, "There were two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor.

2Sam. 12:2 "The rich man had a great many flocks and herds.

2Sam. 12:3 "But the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb

Which he bought and nourished;

And it grew up together with him and his children.

It would eat of his bread and drink of his cup and lie in his bosom,

And was like a daughter to him.

- This chapter opens immediately after we read about David's marriage to Bathsheba, but the details of this chapter tells us that much time has passed
- Later in the chapter we will hear about the son that was born to Bathsheba and David
 - The Hebrew word used to described the boy is *yeled*, which is the word for a boy under the age of adulthood
 - But it is not the word for infant, which is the Hebrew word *yanaq*, so we're not talking about an infant
 - Chapter 12 is some number of years after David married Bathsheba, and it could be as much as ten years later
- So David has enjoyed years with his son and has no doubt established a strong relationship with the boy as would any father
 - The young man is the heir apparent to the throne of Israel

- And at the same time, David has undoubtedly tried to put his sin out of his mind and maybe he assumed he succeeded
- On the other hand, we know that as a man of God, David would have been tormented by guilt from time to time
 - In fact, David wrote of that torment in one of the psalms

**Psa. 6:1 O LORD, do not rebuke me in Your anger,
Nor chasten me in Your wrath.**

**Psa. 6:2 Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am pining away;
Heal me, O LORD, for my bones are dismayed.**

**Psa. 6:3 And my soul is greatly dismayed;
But You, O LORD — how long?**

**Psa. 6:4 Return, O LORD, rescue my soul;
Save me because of Your lovingkindness.**

- David clearly felt the weight of his sin, and yet while he was willing to acknowledge his sin privately he would not publicly
- And so he felt the weight of it bearing down on him for some time
- David's words in this psalm remind us that he did nothing to confess it publicly
 - Elsewhere in another psalm, David writes this:

**Psa. 38:13 But I, like a deaf man, do not hear;
And I am like a mute man who does not open his mouth.**

**Psa. 38:14 Yes, I am like a man who does not hear,
And in whose mouth are no arguments.**

- Unconfessed sin is a burden we carry that has a detrimental effect on our hearts and our walk
- As long as we hold on to that sin we make it easier to sin again and we dare God to deal with it in a more dramatic fashion
- Unfortunately, David continued to hold on to his secret, so eventually God moves to remind David of his sin and expose it
 - God first reveals David's sin to Nathan, the prophet, who must have been shocked to learn of David's misadventures
 - Then the Lord tells Nathan to confront David about his sins and to do it in a particularly convicting manner
 - Nathan comes to David telling him a story about a man who wrongs another man in David's kingdom
 - This was a risky move on Nathan's part, because he couldn't be sure how David would respond

- As king, David had conspired to kill Uriah to conceal his sin, so what might David do to the prophet?
 - There was a real possibility that David could have killed Nathan
 - But Nathan has been told by God to confront David, and that mission came regardless of the consequences
 - And it reminds us that if and when God calls us to confront someone in sin, we do so without regard to the consequences
- So Nathan comes to David and confronts him with a parable that represents David's actions, yet Nathan tells it as if it's a true story
 - In the story a powerful man uses his power to take advantage of an underprivileged man
 - The rich man has a great many flocks while the poor man has but one little ewe lamb
 - The poor man bought and nourished his one lamb and it grew up together with his family
- They ate with the lamb and even slept with the lamb and it became like a daughter to him
 - That may seem a bit over-the-top, but don't think of the lamb as a farm animal
 - Think of the lamb in this story the way we treat our pets, like dogs and cats, because a lamb was sometimes a pet in that time
- Of course, Nathan's story is a comparison between David's harem of beautiful women (his "flock") and Uriah's only wife, Bathsheba
 - David had his choice of wives, and he could have taken virtually any virgin in the nation as his wife if he wanted
 - Obviously, it was a sin for David to take multiple wives in the first place, but the point is he had an abundance in this area
 - Meanwhile, Uriah limited himself to only one wife, and Uriah prized his one wife like every man should
 - Uriah was close to Bathsheba in the way God intended for every husband, yet this was not the way David knew marriage
 - David seemed to collect wives like a hobby and quickly lost interest in the previous wives when the next one came along
 - In that sense, he was like a rich man with many flocks who took little notice of any particular sheep in his fold
- The start of Nathan's story is one of the most compelling arguments in all Scripture for the perils of seeking multiple wives
 - The command God gave in the beginning was for a man to leave his parents and take *a wife* and then to cling to her, to become one with her
 - That command set the expectation that marriage stops at one and that a husband and wife devote their hearts to each other

- But at a point in history sinful men perverted what God created by multiplying wives to themselves
 - Then later, other men used that precedent to defend their choice to do the same, so one man's sin became excuse for more sin
- And in this story, we see the devastating consequences of taking multiple wives as it played out in David's heart
 - Because he could move from conquest to conquest, he had little incentive to invest in the relationship side of marriage
 - Each wife became little more than property and an objective of lust rather than of love
 - Man's ability to dominate women made the sin possible, and society's acceptance institutionalized the practice for a time
 - But the negative effects of this sin soon became evident and nevermore so than in this story
- How differently might David have acted when he spied Bathsheba from the roof if he been fully devoted to his first and only wife, Michal?
 - But because David had taken up the practice of multiple marriages, he saw every woman as a potential conquest
 - That gave opportunity for lust to turn into adultery through multiple marriages
 - And when the object of his lust happened to be married already, David simply graduated to murder
 - This entire account is God's clearest and most compelling argument against the sin of multiple marriages
- So Nathan sets up the story to provoke David's sense of justice against the rich man's presumption for the injustice done against the poor man

2Sam. 12:4 “Now a traveler came to the rich man,
 And he was unwilling to take from his own flock or his own herd,
 To prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him;
 Rather he took the poor man's ewe lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him.”

2Sam. 12:5 Then David's anger burned greatly against the man, and he said to Nathan, “As the LORD lives, surely the man who has done this deserves to die.

2Sam. 12:6 “He must make restitution for the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and had no compassion.”

- In v.4 Nathan brings the story to its point: the rich man wasn't satisfied with his riches... he wanted still more so he robs the poor man
 - Unwilling to take a lamb from his own flock for a feast in honor of a traveler, he takes the poor man's ewe and kills it
 - The poor man lost not only a valuable possession but a prized relationship and

source of companionship

- The rich man steals from the poor man, which is made all the worse because his actions were so unnecessary
 - The rich man had an excess of lambs and yet he stole from a man who had almost nothing by comparison
 - And it was the rich man's callous indifference for the poor man's plight that made this story so outrageous
 - And Nathan tells it this way to provoke David's righteous anger and his instinct to give the poor man proper justice
- And David reacts as Nathan intended, with great anger against this rich man who would do such a cruel and selfish thing
 - David says surely this man deserves to die, which was hyperbole because stealing a lamb was not punishable by death
 - In fact, David quickly changes that to a fine of fourfold which was exactly what the Law required
 - But ironically, this was just a parable, and the actual sin in question was adultery, which was punishable by death
- So David unknowingly pronounced his own sentence, which was exactly what Nathan was hoping to achieve
 - Then Nathan lowers the hammer on David...

2Sam. 12:7 Nathan then said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'It is I who anointed you king over Israel and it is I who delivered you from the hand of Saul.'

2Sam. 12:8 'I also gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your care, and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added to you many more things like these!

2Sam. 12:9 'Why have you despised the word of the LORD by doing evil in His sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the sons of Ammon.'

2Sam. 12:10 'Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.'

2Sam. 12:11 "Thus says the LORD, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your own household; I will even take your wives before your eyes and give them to your companion, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight.'

2Sam. 12:12 'Indeed you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and under the sun.'"

- Nathan says quite famously to David, you are the man, meaning David is the man who deserves that punishment, only in David's case he truly deserved death

- And before David knows what to say to Nathan, the prophet goes on to explain what the Lord thinks of David's actions
 - The Lord reminds David of all the grace he had received from the Lord beginning with the Lord choosing David for king
 - Moreover, the Lord preserved David from Saul when David was under attack
 - And then the Lord delivered the entire nation to rule
- Curiously, in v.8 the Lord also says that He gave David his master's house and wives, which sounds as if God gave David multiple wives
 - The "master" here is Saul, so the master's house refers to the household of male servants who worked for Saul and now David
 - And the master's wives can also be translated the master's women, which likely refer to the female servants of Saul
 - So the Lord isn't talking about wives at all...just the house of Saul and all his servants
- So the point was that David had been incredibly blessed and so David couldn't use deprivation or want as an excuse for his actions
 - On the contrary, David had been abundantly blessed by God in everything
 - And God says if that hadn't been enough, David could have asked God for even more blessing
 - That's an amazing statement all by itself...God says He wasn't necessarily finished blessing David if only David asked God
- Of course, God wasn't saying David could have asked for Bathsheba, and if so, God would have given her to David
 - God won't agree to requests when they are sin, but God is saying that He could have satisfied David's heart in other ways
 - If David's heart hadn't been satisfied in what he had, God has infinite ways to address the issue if only David had asked
- Remember that...your dissatisfaction in life is not beyond God's ability to remedy, but He will likely remedy it in different ways than you will
 - But that's good, because the ways we choose to remedy desire, loneliness, jealousy, fear, stress, emptiness etc. is usually wrong
 - But God can fill that hole in your heart in ways you never imagined if you only seek Him first
- But instead, David took matters into his own hands choosing to sin to gain something he wanted that he thought would make him happy
 - And God calls David's choice to sin "despising the word of the Lord"
 - The Lord was saying that when we go against God's commands, we show contempt for Him and His word
 - And we take for granted God's grace extended to us in the revelation of that word and the other blessings we receive

- It's the same way we would feel if we had taken a desperate, hopeless person into our home
 - Given them everything they could have wanted and more, and done it without any expectation of repayment
 - The only thing we ask is that they follow the house rules and not put their feet on the table, etc.
- And then one day we discover they've been stealing from the house...we would ask the same question
 - We've given you everything and more than you could have expected or deserved, so why repay that kindness with harm?
 - Why despise the grace and abuse the relationship?
- That's how God sees His children when we sin...He sees us despising what we have in Him to something trivial in the world
 - We are no less His children and our sin will never be held against us...but there is still an impact when we sin
 - And the primary impact is inviting God's discipline in this life, and that's different than experiencing His judgment or wrath
- Notice God doesn't threaten David in a personal way nor does God display His wrath against David
 - But at the same time, God does not ignore David's sin either
 - God then shares with David what the consequences of this sin will be for him and for Israel
- In v.10 Nathan says that the sword shall never depart from David's house, which is a euphemism that means David's house will not know peace
 - There will be turmoil, conflict and trial in David's house because of this sin, and that turmoil would come in three specific ways
 - David's house will suffer three penalties, one for each of the ten commandments that David broke
 - First, David broke the tenth commandment not to covet a man's wife
 - So Nathan says members of David's own household will covet David's wives
 - Secondly, David broke the seventh commandment not to commit adultery
 - So Nathan says that some of David's household will lie with David's wives committing adultery with them
 - As we learn later, the men who will defile David's marriages are none other than his own sons, making the offense doubly tragic
 - In v.12 the Lord adds that while David tried to commit his sins in secret, the Lord will perform His discipline in public to make an example
 - And that's the Lord's preferred method of restitution...bringing light to darkness, bringing our sins into the open
 - And the first step of that process is to lead us into a state of repentance, and

- sometimes that requires a shock to the system
- David had assumed that his sin was buried for good until this moment
 - Which is why Nathan's approach to telling his story was designed to shock David so it would lead David to repent
 - He constructs the story so David was in agreement that punishment was needed before he knew it was about him
 - He was trapped by his own words but then came the test...would David embrace the opportunity to repent?
- Moments like this are perhaps the supreme test of spiritual maturity and humility...how do we respond when confronted with our own sin?
 - If we are defensive or deny our actions or attack the messenger or run away, we are continuing in our sin
 - We are displaying spiritual immaturity and most importantly we're missing an important opportunity to grow
 - After all, the Lord brings moments like the one David has here precisely so we can rise above the sin entangling us
 - What a shame that we miss the benefits of the test and ultimately make it necessary for God to repeat the test
 - The real shame of it is that the moment of repentance is generally a short, simple and ultimately cathartic experience
 - And often, our confession is answered by forgiveness and opportunity for restitution – all good things
 - The main thing that suffers is our pride, and that's also a good outcome
 - Yet so many fight against repentance preferring the long, drawn out pain of broken relationships, self-righteous indignation and more sin
 - It's another example of how the enemy lies to us, convincing us that standing our ground and denying the truth is better
 - When the Lord brings our sin to light, repent, throw yourself on His mercy and see how the Lord uses your humility for good
- How does David respond? Even before Nathan is able to announce the third punishment, David interrupts Nathan to admit his fault

2Sam. 12:13 Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” And Nathan said to David, “The LORD also has taken away your sin; you shall not die.

- David made no attempt to deny his sin...he admits to it right away, and that's a good thing certainly and what we would expect
 - This was David's first expression of repentance but David had many days and weeks and years to live out his repentance

- In fact, the psalms reflect David's attitude as he confessed his sin to God for this episode

Psa. 51:1 Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness;
According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions.

Psa. 51:2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity
And cleanse me from my sin.

Psa. 51:3 For I know my transgressions,
And my sin is ever before me.

Psa. 51:4 Against You, You only, I have sinned
And done what is evil in Your sight,
So that You are justified when You speak
And blameless when You judge.

Psa. 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
And in sin my mother conceived me.

Psa. 51:6 Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being,
And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.

Psa. 51:7 Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Psa. 51:8 Make me to hear joy and gladness,
Let the bones which You have broken rejoice.

Psa. 51:9 Hide Your face from my sins
And blot out all my iniquities.

Psa. 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Psa. 51:11 Do not cast me away from Your presence
And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

Psa. 51:12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation
And sustain me with a willing spirit.

Psa. 51:13 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways,
And sinners will be converted to You.

- David felt the weight of his sin, and he calls to God for forgiveness
 - David acknowledges that he began life in sin and his sin was ever before God and therefore he needed God's forgiveness
 - And for that reason David needed God to clean him from the inside, to sanctify him
- Nathan immediately reassures David that his sins have not separated him from God, because the Lord had taken David's sins away
 - This is the reassurance for everyone who has placed their faith in God's Messiah, as David had done
 - As David said in v.10, the Lord created in David a clean heart, and one day David will

live in a sinless body as well

- And David says that when he's learned this lesson he would teach others not to transgress either
- That's the heart of repentance... to confess sin, to accept the discipline God may bring, and to look for how God will use our fall for His glory
 - In some ways, a repentant sinner offers a more powerful testimony of God's grace than a person who never seems to fall
 - In reality, both are sinners, but one is more useful to God in reaching those looking to rise above sin
 - When we project perfection, we aren't being honest with God nor are we giving the sinner encouragement to repent
- Later we'll see David dealing with some of the ramifications of God's discipline with humility
 - And his godly approach to God's discipline is another great testimony to David's ability to follow after the Lord
 - For now his confession stops the bleeding, so to speak, and gives opportunity for the Lord to bring discipline to a close
 - But also notice, David's confession doesn't by itself stop the discipline
 - It's been said that you can remove the nail from wood, but you can't remove the hole
 - Similarly, the Lord doesn't discipline us just to remove the sin from our life, though certainly He is working to that effect
 - It's also to turn a bad situation into a good testimony
 - By effecting discipline, the Lord shows the world that our sin was not approved and not desired
 - And it reminds God's children that sin displeases Him, so that our life can be a testimony one way or another
- So despite David's repentance, Nathan continues on with the final punishment for breaking the sixth commandment, not to murder

2Sam. 12:14 “However, because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born to you shall surely die.”

- The final punishment is death for David's son, a life for a life because David took Uriah's life
 - By far this was the worst punishment for David, since it meant losing someone he loved
 - And remember, his son was not a new infant, though if he had been that wouldn't mean David would have loved him less

- But humanly speaking, it can be even harder to lose an older child after you've come to know the child in deeper ways
- Notice in v.14 Nathan adds that David's sin has given opportunities for the Lord's enemies to blaspheme
 - The issue here is what Israel's enemies saw in Israel's God versus what they claimed about their own gods
 - The leaders of Israel's enemies practiced things like prostitution and fornication and murder as part of normal life
 - While Israel's God declared such things to be abominations and outlawed them in Israel
- So the question became what would the God of Israel do when Israel's leader practices the very same?
 - Now that the Lord is bringing this sin out into the open, it's important for the rest of the story to be told as well
 - The nations couldn't just learn of David's sin without also knowing the Lord's response so that the lesson could be learned
- So Nathan says the child must die so that Israel's enemies understand that God didn't approve of David's actions and that a price was paid
 - This price wasn't to obtain forgiveness for David but to obtain vindication for the Lord Himself
 - The Lord is using evil for a great good...to protect His glory before the nations
- This third punishment is the first the Lord brings to pass for David

2Sam. 12:15 So Nathan went to his house. Then the LORD struck the child that Uriah's widow bore to David, so that he was very sick.

2Sam. 12:16 David therefore inquired of God for the child; and David fasted and went and lay all night on the ground.

2Sam. 12:17 The elders of his household stood beside him in order to raise him up from the ground, but he was unwilling and would not eat food with them.

- We would expect the Lord to act immediately in the case of David's son since it's the only way to demonstrate that God's word is true
 - Everyone is going to die sooner or later, so when God connects someone's death to a specific set of circumstances, He must act quickly
 - If David's son died 40 years later, who would connect his death with this judgment?
 - The whole point is that he dies in such a way that the meaning of the boy's death is understood to be God's judgment
 - But interestingly, the Lord doesn't choose to take the boy's life immediately like He did the first born of Egypt in the Exodus

- Instead, the boy is struck with a sickness that lingers for a week
 - This choice seems intended to provoke a prayerful response from David as well as to teach him a lesson
- The delay prompts David to engage in prayer and fasting hoping he might change God's mind and spare his son's life
 - So David and the elders of his household join in a vigil around David as he lies at his son's feet praying for healing
 - The Lord had already said this must happen to protect His name
 - But until it played out to conclusion, David couldn't know for sure what God might be willing to do in response to his petitions
 - So he had nothing to lose in trying, and obviously he was desperate for his son to survive
- Secondly, the experience taught David a lesson about how his actions will impact the vulnerable in Israel
 - Obviously, his sin with Bathsheba had already taken the life of a powerless and defenseless man, Uriah
 - But David felt no remorse for Uriah's death at all, and a leader who can take life without remorse is a dangerous trait
 - So now the Lord teaches David the significance of the death of an innocent through a first-hand experience
 - David is given this time to contemplate how his actions impact others
 - For all that analysis, this is a tender moment, so if you're not careful your sympathies might align in the wrong way
 - We might be tempted to see David as the good guy here and God as the bad "guy" by His response
 - But the whole point of God's discipline is to provoke a godly response in David so that he returns to what he once knew
 - And we can see that response taking shape here, so don't cut it short by wishing for a different path
 - We can see the impact of the Lord's discipline reflected in David's own commentary probably from that time

**Psa. 38:1 O LORD, rebuke me not in Your wrath,
And chasten me not in Your burning anger.**

**Psa. 38:2 For Your arrows have sunk deep into me,
And Your hand has pressed down on me.**

**Psa. 38:3 There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your indignation;
There is no health in my bones because of my sin.**

**Psa. 38:4 For my iniquities are gone over my head;
As a heavy burden they weigh too much for me.**

Psa. 38:5 My wounds grow foul and fester
Because of my folly.

Psa. 38:6 I am bent over and greatly bowed down;
I go mourning all day long.

Psa. 38:7 For my loins are filled with burning,
And there is no soundness in my flesh.

Psa. 38:8 I am benumbed and badly crushed;
I groan because of the agitation of my heart.

- David made every appeal to the Lord that he could, and understandably so, and in the end the Lord's will was done

2Sam. 12:18 Then it happened on the seventh day that the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they said, "Behold, while the child was still alive, we spoke to him and he did not listen to our voice. How then can we tell him that the child is dead, since he might do himself harm!"

2Sam. 12:19 But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David perceived that the child was dead; so David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" And they said, "He is dead."

2Sam. 12:20 So David arose from the ground, washed, anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he came into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he came to his own house, and when he requested, they set food before him and he ate.

2Sam. 12:21 Then his servants said to him, "What is this thing that you have done? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept; but when the child died, you arose and ate food."

2Sam. 12:22 He said, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who knows, the LORD may be gracious to me, that the child may live.'

2Sam. 12:23 "But now he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."

- On the seventh day, the child dies while David is asleep on the floor somewhere in the room
 - And the servants are afraid to inform David of the child's passing for fear that he will harm himself in grief
 - They say that when they tried to convince David to eat or drink earlier, David was in too much sorrow to listen
 - So what will David do now that the child is gone?
 - In their whispering they disturb David so he asks plainly has the child died, and they answer yes

- Then in v.20 we're told David simply rises up, washes himself, changes his clothes and goes to worship the Lord
 - Then David goes home and requests food and eats
 - It's like a normal day, and David's sudden return to a normal routine has everyone surprised and puzzled
 - In Jewish culture, mourning for a death was an elaborate and very ritualized process, so everyone expects David to follow that process
 - But David does not mourn at all, at least not in any public ritual
 - And so in v.21 the servants gain the courage to ask David why he wasn't mourning his son's death
 - They probably asked out of a concern that David's calm demeanor was a sign he was cracking
- David answers in a matter-of-fact way: while the child is alive, prayers and other shows of piety and could be effective to persuade God
 - But after the child died, David had his answer and therefore it was no longer profitable
 - David asks, can I fast to bring him back from the dead?
 - David isn't saying that he didn't believe in God's ability to resurrect a person
 - We know David believes in resurrection because he wrote of it in the psalms
 - But David knew that in this case, the boy's death wasn't going to lead to that outcome because the Lord had already announced the plan
 - So David made his best appeal while the boy was alive
 - And then once the boy died, David let him go and knew he would see him again one day to come
 - Meanwhile, David turned his attention to the life he had left, and worshiped the Lord even though his prayer wasn't answered
 - It's living with eyes for eternity in the face of God's discipline and the death of those we love and it's spiritual maturity
- David is modeling the perfect attitude toward death for every believer...death is coming for all of us one day and we can't stop it nor should we want to
 - We can pray for more days by asking for healing or better health or whatever comes to our minds, and maybe God will answer us yes
 - But one day the answer to our requests for longer life will be "no" and we will die as God intends
 - And like David, when that day comes for someone we love, we let them go because God's will has been revealed in the matter
 - And if the person is a believer, then we can confidently say what David says at the end of v.23: they can't return to us but we will go to them
 - David is stating the obvious: the plan of God is for all His children to enter into glory and we go there one at a time

- It's not His plan for us to go and then return to this life now with those of us who have yet to be glorified
 - Our loved ones don't hear us after they die, and they aren't coming back to us here in any form, whether physically or as a spirit
 - Death is a one-way trip, and we will follow after them
 - So why dwell on what can't be...better to look forward to what will be as God has promised
 - That's what David was saying, and it shows a biblically mature point of view on death and the after life
- That leads to one final thought about the boy's death and David's reaction...what do we think about God commanding the boy to die?
 - Some have even objected to the notion that God is the One taking the child's life or causing this outcome, but the text is clear
 - In v.11 the Lord says He will raise up this evil against David...the Lord is the one bringing these things against David
 - And the Lord says in v.15 that the Lord struck the child with illness
 - The Lord is the giver of life and He takes it when and how it suits Him, and on this day He took the life of David's child
 - On the other hand, this is not a punishment against the child...the child was not to blame and God is not acting against the child
 - The child is collateral damage from David's sin
 - And yet we say the child is dying, which is not a good thing for the child, right?
 - In v.23 David clearly indicates that his son is going to be with the Lord, probably because David taught him of the Lord and knew his heart
 - If so, then how can we say the child is being punished by being brought into the presence of the Lord in glory?
 - Do we really think that this boy was unhappy with the outcome once he saw how it turned out?
 - Do we supposed he would have elected to return to earth?
- This too is a problem of perspective, and the godly perspective understands that death is never a criteria by which we can judge God
 - If everyone is going to die and justly so, and if every believer who dies enters into glory, then how can we hold any death against God?
 - If anything, we should say that keeping a believer alive a long time is more cruel than taking a young Christian home early
 - It's all about perspective, and since God is the giver of life He can decide when and how anyone dies, and there is no way to judge
 - We judge from a selfish, earthly perspective and that's no place from which to judge
 - So this boy's death was a hardship for David, but it wasn't a hardship for the boy

himself

- And it reminds us to see our life here the way God does...something He can use to His glory and then it's over
 - Make the most of the days but don't hold on too tightly nor define your contentment or security by anything found here
- Finally, I want to make a quick point in passing about something that sometimes gets taught about v.23
 - Some argue that since David said his child was destined to enter Heaven, it means all infants automatically qualify for Heaven
 - First, the text never addresses that question here, so we can't read it into the text
 - Secondly, there's no indication that this boy was an infant, and the Hebrew words would suggest otherwise
 - More importantly, the concern of what God does with an infant death or anyone who lacks capacity to confess Christ must agree with Scripture
 - And Scripture makes clear that everyone comes into the world with sin, and David himself said that in Psalm 51
 - Furthermore, the Bible is abundantly clear that even one sin is enough to remove us from Heaven
 - So if all enter with sin then none are qualified to enter Heaven, not even infants
 - So all must be justified by faith if we are to receive God's righteousness by which we may see the Lord
 - Which leads us to the inevitable conclusion that if a child enters Heaven, it will be because God brings that child saving faith
 - And He can bring saving faith to anyone at any time according to the Bible
 - David himself is the best example:

**Psa. 22:9 Yet You are He who brought me forth from the womb;
You made me trust when upon my mother's breasts.**

**Psa. 22:10 Upon You I was cast from birth;
You have been my God from my mother's womb.**

- If David was "made to trust" in God while nursing, then we can hope for any infant or anyone lacking an ability to confess
- God brings faith, we don't find it on our own, and that's our confidence

- David's fall into sin and his unwillingness to repent have led him to the place where God had to deal with His sin
 - The process began with the Lord revealing David's sin to the prophet Nathan, who in turn confronted David about it
 - To his credit, David immediately confessed and repented, which was characteristic of David's heart overall
 - David was not a man who gloried in sin nor practiced sin, as the New Testament would describe it
 - David was a sinful man, yes, but he desired for better, so even when he did fall, he was quick to return to the Lord in humility
 - If we catalogued all of David's positive, godly traits, I believe David's humility in repentance was perhaps his most admirable quality
 - And that's why this section of our study on David's failings is so valuable
 - It's not merely a look at what David did wrong...it's an examination of how David responded well to those failures
 - In this example, David committed serious sin, perhaps the most serious sins a person can commit in the case of adultery and murder
 - Initially for several years, David failed to hide his sin, and the Lord graciously gave David time to repent
 - And we have to wonder what would have happened had David confessed on his own? Would his son have lived?
 - We can't know because David never took that path
- Instead, it required the Lord to expose it for him and to bring consequences against David as discipline so the Lord could protect His name, He said
 - As we learned last week, the Lord needed the world to see that David's sin brought severe consequences so no one could claim God approved
 - The nation of Israel was to be a light to the world, meaning they were representatives of God's righteous ways
 - And so when the leader of God's people behaved in ways more consistent with pagans than with God, the Lord had to act
 - As the prophet Nathan explained to David:

2Sam. 12:14 “However, because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born to you shall surely die.”

- Nevertheless, the Lord showed grace delaying the child's death for a week giving David time with him, which David used to plead with God
 - In the end the Lord did as He declared by taking the child home, and David learned a valuable lesson

- So David ended his pleading and mourning and accepted the discipline of the Lord with humility and moved on
- David went directly from his child's bedside to worship before the Lord, humbly recognizing his part in these circumstances
 - He also recognized the Lord's right to discipline him in the way that God chose, as David wrote in the psalms

**Psa. 51:3 For I know my transgressions,
And my sin is ever before me.**

**Psa. 51:4 Against You, You only, I have sinned
And done what is evil in Your sight,
So that You are justified when You speak
And blameless when You judge.**

- David said he knew His God is a God of righteous judgment, and therefore He is blameless in whatever He does, and yet He is also a God of mercy and grace
 - And these two sides of God's nature often work hand-in-hand, sometimes in the very same set of circumstances
 - So even as God was disciplining David for his sin, the Lord was also prepared to bless David for his humility
 - This pattern can confuse us at times, since we commonly expect only one or the other from someone in authority
 - Either we do good and get rewarded or go poorly and get punished, but we never expect both at the same time
 - But God's ways are not man's ways
 - We pick up near the end of Chapter 12

2Sam. 12:24 Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and went in to her and lay with her; and she gave birth to a son, and he named him Solomon. Now the LORD loved him

2Sam. 12:25 and sent word through Nathan the prophet, and he named him Jedidiah for the LORD'S sake.

- First, we're told David comforts his wife in her sorrow over the loss of her son, and this must have been a difficult conversation for David to have
 - David is obviously fully repentant at this point, but we don't know where his wife was at this point
 - Does she blame God for her son's death? Was she willing to acknowledge her own culpability in the situation?
 - Has she forgiven David for killing Uriah?

- Sometimes the hardest step in accepting God's discipline with humility is helping others in your life accept it with you
- Then David and Bathsheba conceive again, and the new son is born probably around 991 BC, and David names the boy Solomon
 - The name Solomon comes from the Hebrew word *shalom*, meaning fullness, completeness or peace
 - His name probably reflects both David's peace with God having been forgiven and restored from his sin
 - And also Solomon's time ruling Israel in peace, since Solomon ruled over a kingdom largely absent external threats
- Curiously, the prophet Nathan chooses to give the boy another name, Jedidiah, which means beloved of Yahweh
 - It says Nathan assigned Solomon this additional name for the Lord's sake, meaning to honor the Lord for His work in David's life
 - Jedidiah was Nathan's pet name for Solomon, not a name Solomon ever used, and the name is never mentioned again
- Now clearly we see the grace of God at work in David's life in giving David another son, almost as if to replace the one that died
 - Every child we receive is the result of a conscious, purposeful decision by God to bring a new life into existence through us
 - And of course, this child is no different...the Lord has chosen to bless David and Bathsheba with another son
 - And therefore, the birth of this son is evidence by itself that the Lord is still willing to bless David
 - And as we move on, we see further evidence of God's sovereign purpose in all this, as God foretold that this new son would one day rule
 - Later in his life, David tells Solomon how the Lord spoke to David before Solomon was conceived

1Chr. 22:7 David said to Solomon, "My son, I had intended to build a house to the name of the LORD my God.

1Chr. 22:8 "But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'You have shed much blood and have waged great wars; you shall not build a house to My name, because you have shed so much blood on the earth before Me.

1Chr. 22:9 'Behold, a son will be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies on every side; for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days.

1Chr. 22:10 'He shall build a house for My name, and he shall be My son and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.'

- At some point before Solomon's conception, the Lord revealed His plans to David to give

him a son who would build a house for the Lord

- This moment in 1 Chronicles 22 probably happened early in David's life soon after the death of David's son
- The Lord appeared to David and comforted him with the knowledge that he would have another son
- And the Lord said the son's name would be Solomon and he would build a house to the Lord in this age
- You'll remember another moment in Chapter 7 when David was contemplating building a house for the Lord
 - The events of that chapter happen near the end of David's life after Solomon is already alive
 - So apparently, David returned to the thought of building a house for God later in life as he felt self-conscious in his palace
- At that time the Lord told David not to pursue the idea, because He had plans for a future descendant who would build a permanent house
 - That promise was the Davidic Covenant, which says that a descendant of David, Jesus, would reign in a day to come
 - Meanwhile, God told David earlier that his son, Solomon, would build a lessor house in his day
 - But either way, David wasn't going to build a temple for the Lord
- So the point here is David knew Solomon was going to be born before Bathsheba conceived
 - Which reinforces our understanding of the sovereignty of God in all that happened between him and Bathsheba
 - At the end of v.24, the writer says the Lord loved Solomon, and this is an important statement that holds great meaning
 - This is one of those times in the Bible when the Lord uses the term "love" to mean chose or selected
 - The most famous example is found in Malachi:

Mal. 1:2 "I have loved you," says the LORD. But you say, "How have You loved us?" "Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares the LORD. "Yet I have loved Jacob;

Mal. 1:3 but I have hated Esau, and I have made his mountains a desolation and appointed his inheritance for the jackals of the wilderness."

- The Lord tells Israel that He has loved them, and then the Lord says, "You will ask Me how I loved you?"
- At that time, the nation of Israel was still recovering from years spent in exile as God's discipline against His people for their sin

- And the Lord knows that His people were questioning His love for them in light of that great hardship
- So the Lord says I will show how you know that I love you: I chose you to be My people
 - The Lord points back to the moment that He chose one brother over another which led to Israel coming from Jacob
 - In fact, the Lord changed Jacob's name to Israel reflecting that God intended to bring a nation from this man
- So the Lord reminded Israel that they can see His love for them in that He chose them for His covenant
 - And at the same time God did not choose Esau, and not choosing Esau is expressed as the Lord hated Esau
 - Esau's descendants have no future and no blessing from God unlike Jacob
- From this passage we come to understand that to be chosen by God is to be loved by God, and to be passed over by God is to be "hated" by God
 - Later, in Romans Paul points to this text in teaching that all who descend from Abraham are God's chosen people

Rom. 9:10 And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac;

Rom. 9:11 for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,

Rom. 9:12 it was said to her, "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER."

Rom. 9:13 Just as it is written, "JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED."

- Paul draws from Malachi 9 using the same phraseology...God loved Jacob, meaning God chose Jacob, and Esau He didn't
- And this makes perfect sense...to be chosen by God is to be loved by God, and to not be chosen is not to be loved (or we say to be hated)
 - This isn't a description of God's emotions...God didn't have better "feelings" for Jacob over Esau
 - In fact, Paul emphasizes that this choice was made while the sons were in the womb before they did anything good or bad
 - In that way we would see that it was by God's choice that one received good things and one received bad things
 - God makes such choices all the time, because that's what it means to be sovereign...to have authority over every outcome
- Knowing this, we come back to 2 Samuel 12 to find God saying that He loved Solomon, and now we understand it means God chose him
 - We heard this already from David in 1 Chronicles 22 when David recounted how the

Lord said He had chosen his son Solomon

- That's what this writer is saying also here in 2 Samuel 12...Solomon was God's choice to succeed David
- The writer needs to tell us this now because Solomon was not the expected choice
 - Normally, the oldest son of the king would be expected to inherit the throne at the death of the father
 - David's first born son was Amnon, while Solomon was the 7th born son of David
 - So Solomon was far down the pecking order for succession
 - But God chose Solomon as David's successor, just as the Lord told David He would, and that choice supersedes anything that men expected
 - And it's notable that David's successor would come by the woman that David took through adultery and murder
 - And it's also notable that this son would be a uniquely wise and powerful king in all the history of Israel, save only Christ Himself
 - These details are proof that we cannot sin our way out of God's grace, nor does our sin separate us from the love of God
 - Most of us were raised to believe that bad people should get bad outcomes, while good people should get good outcomes
 - The problem is that from God's perspective, every human being is bad...there is none who do good, no not one Romans 3 says
 - So therefore the only way for God to ever give us something good is by His grace, not because we merit good things
 - When you understand this, then you can make sense of why God put one son to death as discipline and gave another as grace...
 - God is not rewarding David's bad behavior...God is showing David grace, undeserved merit
 - And both acts were good for David...because God disciplines us *as a blessing*, and so everything that comes from God is good
- God used David's greatest sin to ultimately produce David's greatest blessing, his son Solomon
 - In grace, God granted David another son through Bathsheba and assigned this new son earthly prominence and spiritual significance
 - Truly, this is an example of Paul's statement in Ephesians:

**Eph. 3:20 Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,
Eph. 3:21 to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.**

- God does this for all His children, blessing us even as we sin and sometimes even if we

aren't ready or willing to repent

- Clearly, we should *expect* discipline when we sin and perhaps blessing when we don't
- But that's not a rule nor does it predict God's behavior
- God turns all circumstances to good, so He often mixes discipline with other forms of blessing at the same time
- Interestingly, the son that was taken from David and Bathsheba could never have received the blessings that Solomon received
 - He was conceived out of wedlock, so he was a bastard son, and as such he could not have been king of Israel

Deut. 23:2 “No one of illegitimate birth shall enter the assembly of the LORD; none of his descendants, even to the tenth generation, shall enter the assembly of the LORD.

- So the only way the Lord could bless an offspring of David and Bathsheba with the throne was to give a new son
- And in addition to blessing David with a new son, the Lord continues to bless David and the nation in warfare, leading to a defeat of the Ammonites

2Sam. 12:26 Now Joab fought against Rabbah of the sons of Ammon and captured the royal city.

2Sam. 12:27 Joab sent messengers to David and said, “I have fought against Rabbah, I have even captured the city of waters.

2Sam. 12:28 “Now therefore, gather the rest of the people together and camp against the city and capture it, or I will capture the city myself and it will be named after me.”

2Sam. 12:29 So David gathered all the people and went to Rabbah, fought against it and captured it.

2Sam. 12:30 Then he took the crown of their king from his head; and its weight was a talent of gold, and in it was a precious stone; and it was placed on David's head. And he brought out the spoil of the city in great amounts.

2Sam. 12:31 He also brought out the people who were in it, and set them under saws, sharp iron instruments, and iron axes, and made them pass through the brick kiln. And thus he did to all the cities of the sons of Ammon. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

- The war against the Ammonites had been raging on and off for some time now
 - Remember, years earlier David had Uriah killed in battle against these same Ammonites

- And it would seem the Lord left Israel's victory out of reach for as long as David hid his sin
- But once the sin was exposed, and David had repented, then the Lord was ready to move His plan for Israel forward
- Here again, as David goes, so goes the nation, so not only is David moving back to a place of blessing, so is the nation
 - And that's why the author of 2 Samuel includes this account here at the conclusion of the story of David and Bathsheba
 - He's making the connection that because of David's restoration, now the Lord was willing to bring about the Ammonites' defeat
- And the story starts with a summary statement in v.26 as we're told Joab captures the Ammonites' royal city, their capital city, Rabbah
 - The rest of the passage explains how that happened, beginning with Joab sending word to David
 - Joab speaks as if the deal were already done saying he has captured Rabbah because he captured their water supply
 - Without water, he knew the city couldn't last more than a short time, so Joab calls for David to share in the final victory
 - Joab wryly adds that if David hesitates, Joab will win without him and name it for himself
 - So David sends his entire army of men to the battle, and with the extra manpower, Joab succeeds in taking Rabbah
 - Part of the spoil was the crown of the king of the Ammonites, which weighed a talent of gold, which was about 75 lbs
 - It's very unlikely that David (or any king) ever wore a crown this heavy, or even let it rest on his head
 - It was a symbol of power, so when v.30 says Joab placed it on David's head, we can probably imagine that several men held it
 - But the imagery is certainly powerful...David victorious over perhaps Israel's most dangerous enemy, and gaining more power and riches
 - The spoil of the battle is brought to Jerusalem in great amounts we're told in v.30
 - And the people living in all the cities of Ammon were enslaved and made to work for Israel
 - These same people had long done the same to Israel, tormenting the people of Israel for centuries, but now they cease to exist
- The story of David's victory over the Ammonites sits as bookends in the story of David's sin, and as such, it shows how our walk with the Lord gets sidetracked
 - The Lord's work in our life proceeds until we get sidetracked in sin or worldliness, and then He pauses our progress with Him
 - He leads us through that battle with our flesh and through discipline if

- necessary until we repent and return
 - Then our walk and our progress in other areas of our life picks up again where we left off
- In a sense, everything is progress, because even during the pause, He is moving us away from our wayward path walking us back to the narrow
 - But we tend to see spiritual progress only in terms of big changes happening around us or through us
 - While God measures spiritual progress by what happens inside us, which makes the pauses the most important times of growth
- When you're not making progress in plans and goals and "ministry," it's probably because the Lord is busy attending to something inside you
 - When we've repented, put away our sin, and learned the lesson, then He will open new doors for the next spiritual adventure
 - The three chapters of David and Bathsheba give us a vivid example of that pattern
 - David's "ministry" was leading Israel in defeat of their enemies and in growing prosperity
 - But his walk was sidetracked at times while the Lord contended with personal issues in David's life
- Our next section beginning in Chapter 13 is the longest single section of the book running from Chapters 13-20
 - The section is another telling of David's failures and their impact on the nation of Israel
 - But unlike the section we just studied, the sin driving this section doesn't stand out so obviously
 - The principle sin driving this section will be David's choice to take multiple wives and the consequential rivalries that resulted
 - Adding to those consequences will be David's hesitation to implement the will and law of God
 - The consequences of these sins lead to some of David's sons dying and David being forced to leave Jerusalem for a time
 - The story begins with three new characters, Amnon, Absalom and Tamar

2Sam. 13:1 Now it was after this that Absalom the son of David had a beautiful sister whose name was Tamar, and Amnon the son of David loved her.

2Sam. 13:2 Amnon was so frustrated because of his sister Tamar that he made himself ill, for she was a virgin, and it seemed hard to Amnon to do anything to her.

- Absalom is David's third-born son by Maacah, and David also had a daughter by Maacah

called Tamar

- David's first-born son, Amnon, was born to a different wife named Ahinoam
- Technically, these three children of David are half-brother and half-sister, sharing the same father but different mothers
- Both Amnon and Absalom were in their early 20s, born to David while he was still in Hebron waiting to become king over Israel
- Tamar, the full sister of Absalom, was probably in her early teens
- And one of the consequences of David's sin of taking multiple wives were these unnatural desires and jealousies between families
 - David's son Amnon finds his half-sister, Tamar, attractive to the point of distraction and lusts after her
 - He is so infatuated with her he makes himself ill, because he sees she was unmarried and yet he can't see a way to have her
 - Under the Law of Moses, a half-brother couldn't take his half-sister as a wife, which is why he sees no way to marry her
 - So Amnon is frustrated at the prospect of being unable to have her for himself and it's depressing him greatly
 - But then a friend offers a solution of sorts

2Sam. 13:3 But Amnon had a friend whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother; and Jonadab was a very shrewd man.

2Sam. 13:4 He said to him, "O son of the king, why are you so depressed morning after morning? Will you not tell me?" Then Amnon said to him, "I am in love with Tamar, the sister of my brother Absalom."

2Sam. 13:5 Jonadab then said to him, "Lie down on your bed and pretend to be ill; when your father comes to see you, say to him, 'Please let my sister Tamar come and give me some food to eat, and let her prepare the food in my sight, that I may see it and eat from her hand.'"

- **Jonadab, the son of one of David's brothers, was Amnon's cousin and also a cousin to Absalom and Tamar, and he was a shrewd young man**
 - When the Bible calls a person shrewd, it's usually not a compliment, and certainly not in this case
 - This young man notices that his cousin, Amnon, was depressed day after day and presses for an explanation
- Amnon confides in Jonadab that he is in love with his half sister, Tamar, Jonadab sees opportunity to ingratiate himself to Amnon
 - Jonadab is smart, but not in a godly way, and Amnon is easily influenced for the worse by his cousin

- These two serve as poster children for Paul's comment in 1 Corinthians 15 that bad company corrupts good morals
- Only in this case it's more a case of bad company makes bad morals worse
- Jonadab tells Amnon to set a trap for Tamar by pretending to be sick and then asking David to send Tamar with food
 - In that day, a young, unmarried woman was not typically in the company of young, unmarried men
 - Had Amnon sought her company under normal circumstances, it would have raised concerns and questions
 - Preparing food was exclusively the work of women, so it became the perfect excuse to ask for Tamar
 - But by pretending to be ill, Amnon's request will seem harmless
 - Why does Jonadab want to help this cousin? Because Jonadab wants to gain a friend in David's successor
 - Amnon was the first-born of David, so Amnon was most likely to become king after David died, or so Jonadab thought
 - On the other hand, Tamar's brother, Absalom, was the strongest leader among the sons of David
 - So shrewd Jonadab sees an opportunity to pit one brother against another and either way he gains favor
 - If Amnon becomes king, then Amnon will remember Jonadab's helpful counsel
 - But by encouraging Amnon to take Tamar, he sets up Absalom to take revenge and eliminate a rival
 - Either way, he can play the situation to his advantage to gain the favor of the winner
 - So Amnon takes the advice and the plan moves ahead

2Sam. 13:6 So Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill; when the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, "Please let my sister Tamar come and make me a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat from her hand."

2Sam. 13:7 Then David sent to the house for Tamar, saying, "Go now to your brother Amnon's house, and prepare food for him."

2Sam. 13:8 So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house, and he was lying down. And she took dough, kneaded it, made cakes in his sight, and baked the cakes.

2Sam. 13:9 She took the pan and dished them out before him, but he refused to eat. And Amnon said, "Have everyone go out from me." So everyone went out from him.

- Obviously, the point of this plan is for Amnon get Tamar alone so he can force himself on her when no one could help her

- We call this rape, of course, and it's no coincidence that one of David's sons is about to sin in a way very similar to the way his father sinned
 - The acorn doesn't fall from the tree and the hens have come home to roost, etc.
 - In other words, David's sin with Bathsheba has consequences for the way his sons think and act toward women
 - And there is a basic biblical principle (and a principle of human nature) that says the parents' sin influences their children's sin
- And David displays some naiveté here by agreeing to send Tamar to her half-brother's bed
 - She works in a room adjacent to his bedroom making bread, and through the doorway he can watch her work
 - Once more, his eyes see something that provokes lust and lust is consummated in sin as we learned before
- So when she was ready to serve him, he orders the other servants out of his bedroom and orders her to bring the food herself

2Sam. 13:10 Then Amnon said to Tamar, “Bring the food into the bedroom, that I may eat from your hand.” So Tamar took the cakes which she had made and brought them into the bedroom to her brother Amnon.

2Sam. 13:11 When she brought them to him to eat, he took hold of her and said to her, “Come, lie with me, my sister.”

2Sam. 13:12 But she answered him, “No, my brother, do not violate me, for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do this disgraceful thing!

2Sam. 13:13 “As for me, where could I get rid of my reproach? And as for you, you will be like one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, please speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from you.”

2Sam. 13:14 However, he would not listen to her; since he was stronger than she, he violated her and lay with her.

- As she offers him the bread, he grabs her arm and demands she lie with him
- She begs him as her brother not to violate her for such a thing was not proper in Israel
- She's speaking both of the general violation of an unmarried woman and the specific sin of incest
 - In that time the one and only thing of value a woman had to offer a husband in marriage was her virtue
 - If that was taken from her, she would find it very difficult to attract an honorable man and might remain unmarried for life
 - She asks him where she could get rid of her approach, meaning that since they couldn't marry, there was no way to be made whole

Deut. 22:28 “If a man finds a girl who is a virgin, who is not engaged, and seizes her and lies with her and they are discovered,

Deut. 22:29 then the man who lay with her shall give to the girl’s father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall become his wife because he has violated her; he cannot divorce her all his days.

- So she can’t be restored by marrying him, and since there was no way he could keep her, he would be seen as a fool in Israel
- And then as a final try at escaping, she suggests Amnon talk to David to ask for Tamar’s hand in marriage
 - She certainly must have known that David would have refused the marriage, but she suggests this option as a delaying tactic
 - She’s looking for any way she can to keep her half-brother from taking this step
- In the end, he overpowers her, rapes her and sets in motion a cascade of devastation in David’s family

2Sam. 13:15 Then Amnon hated her with a very great hatred; for the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, “Get up, go away!”

2Sam. 13:16 But she said to him, “No, because this wrong in sending me away is greater than the other that you have done to me!” Yet he would not listen to her.

2Sam. 13:17 Then he called his young man who attended him and said, “Now throw this woman out of my presence, and lock the door behind her.”

2Sam. 13:18 Now she had on a long-sleeved garment; for in this manner the virgin daughters of the king dressed themselves in robes. Then his attendant took her out and locked the door behind her.

2Sam. 13:19 Tamar put ashes on her head and tore her long-sleeved garment which was on her; and she put her hand on her head and went away, crying aloud as she went.

- As soon as the act was complete, Amnon’s lust for Tamar turned to hatred, and in fact the hatred was greater than the passion he had previously felt
 - This response is evidence that Amnon’s attraction for Tamar had been entirely selfish and fleshly, if not downright demonic
 - Once his flesh obtained what it desired, he reacted with self-loathing, which came out of him as a hatred for Tamar
 - He begins to blame the object of his lust for his feelings of guilt and the awareness that he will face consequences
 - Sexual sin is somewhat unique in this respect...it’s an action that can’t be reversed, has lasting ramifications, and the body itself is one of the victims

- As Paul says, speaking about sexual sin

1Cor. 6:18 Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.

- Immorality refers to sexual immorality, and Paul says flee this sin particularly because it demoralizes and desecrates our own body
- And that has effects on our mind and heart that are far greater than we may realize until much later
- Amnon shows that effect immediately as he throws Tamar out of the room
 - But she is now trying to salvage something of the situation for herself
 - Though the Law prohibited a marriage between them, she was grasping at straws hoping that a solution might be found
 - The one thing she didn't want was to be rejected by the only man who could marry her with her honor intact
- But Amnon would not have it, and so he compounds his sin by sending her away a violated woman with no prospects
 - Amnon calls for his servants to throw her out of the room, and the text says that she wore a long outer cloak
 - The writer is making the subtle point that this outer cloak obscured any evidence of her having been violated
 - So the servants take her out without knowing what transpired between them and lock the door so she can't return
 - With no hope, she tears her garments in distress and mourning and weeps loudly as she goes
 - Naturally, her hysterics attract attention and that leads to the next part of the story...

2Sam. 13:20 Then Absalom her brother said to her, "Has Amnon your brother been with you? But now keep silent, my sister, he is your brother; do not take this matter to heart." So Tamar remained and was desolate in her brother Absalom's house.

2Sam. 13:21 Now when King David heard of all these matters, he was very angry.

2Sam. 13:22 But Absalom did not speak to Amnon either good or bad; for Absalom hated Amnon because he had violated his sister Tamar.

- As she returns to her family home, her brother Absalom immediately suspects the cause and asks if Amnon had raped her
 - The very fact that Absalom knew to ask that specific question tells us that Amnon's desire for his sister is not a secret

- Somehow he knew that his half-brother was on the hunt for Tamar
- So now when she has shown up in torn clothing and crying, he is ready to ask that question
- He tells his sister to be silent, meaning she should not say anything more about it and do not let it trouble your heart
 - He's promising he will take care of her in his home as spinster forever since she is unlikely to ever be married off
 - So we're told she remained in her brother's house desolate
- This sounds like Absalom is being kind and brotherly, and he is to a degree, but he's also working an angle here for himself
 - He wants to keep the incident quiet to allow him time to take revenge and advance his path to the throne
 - Absalom sees an opportunity to take out a rival for the throne in a semi-legitimate manner when the timing is right
- But if Absalom saw this coming, then certainly David should have known also, and that makes his decision to send Tamar to Amnon all the more foolish
 - And even more surprising, in v.21 David learns of this incident, probably from the servants, and he is very angry
 - But what's surprising is what the text doesn't say...there is no further commentary on David's response to Amnon's sin
 - Under the law, a man who did what Amnon did to Tamar was to be cut off from the nation, which generally meant to die
 - So David should have immediately acted against Amnon to keep the Law in defense of his daughter and for righteousness sake
 - But David does nothing at all, and that plays into Absalom's hands, for had David done the right thing, then Absalom's plan would have ended
 - Although David's sexual sin gets the most attention, David's hesitation to merit out timely justice was a close second
 - He failed to bring justice against Joab for killing Abner and that has longterm consequences for him and the nation
 - And here again, David fails to deal swiftly with the sin of Amnon, and as a result it leads to a coup and the loss of two more sons
- On the one hand it's easy to understand David's hesitation to condemn his first-born son, but on the other hand what of his daughter, Tamar?
 - It seems David's loyalties and desire to please and be loved clouded his judgment of right and wrong
 - Love without justice leads to injustices like the one visited upon Tamar
 - Not only did David not defend Tamar afterward, he allowed the situation in the first place by not dealing with Amnon's lust
 - Again, if Absalom could know so easily what happened to his sister, then clearly the

word was out about Amnon's intentions

- And it's hard to believe no one would have warned the king that his daughter might be in danger
- Maybe that's why David didn't act against his son for the rape...perhaps David felt that the blame rested with him
- Or perhaps David hesitated because he felt like a hypocrite in judging his son for taking a step similar to David's own sin
 - Yes, David didn't rape his sister, but he did have a man murdered
 - So David could hardly say his son's sin was worse, but of course that wasn't the standard for justice
- God's Law doesn't demand that we be sinless before an authority can hold someone else accountable to the Law
 - But it does demonstrate the difficulty of standing up for righteousness when we ourselves aren't standing there
 - We are likely to shrink back from doing right by someone else when we aren't doing right by God
- So whether out of misplaced affections or guilt, David doesn't act against Amnon
 - David is sinning against the Law of Moses by not holding his son accountable
 - And that decision has long and devastating consequences
- These events set up Absalom's revenge which itself leads to a coup and the ripping apart of David's family and Israel's government
 - Sin has consequences for all of us
 - And when you're king of Israel, your sin has consequences for an entire nation

- Tonight we continue with the story of Amnon, Absalom, and Tamar
 - The soap opera involving these three children of David was the product of David's failure to deal with sin quickly and decisively
 - And it was made possible by David's willingness to take multiple wives to produce multiple families with rivalries and jealousies
 - And the effect of these decisions have ramifications for the nation of Israel that extend for years
 - Last week in Chapter 13 we studied Act 1 of this drama, as Amnon acted on his lust over his half sister, Tamar, and raped her
 - He was encouraged to do so by a cousin who was seeking to manipulate the heir to the throne to his own advantage
 - That cousin has now poisoned one brother against another, as Tamar's full brother, Absalom, now seeks revenge against Amnon
 - And that story of revenge leads us to Act 2 of this drama...

2Sam. 13:23 Now it came about after two full years that Absalom had sheepshearers in Baal-hazor, which is near Ephraim, and Absalom invited all the king's sons.

2Sam. 13:24 Absalom came to the king and said, "Behold now, your servant has sheepshearers; please let the king and his servants go with your servant."

2Sam. 13:25 But the king said to Absalom, "No, my son, we should not all go, for we will be burdensome to you." Although he urged him, he would not go, but blessed him.

2Sam. 13:26 Then Absalom said, "If not, please let my brother Amnon go with us." And the king said to him, "Why should he go with you?"

2Sam. 13:27 But when Absalom urged him, he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him.

- We learned last week that Absalom was intent on avenging his sister, but we also noticed that he told Tamar immediately after the incident to stay quiet
 - From that comment we saw he intended to be patient as he plotted his revenge, and now we see how patient he was
 - He waits two years to pick the perfect opportunity, and he has finally determined how to get it done
 - Absalom knew that after he killed his brother, he would be a pariah in David's family
 - So Absalom's planning revolves getting Amnon away from his defenses and getting himself far enough away from David that he has time to escape
 - And sheep shearing time gives Absalom both, because sheep graze away from the city and are sheared where they are kept

- So in v.23 we're told Absalom has herds near a town called Baal-hazor, and shearing time has come
- Sheep shearing was done several times a year, and each time was a time of great feasting
 - It took several days to shear all the sheep in a fold, and the workers labored all day at a shearing barn or pen
 - Then in the evening, the workers enjoyed a large meal and plenty of drink, and the next day it started again
- At shearing time, it was common for families to join the men when possible to enjoy the festivities at night
 - That's why Absalom invites his father, David, and David's servants to attend the shearing of Absalom's sheep
 - David responds saying he would just be a burden on the work and the festivities, which is a polite way of saying no thank you
 - Absalom continues encouraging David to go, but the king continues to say no
 - The sense of the text is that Absalom expected David to decline the invitation, and therefore this was merely a set up for a second ask
 - Absalom's true target was Amnon, so when David refuses the invitation to join the feasting, Absalom asks that his brother go
 - Here again, it was not unusual for family members to attend a sheep shearing gathering but this was different
 - The history between these two brothers and Tamar would have made it unusual and suspicious for Absalom to invite Amnon
 - For that reason, Absalom knows his brother is unlikely to go if invited, and in fact, David probably would have forbidden Amnon to go
 - David knows Absalom hates his brother, and he knows this setting would give Absalom opportunity to take revenge
 - For that reason, Absalom has been waiting two years and has schemed to invite David first
 - The delay has lulled David and Amnon into assuming that Absalom is no longer upset or seeking revenge
 - And by asking David to go first, Absalom has skillfully obscured his true target, Amnon
- So after David declines Absalom's hospitality, he feels some obligation to agree to Absalom's second request
 - But in v.26 Absalom asks that Amnon be allowed to go to the feast, meaning can Amnon go with the rest of the brothers?
 - Reading between the lines, we're learning that David has been protecting Amnon
 - The rest of the brothers are invited too, but David is not allowing Amnon to be with Absalom because he fears the outcome

- Even now after two years, David is suspicious when he hears Absalom's request to allow Amnon to attend
 - David asks why should Amnon go to this event, and in that response we can see how David has been protecting this son
 - Remember, David's failure to deal with Amnon in the first place allowed Tamar to be raped, and now he's favoring him again
 - This favoritism within multiple families is pouring fuel on the fire in Absalom's heart
- Amnon committed sin against Tamar, and now Absalom is doing the same, and we can't blame David for their choices, of course
 - But David did play a role in this soap opera, specifically in not disciplining Amnon's sin when he could
 - And before that, David should not have taken multiple wives
 - And now, David should've listened to his instincts, but Absalom presses and David responds like a parent worn down by begging
- So David agrees to allow Amnon to accompany the rest of his brothers to the shearing party about 14 miles north at Baal-hazor
 - And so Absalom's plan to get David to stop protecting Amnon has worked and he will have his opportunity
 - Absalom's two-year delay and David's guilt for having declined Absalom's invitation lead him to agree to send Amnon
 - And that gives Absalom the opportunity he wanted

2Sam. 13:28 Absalom commanded his servants, saying, "See now, when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say to you, 'Strike Amnon,' then put him to death. Do not fear; have not I myself commanded you? Be courageous and be valiant."

2Sam. 13:29 The servants of Absalom did to Amnon just as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose and each mounted his mule and fled.

- Amnon's plan is simple...he tells his servants to wait until late in the evening after the party has run its course and Amnon is drunk and tired
 - Then Absalom directs them to kill Amnon and not to be afraid to raise their hand against the king's son
 - Absalom assures them that since he is giving the order, he alone will bear the guilt and consequences
 - And with that assurance, they do as they are told and kill Amnon
 - Once again, a son of David has followed in David's footsteps
 - Earlier, David's son Amnon followed David in committing an immoral sexual act

- with a vulnerable woman
- And now a second son has followed in David's footsteps by committing murder in the aftermath of the sexual sin
 - David can't act in such ways without expecting his example to set the tone for his family, and it does
- In response to the attack, the rest of David's sons who also attended the feast, get on mules and flee the scene
 - Most likely they are running because they wonder if David has intentions of killing all his brothers
 - Everyone knows that Absalom was infuriated at Amnon over Tamar's rape, and they suspect he's equally upset at David
 - Now that he has taken Amnon's life, the fear would have been that he wouldn't stop there
 - But wishing to hurt David, Absalom would kill all of David's sons
- But that was never the plan, and so the other sons leave unharmed, but in the ensuing chaos of that night, rumors start flying
 - And one of those rumors makes its way back to David faster than the sons themselves

2Sam. 13:30 Now it was while they were on the way that the report came to David, saying, "Absalom has struck down all the king's sons, and not one of them is left."

2Sam. 13:31 Then the king arose, tore his clothes and lay on the ground; and all his servants were standing by with clothes torn.

- A report of this incident reaches David before the sons themselves are able to return to the palace
 - We wonder how that would be possible, but it's not hard to imagine
 - If a servant overheard Absalom giving instructions to his servants to kill Amnon, he could have run back to David then
 - A scared man could run the 14 miles in 2 hours and be talking to David even as the event was still taking place
 - And if so, that would also explain why the news David heard was so exaggerated... the messenger didn't see how it actually turned out
 - He must have assumed that if Absalom intended to kill one brother, then he was going to kill all of them
 - And that's how the news gets reported to David at first
 - And for a while, David bears a burden equal or greater to the one he bore when the Lord told him that his son of Bathsheba was going to die
 - Imagine the emotions that David experienced for these few hours as he

contemplates the loss of all his sons

- In v.31 we're told that David lay on the ground, probably sobbing and irrational with sadness and perhaps anger
- And while the text doesn't say, laying on the ground was a common position of prayer during distress, so perhaps David is appealing to God
 - Was he praying to the Lord for mercy as he did for his younger son when he learned that the boy was destined to die?
 - Would David have even considered to pray for the lives of boys who were reportedly already dead?
 - In that previous moment, David's prayer couldn't save the son who was still alive, so we wonder did David think to pray now?
- Now the cousin, Jonadab, who encouraged Amnon to rape Tamar in the first place, speaks up to correct the inaccurate report

2Sam. 13:32 Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother, responded, "Do not let my lord suppose they have put to death all the young men, the king's sons, for Amnon alone is dead; because by the intent of Absalom this has been determined since the day that he violated his sister Tamar.

2Sam. 13:33 "Now therefore, do not let my lord the king take the report to heart, namely, 'all the king's sons are dead,' for only Amnon is dead."

- Jonadab is the cousin to Amnon and Absalom who has been playing both sides to his advantage
 - As he sees David mourning the loss of his sons, he steps in to reassure the king that only Amnon has died
 - He also tells the king that Absalom is the guilty party having acted in revenge against his brother
 - But Jonadab is confident that only Amnon died, not all David's sons
- Why is Jonadab even here? Perhaps he has worked his way to becoming a member of David's cabinet over the past two years
 - However he came to be there, we know he was not at the shearing party that night
 - So the only way he could know the truth is if he was part of the conspiracy with Absalom
 - As we suspected, Jonadab was working both sides, first conspiring with Amnon and then with Absalom
 - He manipulated Amnon into raping Tamar and now we learn he helped Absalom entrap and kill Amnon
- But Jonadab is playing a third angle with David...that of comforter and wise counselor
 - Jonadab spoke as if he did not possess personal knowledge but was merely making an educated guess

- But he did so knowing that the facts would bear out in the end, and that when they do, David will appreciate his wisdom
- He gave David reason for hope and when hope turns to reality, David will be pleased with Jonadab
- Turning back to David, the text never records David's reaction to Jonadab's news that only Amnon is gone, but we can imagine it was well received
 - Certainly, knowing Amnon was dead would still upset David, but at the same time, David probably felt considerable relief for his other sons
 - It seems if the Lord set up this moment so that David would fear the greater outcome for a time leading him to seek the Lord
 - And then as Jonadab spoke, David saw the Lord moving to his side
 - And then the confirmation comes by way of the other sons returning

2Sam. 13:34 Now Absalom had fled. And the young man who was the watchman raised his eyes and looked, and behold, many people were coming from the road behind him by the side of the mountain.

2Sam. 13:35 Jonadab said to the king, "Behold, the king's sons have come; according to your servant's word, so it happened."

2Sam. 13:36 As soon as he had finished speaking, behold, the king's sons came and lifted their voices and wept; and also the king and all his servants wept very bitterly.

- Absalom had to flee after the murder of his brother, because he knows he cannot return home safely
- David ignored Amnon's rape of Tamar, but Absalom knows David won't be able to overlook this treachery
- Even if David didn't act against Absalom, his brothers certainly would take revenge, and so the cycle would continue
- So as Absalom has gone on the lam, the rest of the sons ride home to David, and a watchman sees them approaching and informs David
 - The news is as Jonadab reported to David and it leads to a tearful reunion
 - David's family is being torn apart one seam at a time, first Amnon vs. Absalom, and now Absalom vs. his brothers and father
- Every believer seeking spiritual maturity in their walk with God needs to appreciate the differences between judgment, discipline and consequences
 - God's judgment is the penalty for sin, and by our faith in Christ we have received relief from that outcome forevermore
 - Nevertheless, the Bible says God will discipline His children to encourage us to move away from sin and into obedience
 - Discipline is a far cry from judgment, both in terms of purpose and form

- The purpose of judgment is to bring justice against ungodliness, as a just penalty for an offense committed against God
- And it comes in the form of the wrath of God, an eternity spent away from God's presence and in torment
- But the purpose of discipline is to encourage us into greater godliness, as an expression of the love of God for His children
 - And it comes now, in this life, and in various forms that train us, not to destroy us but to build us up
 - As Hebrews says

Heb. 12:6 FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.”

Heb. 12:7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

Heb. 12:8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

Heb. 12:9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?

Heb. 12:10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness.

- The Lord has not brought judgment upon David for any of his sins, nor will He because David was covered by the grace of God
 - Remember, Nathan assured David after he repented that he was forgiven by God
- But because God loves David, God also measured out discipline, particularly the death of his son to discourage future sin
 - Moreover, discipline was made necessary because David didn't repent on his own earlier
 - This wasn't judgment...that's an eternity in torment...it was a temporary "scourging" to promote holiness
 - God resorted to discipline to shepherd David's heart as He does for all His children
- And then there are consequences of sin, which are the natural result of our actions
 - Only believers experience the discipline of the Lord, because He only disciplines His children, but everyone experiences consequences
 - The consequences of our sin follow us just as they do the unbelieving world
 - And those consequences usually don't stop at just one or two effects...they fan out like ripples across a pond
 - The consequences of David's sin to take multiple wives including Bathsheba have piled up and continue moving outward
 - In addition to God's discipline of taking the life of the child, we can count six

family consequences from David's poor choices

- First, David developed an attitude of favoritism for his children and turned a blind eye to his sons' sins, especially Amnon
 - That allowed Amnon to lust after and rape Tamar
 - This led Absalom to hate his brother Amnon leading to a division among the sons and in the family
 - Those events forced David to protect Amnon by keeping him apart from Absalom creating greater conflict in the family
 - This furthered Absalom's resentment leading him to act in revenge killing Amnon
 - Now that has resulted in Absalom fleeing, depriving David of the company of his 3rd born son
- This separation will have further consequences for David and the kingdom of Israel as Absalom mounts a coup attempt
 - And this will eventually lead to civil war in the family and in the nation, leading to a new chain of consequences, etc.
- It's hard to overstate how much harm can come from one decision, but imagine how different the story of David would be without his sin with Bathsheba
 - And at the same time, as we studied last week, without Bathsheba there would be no Solomon either
 - Which reminds us that though the consequences of sin can be great, the God who extends mercy and grace is still greater
 - That even as God may allow the consequences of our sin to unleash, He also gives us grace to deal with the consequences
 - And He can turn the whole thing to good in the end
 - As Wiersbe observed:

Grace means that God, in forgiving you, does not kill you. Grace means that God, in forgiving you, gives you the strength to endure the consequences. Grace frees us so that we can obey our Lord. It does not mean sin's consequences are automatically removed. If I sin and in the process of sinning break my arm, I will receive forgiveness for my sin, but I still have to deal with a broken arm.

- David sinned and broke a lot of things, and he's now dealing with the consequences but God is still with him
- And so the Lord will use it all to His glory in the end
- But in the meantime, don't expect that if we say a simple "I'm sorry" to God that the natural consequences will not follow
 - Our confession and repentance may stop the discipline of the Lord, just as we would hold back punishing a repentant child

- But just as we can't stop the consequences of our children's sin, God usually allows the consequences of our sin to follow too
- Because the Bible says if God routinely intervened to stop them, we would be seen in our disobedience to be mocking God

Gal. 6:7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

Gal. 6:8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

Gal. 6:9 Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.

- David can't mock God by his refusal to address the systemic issues in his family and in his parenting, so the consequences keep coming
 - And so now the story transitions to the next Act

2Sam. 13:37 Now Absalom fled and went to Talmi the son of Ammihud, the king of Geshur. And David mourned for his son every day.

2Sam. 13:38 So Absalom had fled and gone to Geshur, and was there three years.

2Sam. 13:39 The heart of King David longed to go out to Absalom; for he was comforted concerning Amnon, since he was dead.

- Absalom finds refuge in Geshur, which is in the Upper Galilee, present-day Golan Heights and spends three years in exile
 - With David's first and second sons gone, Absalom is now the heir of the throne, at least by custom
 - And David is still very fond of this son, despite the fact that he killed another of David's sons
 - In fact, we're told David mourns the loss of his son everyday
 - Even more, David is relieved at Amon's death, we're told in v.39, because it solved a problem for David
 - First, it brought the justice to Amnon that the Law required yet David couldn't bring himself to execute
 - So in that sense David was relieved that Absalom took that duty off his hands
 - But secondly, David no longer has to guard Amnon or referee the division between his two sons
 - David is clearly a father weary of dealing with rivalries and disputes, and yet they exist largely because of him
 - And even now, he's not willing to cut the head off this snake

2Sam. 14:1 Now Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart was inclined toward Absalom.

2Sam. 14:2 So Joab sent to Tekoa and brought a wise woman from there and said to her, "Please pretend to be a mourner, and put on mourning garments now, and do not anoint yourself with oil, but be like a woman who has been mourning for the dead many days;

2Sam. 14:3 then go to the king and speak to him in this manner." So Joab put the words in her mouth.

- Joab is the commander of David's army and another man that David should have dealt with long ago
 - But now after three years, Joab develops concern over Absalom hiding out in Geshur
 - God told David his heir will be Solomon, but Joab and everyone else thinks it will be Absalom
 - And it concerns Joab that the heir to the throne of Israel is hiding in the territory of a vassal state
 - Joab wants him in the palace reconciled with David, so he devises a plan to persuade David into pardoning Absalom
 - Joab recruits an actress from a town ten miles south to tell the king a story that is designed to mirror David's own situation
 - He found her in Tekoa to ensure she was an unknown character
 - The goal is to get David to hear the woman's story and issue a decree that will tie his hands concerning Absalom
 - Joab is a manipulator and a man who shouldn't be trusted, but like his sons, David can't bring himself to deal with the man
 - Another leadership weakness of David was leaving in power those who he shouldn't trust

2Sam. 14:4 Now when the woman of Tekoa spoke to the king, she fell on her face to the ground and prostrated herself and said, "Help, O king."

2Sam. 14:5 The king said to her, "What is your trouble?" And she answered, "Truly I am a widow, for my husband is dead.

2Sam. 14:6 "Your maidservant had two sons, but the two of them struggled together in the field, and there was no one to separate them, so one struck the other and killed him.

2Sam. 14:7 "Now behold, the whole family has risen against your maidservant, and they say, 'Hand over the one who struck his brother, that we may put him to death for the life of his brother whom he killed, and destroy the heir also.' Thus they will extinguish my coal which is left, so as to leave my husband neither name nor remnant on the face of the earth."

2Sam. 14:8 Then the king said to the woman, “Go to your house, and I will give orders concerning you.”

2Sam. 14:9 The woman of Tekoa said to the king, “O my lord, the king, the iniquity is on me and my father’s house, but the king and his throne are guiltless.”

2Sam. 14:10 So the king said, “Whoever speaks to you, bring him to me, and he will not touch you anymore.”

2Sam. 14:11 Then she said, “Please let the king remember the LORD your God, so that the avenger of blood will not continue to destroy, otherwise they will destroy my son.” And he said, “As the LORD lives, not one hair of your son shall fall to the ground.”

- Her story mirrors David’s situation...two sons, one kills the other, and now people want justice for the death of the deceased
 - Absalom killed Amnon, and because the law requires that Absalom die, Absalom hasn’t returned to Israel
 - If he did come home and David allowed the law to prevail, he would lose yet another son
 - David certainly doesn’t want that, but moreover the people of Israel didn’t want to see that outcome either
 - Absalom was the popular son of David and the people’s choice for David’s successor
 - But here again, David should apply the law without favoritism, and there is no option under the law for mercy in the case of two sons
 - David should hold his son accountable, but Joab knows David is inclined to let his son go unpunished
 - And this woman is here to help nudge David in that direction
 - The woman spins her tale and appeals to David to help her save her last son from justice
 - She doesn’t want to lose her only heir, which would have meant the end of the family line
 - And of course, had David judged his son appropriately, then he would have lost another heir also
 - Except that David knew Absalom wouldn’t be the heir, so David had less reason to hold back justice
- Of course, David doesn’t see the connection to his own story, so he agrees to make a decision on behalf of the latter and send word to her later
 - But she has come hoping to get a decision in the moment, so she presses David to act more quickly
 - In v.8 she tells David that in the meantime she and her father’s house bear the sin of not holding the son accountable

- In other words, as long as nothing is done, she is guilty of not keeping the law and could be in jeopardy herself
 - So David says in v.10 he will protect her in the meantime and if anyone touches her, they will have to deal with David
 - Still not getting what she wants, she makes a final appeal in v.11 warning that others will take action against her son
 - If David doesn't pardon him immediately, her son will be killed by vigilantes
 - Growing weary with the woman, David gives in and says not one hair of her son shall fall to the ground
 - In that way, David pardons her boy without justification merely as an act of mercy contrary to justice
 - That fictitious boy was intended to represent Absalom, so that David would be persuaded to do the same for his son
 - Ironically, Absalom's eventual fall comes as a consequence of his hair, so David's comments come back later to haunt him
- Now with David trapped, the actress moves to the second half of Joab's plan

2Sam. 14:12 Then the woman said, "Please let your maidservant speak a word to my lord the king." And he said, "Speak."

2Sam. 14:13 The woman said, "Why then have you planned such a thing against the people of God? For in speaking this word the king is as one who is guilty, in that the king does not bring back his banished one.

2Sam. 14:14 "For we will surely die and are like water spilled on the ground which cannot be gathered up again. Yet God does not take away life, but plans ways so that the banished one will not be cast out from him.

2Sam. 14:15 "Now the reason I have come to speak this word to my lord the king is that the people have made me afraid; so your maidservant said, 'Let me now speak to the king, perhaps the king will perform the request of his maidservant.

2Sam. 14:16 'For the king will hear and deliver his maidservant from the hand of the man who would destroy both me and my son from the inheritance of God.'

2Sam. 14:17 "Then your maidservant said, 'Please let the word of my lord the king be comforting, for as the angel of God, so is my lord the king to discern good and evil. And may the LORD your God be with you.'"

- The woman asks David's permission to speak once more, and David agrees
 - She then asks David why he has planned to allow the heir of the throne over the people of God to suffer a loss in the same way?
 - She boldly suggests that David has guilt to bear for not pardoning his own son for a similar crime
 - If it were acceptable for the king to pardon some obscure mother's son, why not the heir to throne she asks?

- In v.14 the woman points to a biblical truth yet uses it in an unbiblical fashion
 - She says that our lives are short and once they are gone, we can only move on
 - And we know God is not in the business of taking life, meaning He is not directed at destroying humanity but rather saving it
 - So therefore, the quest of life should be to find God's plan for how banished ones are restored to God
- In a sense she's describing the Gospel, which is the message that God has made a way for sinful humanity to be restored and not cast out
 - But she's misusing this truth to demand justice against God's own law
 - God makes a way for us to avoid the judgment for our sin, but that pattern doesn't become a rule for every situation
- The fact that God shows us mercy doesn't mean that a judge should dismiss our speeding ticket
 - And the fact that God showed David mercy doesn't mean that David should never hold anyone accountable either
 - And yet that logic made sense to David, because he was already self-conscious over his sin with Bathsheba
 - And it's why David has thus far refused to hold his sons accountable to any degree
- I doubt this is the first time David has heard this argument during the past three years of Absalom's exile
 - Family members, advisors and David's subjects have all been asking when will David pardon the heir to the throne
 - Certainly David has received that counsel from Joab directly
 - So when David hears the same words coming from the mouth of this woman, he suspects Joab

2Sam. 14:18 Then the king answered and said to the woman, "Please do not hide anything from me that I am about to ask you." And the woman said, "Let my lord the king please speak."

2Sam. 14:19 So the king said, "Is the hand of Joab with you in all this?" And the woman replied, "As your soul lives, my lord the king, no one can turn to the right or to the left from anything that my lord the king has spoken. Indeed, it was your servant Joab who commanded me, and it was he who put all these words in the mouth of your maidservant;

2Sam. 14:20 in order to change the appearance of things your servant Joab has done this thing. But my lord is wise, like the wisdom of the angel of God, to know all that is in the earth."

- David now realizes that this woman has been telling him a lie, and so he turns to the

woman and asks her to tell the truth

- She agrees and David asks, did Joab put you up to this?
- Sandwiched between statements of flattery, she admits to her lies and says this was Joab's doing
- At this point, David shifts his attention to Joab

2Sam. 14:21 Then the king said to Joab, “Behold now, I will surely do this thing; go therefore, bring back the young man Absalom.”

2Sam. 14:22 Joab fell on his face to the ground, prostrated himself and blessed the king; then Joab said, “Today your servant knows that I have found favor in your sight, O my lord, the king, in that the king has performed the request of his servant.”

2Sam. 14:23 So Joab arose and went to Geshur and brought Absalom to Jerusalem.

2Sam. 14:24 However the king said, “Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face.” So Absalom turned to his own house and did not see the king's face.

- Joab was probably in the room the whole time, likely to observe his hired actress do as he directed her to do
 - And David has figured it out but he's trapped by his own words, so he has little choice at this point except to pardon his son
 - Why hadn't David done it already? Probably because David knew that he had no cause to do so and was afraid of how it appeared
 - But now that David has been willing to do it for a lesser, he feels he must show mercy for his own son
 - Is mercy a bad thing? No, and when it comes our way we certainly like it
 - But mercy exists because the rule is justice, but when no one follows the rule, mercy is no longer mercy
 - It's merely injustice and license to sin, which is what David has been sowing in his family
 - With each decision to avoid holding a son accountable, David makes his family situation worse
 - And in the process, he proves that mercy disconnected from justice is permissiveness
 - So David orders Joab to go and bring back Absalom, which means to go to Geshur and tell Absalom that he has been pardoned
 - Absalom can return to Israel without fear of death, but David adds that Absalom is not to return to the palace
 - David still has mixed emotions over Amnon and Absalom

- David is issuing an official state pardon to his son, but he is not ready to forgive his son personally and restore that relationship
- And as it turns out, David's decision to restore Absalom made even less sense, because David knew Solomon was to be the king
 - And therefore, Absalom was a threat to that outcome, and now that Absalom has returned, there will be more conflict between them
 - And making things worse, Absalom has a personal following in the nation, which was a destabilizing influence

2Sam. 14:25 Now in all Israel was no one as handsome as Absalom, so highly praised; from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no defect in him.

2Sam. 14:26 When he cut the hair of his head (and it was at the end of every year that he cut it, for it was heavy on him so he cut it), he weighed the hair of his head at 200 shekels by the king's weight.

2Sam. 14:27 To Absalom there were born three sons, and one daughter whose name was Tamar; she was a woman of beautiful appearance.

- If this story is starting to sound a little like the introduction of Saul in 1 Samuel, it should because the pattern is the same
 - Like Saul, Absalom was a rock star in Israel, complete with the gorgeous hair
 - The Scriptures say there was no one in Israel more handsome, but notice it adds "so highly praised"
- In other words, the Scripture is saying Absalom was regarded as the most handsome by public opinion
 - He was the consensus pick for Most Handsome Jewish Man, and no one saw any defect in him from head to toe
 - And his hair seems to be of particular fame in that it was both good looking and abundant
 - He even made an annual show of cutting it, and since it grew so well, the weight of the cuttings was five pounds
 - We can imagine squealing school girls fighting for the locks
- There are two problems with this development, and both remind us of Saul
 - First, external beauty is never the quality God uses in determining who should be exalted
 - In fact, the people judge by appearance but God judges by the heart
 - Absalom might look the part, but his heart wasn't suited to godly leadership
 - This was exactly the problem with Saul's leadership
 - Secondly, and more importantly, he wasn't the man God chose to succeed David

- Solomon has already been designated as David's replacement, though it's unlikely few know this yet
- So the people are setting themselves up for disappointment by wishing for something they can't have
- And that's a dangerous situation...one that will force the people to split their allegiance between David and his own son
- Meanwhile, Absalom has a family and a future, but David is going to hold Absalom back and his resentment will build

2Sam. 14:28 Now Absalom lived two full years in Jerusalem, and did not see the king's face

- For two years Absalom is basically on house arrest, or at least kept outside the corridors of power
- He's the heir apparent (at least publicly) but treated as a pariah, and that leads Absalom to make his own plans
- If David won't treat Absalom as the rightful next king, then he will take the throne on his own terms
- Sin has consequences, and we repeat that phrase not as a statement of the obvious but as a warning not to sin
 - Knowing that sin may feel good in the moment but ultimately leads us places we don't want to go, then it's far better not to sin
 - David is learning that lesson the hard way
 - David was reluctant to pardon a son he loved because he felt conflicted over his first son's death and his own past
 - But now that he has pardoned Absalom, he's only sowing seeds for the next conflict by not living up to the terms of the pardon
 - David's internal conflict over how and when to do the right thing by his family flew in the face of an otherwise stellar life
 - And isn't the case so often that our greatest failings come in how we live among, and with, our family
 - I suspect that if we made our goal being the best husband, wife, mother or father we could be, we would find most other sins disappearing too

- We're back to our study of David's failings in 2 Samuel
 - The author of this book has chosen to organize the story of David's reign into sections of good and bad rather than in a chronological order
 - The first section of the book focused on David's rise to power and his triumphs as king
 - And the second section beginning in Chapter 9 chronicles David's short comings and their cumulative effect on the nation
 - The longest example in this second section focuses on David's failings in his family stemming from taking multiple wives
 - From multiple wives comes multiple sons of different mothers, which led to ancestral lust, rivalries and conflict
 - If that weren't bad enough, David compounds the problem by failing to hold sons accountable for their misdeeds
 - And in other cases, he fails to show forgiveness and mercy
 - Altogether, David's actions breed resentment and ultimately rebellion
 - We're in the middle of that story, and so today we return to Chapter 14 and the turmoil of Absalom, David's oldest living son
 - Absalom murdered his brother, Amnon, fled to his grandfather's home in Geshur, and has now returned to Jerusalem after 3 years
 - His son expected his father's forgiveness, but David seems unwilling to give Absalom that satisfaction as we read:

2Sam. 14:28 Now Absalom lived two full years in Jerusalem, and did not see the king's face.

- After his return, Absalom was ignored by for two years, barred from David's presence and from the privilege of the king's table
 - Even Saul's descendant, Mephibosheth, was eating at David's table, but David's oldest son and presumptive heir was excluded
 - David is enforcing a justice on his son that is neither just in its approach nor effective in its outcome
 - The Law didn't stipulate alienation as a punishment and it's just driving a wedge between father and son
- As James tells us:

James 2:13 For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

- Initially, David was unwilling to hold Absalom accountable according to the Law's requirements

- But neither was David willing to extend Absalom his mercy later, preferring to hold Absalom in limbo
- So now Absalom takes matters into his own hands, which begins a pattern of behavior suggesting Absalom has had enough of his father's cold shoulder

2Sam. 14:29 Then Absalom sent for Joab, to send him to the king, but he would not come to him. So he sent again a second time, but he would not come.

2Sam. 14:30 Therefore he said to his servants, "See, Joab's field is next to mine, and he has barley there; go and set it on fire." So Absalom's servants set the field on fire.

2Sam. 14:31 Then Joab arose, came to Absalom at his house and said to him, "Why have your servants set my field on fire?"

2Sam. 14:32 Absalom answered Joab, "Behold, I sent for you, saying, 'Come here, that I may send you to the king, to say, 'Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me still to be there.'" Now therefore, let me see the king's face, and if there is iniquity in me, let him put me to death."

2Sam. 14:33 So when Joab came to the king and told him, he called for Absalom. Thus he came to the king and prostrated himself on his face to the ground before the king, and the king kissed Absalom.

- Absalom wants answers for why he's still being banished, so he decides to call for the commander of the army, Joab
 - Remember, Joab was the one who convinced David to permit Absalom to return from Geshur in the first place
 - So Absalom logically concludes that Joab could also help Absalom move a step closer to resolving the impasse with David
 - So Absalom calls for Joab, but Joab ignores Absalom's request
 - The text doesn't explain why Joab didn't want to respond to Absalom
 - But in 1 Kings 2:28 we learn that Joab had aligned himself behind another of David's sons, Adonijah
 - We know the Lord selected Solomon to succeed David, and David and Bathsheba knew Solomon was the Lord's choice
 - But it's not clear if David told anyone else of Solomon's future, least of all his other sons
 - Perhaps David kept the news to himself to protect a young Solomon from his older brothers' murderous ambitions
 - But as David ages, everyone in David's court is wondering who will succeed David to the throne
 - And they begin to throw their support behind one or the other of David's sons
 - Ordinarily, David's 3rd born and oldest surviving son, Absalom, would have been the logical choice to succeed his father

- But the strife between Absalom and David has placed that outcome in doubt
 - So at some point Joab decided that Israel's future king would more likely be David's 4th son, Adonijah
 - So because Joab supports Adonijah, he has no interest in furthering a reconciliation between David and Absalom
- But Absalom forces Joab's hand by directing his servants to set fire to a portion of Joab's fields, which were adjacent to Absalom's fields
 - Once Joab hears of this, he realizes he can't ignore Absalom risking further retaliation, so he visits the ostracized son
 - Absalom demands an audience with his father saying that David should either hold Absalom accountable or free him
 - Ironically, Absalom challenges David to find fault with him...right after Absalom committed arson against Joab's property
 - Nevertheless, he has a valid point...David should either hold Absalom accountable according to the law's requirements (i.e., death)...
 - Or else David should extend Absalom mercy and put an end to his exile
 - There is simply no basis for holding him in limbo
 - So Joab conveys Absalom's demands to David, so David invites an audience with Absalom
 - When his son arrives, he bows before David and throws himself on David's mercy
 - David in turn extends forgiveness and embraces his son, and they are reconciled
 - We might suppose this puts an end to their relationship troubles, but the damage was already done
 - If anything, David's capitulation to his son's demands only emboldened Absalom to pursue greater objectives
 - With Absalom out of the doghouse, he's ready to embark on a public campaign to cement his position as David's heir apparent

2Sam. 15:1 Now it came about after this that Absalom provided for himself a chariot and horses and fifty men as runners before him.

2Sam. 15:2 Absalom used to rise early and stand beside the way to the gate; and when any man had a suit to come to the king for judgment, Absalom would call to him and say, "From what city are you?" And he would say, "Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel."

2Sam. 15:3 Then Absalom would say to him, "See, your claims are good and right, but no man listens to you on the part of the king."

2Sam. 15:4 Moreover, Absalom would say, "Oh that one would appoint me judge in the land, then every man who has any suit or cause could come to me and I would give him justice."

2Sam. 15:5 And when a man came near to prostrate himself before him, he would put out his hand and take hold of him and kiss him.

2Sam. 15:6 In this manner Absalom dealt with all Israel who came to the king for judgment; so Absalom stole away the hearts of the men of Israel.

- Absalom's antics involve public displays of power and royal privilege
 - First, Absalom projects *the status* of king by securing a chariot for himself pulled by stallions and proceeded by fifty runners
 - Ever since the prophet Samuel, this had become the proper way for kings to make an entrance in Israel
 - When Israel demanded Samuel anoint a king over them, the prophet warned the people that kings would be a burden

1Sam. 8:10 So Samuel spoke all the words of the LORD to the people who had asked of him a king.

1Sam. 8:11 He said, "This will be the procedure of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and place them for himself in his chariots and among his horsemen and they will run before his chariots.

1Sam. 8:12 "He will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and of fifties, and some to do his plowing and to reap his harvest and to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots.

1Sam. 8:13 "He will also take your daughters for perfumers and cooks and bakers.

1Sam. 8:14 "He will take the best of your fields and your vineyards and your olive groves and give them to his servants.

- Samuel's description of how kings behave was supposed to serve as a warning to Israel to think twice about inviting kings to rule over them
 - Ironically, Israel took Samuel's words as a *prescription*, and thereafter Israel's kings did exactly what the prophet foretold
 - They ordered men to run in front of their chariot because that's what Samuel said kings do
 - And Absalom is repeating that procedure here precisely so the people would see him as a king-in-waiting
- Next, Absalom projects the *wisdom and authority* of a king by rendering judgment for the people while undermining David's authority
 - The gates of cities were multi-chambered rooms set into the wall of the city where official business was conducted
 - Judges and magistrates "sat in the gate" to render judgment for people bringing business into the city
 - These men represented the king, so they were part of David's administration

- But in v.2 we're told Absalom rose early to take a place on the road leading to the city where he could intercept men coming to the gate
 - As he did, he would engage in a conversation, and when he discovered a Jew, Absalom would ingratiate himself
 - Absalom would encourage the traveler by saying he had a valid claim
 - But then just as quickly Absalom would declare that David was unlikely to give the man the justice he deserved
 - And then Absalom would say if only someone appointed him judge, then everyone would certainly get proper justice
- Absalom engages in this charade to undermine the peoples' confidence in David and to build himself up in their eyes
 - In v.6 we're told that in this way he steals away the hearts of the men of Israel, which is a reference to popular opinion
 - This is an orchestrated campaign to ensure that the people will demand that Absalom follow his father on the throne
 - And should David try to appoint a different son, Absalom can still gain the throne by force with the backing of the men of Israel
- Now where is David while all this is going on? Why hasn't David put a stop to Absalom's antics?
 - First, David continues in his unwillingness to confront – much less control – his sons, which is a continuation of his poor family leadership
 - Once he reconciled with Absalom, David appears to have put the conflict and his son out of mind
 - Later in 1 Kings we hear how David refused to stop another son's efforts to take the throne by force

1Kings 1:5 Now Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, “I will be king.” So he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen with fifty men to run before him.

1Kings 1:6 His father had never crossed him at any time by asking, “Why have you done so?” And he was also a very handsome man, and he was born after Absalom.

- Adonijah was the next son in line after Absalom, and as with Absalom, David was not willing to confront his son's rebellion
 - And once again, David's sin has dire consequences, particularly in the case of Absalom
 - David's detachment will give Absalom opportunity to lay the groundwork for a coup
- Secondly, David became distracted by projects that left him oblivious to what was happening on his own doorstep

- During this time, David was building his palace, building a new place for the ark, and contemplating a temple for God
- Like many long-lasting regimes, David's government lost interest in making peoples' lives better
- Instead, it became self-absorbed with legacy and privilege
- David's inward focus ensured that Absalom's suggestion that David's rule couldn't give justice to the people found a receptive audience
 - And it sowed the seeds for a rebellion against David who remained blissfully ignorant of the threat
 - To the point that when Absalom decides to make his move against his father, David couldn't see it coming

2Sam. 15:7 Now it came about at the end of forty years that Absalom said to the king, "Please let me go and pay my vow which I have vowed to the LORD, in Hebron.

2Sam. 15:8 "For your servant vowed a vow while I was living at Geshur in Aram, saying, 'If the LORD shall indeed bring me back to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD.'"

2Sam. 15:9 The king said to him, "Go in peace." So he arose and went to Hebron.

2Sam. 15:10 But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then you shall say, 'Absalom is king in Hebron.'"

2Sam. 15:11 Then two hundred men went with Absalom from Jerusalem, who were invited and went innocently, and they did not know anything.

2Sam. 15:12 And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his city Giloh, while he was offering the sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong, for the people increased continually with Absalom.

- In v.7 we're told that at the end of forty years, Absalom approaches David with a request, but that length of time doesn't make sense in this context
 - The contextual clues strongly suggest the time was four years not forty
 - It's likely that the value was changed from four to forty as a result of a copyist's error at some point
 - In fact, Josephus' account of this same story as well as the Dead Sea Scrolls version both say four years, not forty
 - Still, four years is a long time for Absalom to engage in this behavior unchecked by David, and so now he's ready to take the next step
 - Absalom tells David he made a vow to the Lord while living in Geshur
 - The vow was that should God bring him back to Jerusalem, Absalom would serve God

- So Absalom asks permission to go to Hebron to worship, since the tabernacle was probably located in Hebron at this time
 - Knowing Absalom's plans and motives at this point, there is absolutely no reason to believe he is telling the truth here
 - More likely, this is a lie intended to give him a convenient excuse to go to Hebron
 - The real reason Absalom wanted to travel to Hebron was to announce his reign as the new king of Israel
 - Why did Absalom choose Hebron as the place to announce his coup?
 - First, it was the place of David's anointing, so there was symbolism in ascending to the throne at Hebron
 - Secondly, Hebron was a safe distance from Jerusalem, which gave Absalom space and time to organize and prepare his attack
 - Finally, Absalom was born in Hebron so this was his hometown, and he probably intended to make Hebron the capital again
- Absalom arranged to have 200 military men accompany him to Hebron without the soldiers knowing what Absalom had planned
 - The idea was to force these men to side with Absalom by putting them in a no-win situation
 - Once they learned of Absalom's rebellion in Hebron, it would be impossible for them to oppose Absalom without dying
 - So that ensured Absalom would start his civil war with a strong personal guard and the appearance of the army's support
 - Next, he calls for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, to join him in Hebron
 - This man is the grandfather of Bathsheba according to 2 Samuel 11:3 and 23:34, and he willingly joins Absalom
 - His name means brother of folly, which isn't a compliment, so it probably reflects his decision to align with Absalom
 - This shows how high in the ranks of David's government Absalom's conspiracy has reached
 - In fact, v.12 confirms the conspiracy is strong, so the question becomes how can David stop it?
 - Solomon is the true heir, but at this point he's barely 14 years old
 - Moreover, David is older now and unlikely to wage battle himself
 - Given that such a high-ranking member of David's cabinet came to Hebron suggests David is losing a grip on power
- So when news reaches David, he realizes the precarious position he's in

2Sam. 15:13 Then a messenger came to David, saying, "The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom."

2Sam. 15:14 David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, “Arise and let us flee, for otherwise none of us will escape from Absalom. Go in haste, or he will overtake us quickly and bring down calamity on us and strike the city with the edge of the sword.”

2Sam. 15:15 Then the king’s servants said to the king, “Behold, your servants are ready to do whatever my lord the king chooses.”

2Sam. 15:16 So the king went out and all his household with him. But the king left ten concubines to keep the house.

2Sam. 15:17 The king went out and all the people with him, and they stopped at the last house.

2Sam. 15:18 Now all his servants passed on beside him, all the Cherethites, all the Pelethites and all the Gittites, six hundred men who had come with him from Gath, passed on before the king.

- David hears what his son has done and that the people are in favor of Absalom’s rule, so David has no choice but to leave Jerusalem for now
 - David was a pragmatic man, and he knew that his son’s popularity meant that David had few allies
 - Moreover, he is unwilling to see war destroy the city he built, so he decides the best course of action is patience
 - If he took Absalom’s bait and attacked Hebron he would be unlikely to muster enough forces against Absalom
 - And if he stayed locked up in the city, he would appear weak before the people and would end up under house arrest
 - So David tells his servants they will leave the city quickly to ensure they live to fight another day
 - After all, in the same time it took a messenger to reach David, Absalom and his men could have traveled the same distance
 - So David hurries to escape the city with his loyal servants though he leaves behind ten slave wives to care for the palace
 - They wouldn’t be perceived as a threat and therefore were unlikely to be harmed, David assumed
 - As David leaves the city to the east, he is followed by a troop of more than 600 men
 - The Cherethites and the Pelethites were of Philistine descent and were David’s non-Jewish bodyguards
 - The 600 from Gath were likely mercenary soldiers who are loyal to David because they were employed and paid well
 - Given that David’s own son is in rebellion to him, the only men he can trust now are non-Jews and men he pays well
 - The text doesn’t mention Solomon, but given his young age, we can safely assume that he was with David as well

- As David reaches the last house in Jerusalem and prepares to exit, he challenges one resident of the city to stop following and stay behind

2Sam. 15:19 Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, “Why will you also go with us? Return and remain with the king, for you are a foreigner and also an exile; return to your own place.

2Sam. 15:20 “You came only yesterday, and shall I today make you wander with us, while I go where I will? Return and take back your brothers; mercy and truth be with you.”

2Sam. 15:21 But Ittai answered the king and said, “As the LORD lives, and as my lord the king lives, surely wherever my lord the king may be, whether for death or for life, there also your servant will be.”

2Sam. 15:22 Therefore David said to Ittai, “Go and pass over.” So Ittai the Gittite passed over with all his men and all the little ones who were with him.

2Sam. 15:23 While all the country was weeping with a loud voice, all the people passed over. The king also passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over toward the way of the wilderness.

- David notices one man, Ittai, a Gittite from the town of Gath, following voluntarily
 - The man is not a paid member of David’s guard, so David asks why this man wants to follow him?
 - David says you are a foreigner and exile, and he came into the city just a day earlier
 - He may have been the messenger who brought the news to David of Absalom’s coup
 - And now he is committing to wander with David’s men and placing himself at significant risk by aligning himself with David
 - Since he has no reason to involve himself in this Jewish fight for control of the throne, David says go home in peace
 - But Ittai responds saying wherever the king may be, this man will follow to do the king’s will even if it means death
 - So David welcomes the man into the troop and they all pass together, it says
 - The “passing” is out through the Kidron valley and up the Mt of Olives eastward out of the city and into the wilderness
 - This is a place that David knew all too well from his years fleeing from Saul
 - And once again it will be the place David retreats to fight a foe for control of the throne of Israel
 - Only this battle didn’t have to happen...David invited it in the way he (mis-)handled his sons
- Finally, as David was leaving the city, the priest who was loyal to David came out with the ark hoping to leave with David

2Sam. 15:24 Now behold, Zadok also came, and all the Levites with him carrying the ark of the covenant of God. And they set down the ark of God, and Abiathar came up until all the people had finished passing from the city.

2Sam. 15:25 The king said to Zadok, “Return the ark of God to the city. If I find favor in the sight of the LORD, then He will bring me back again and show me both it and His habitation.

2Sam. 15:26 “But if He should say thus, ‘I have no delight in you,’ behold, here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him.”

- Zadok was one of two leading or high priests in that time along with Abiathar
 - Abiathar was a descendant of Eli, the high priest who raised Samuel in the temple
 - Eli was a poor father and raised evil sons who angered God by their ungodly service in the temple
 - So the Lord told Eli that his family would one day be removed from holding the office of high priest
 - And in their place the Lord would raise up a new family of priests who would obey the Lord

1Sam. 2:31 ‘Behold, the days are coming when I will break your strength and the strength of your father’s house so that there will not be an old man in your house.

1Sam. 2:32 ‘You will see the distress of My dwelling, in spite of all the good that I do for Israel; and an old man will not be in your house forever.

1Sam. 2:33 ‘Yet I will not cut off every man of yours from My altar so that your eyes will fail from weeping and your soul grieve, and all the increase of your house will die in the prime of life.

1Sam. 2:34 ‘This will be the sign to you which will come concerning your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas: on the same day both of them will die.

1Sam. 2:35 ‘But I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who will do according to what is in My heart and in My soul; and I will build him an enduring house, and he will walk before My anointed always.

- In a day to come, Abiathar will align himself with another of David’s sons in rebellion against the king, and for that he loses his life
 - In that future day, David will appoint Zadok in Abiathar’s place
 - And here we see the loyalty and godliness that qualified Zadok to replace Abiathar
- Notice it was Zadok’s initiative that resulted in the ark being brought to David with all the priests, which was a show of support for David
 - Abiathar comes as well but only because he didn’t want to be the only one left out
 - David addresses Zadok which indicates that David recognized that Zadok was the

one leading this charge

- David tells Zadok that the ark and the priests must remain in the city for that is where God wants them
 - But God doesn't want David in the city right now, and so David is willing to accept that judgment of God
 - If God wants to bring David back, then He will, and if not, then God has another king in mind for Israel
 - David recognizes that this episode is the Lord bringing discipline upon David
 - And so David is accepting the discipline as medicine he deserves but it's not a sign that God is moving the ark or priesthood

2Sam. 15:27 The king said also to Zadok the priest, “Are you not a seer? Return to the city in peace and your two sons with you, your son Ahimaaz and Jonathan the son of Abiathar.

2Sam. 15:28 “See, I am going to wait at the fords of the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me.”

2Sam. 15:29 Therefore Zadok and Abiathar returned the ark of God to Jerusalem and remained there.

2Sam. 15:30 And David went up the ascent of the Mount of Olives, and wept as he went, and his head was covered and he walked barefoot. Then all the people who were with him each covered his head and went up weeping as they went.

- David tells the priests to go home with the ark, and they do, and then David retreats up the Mount of Olives and weeps over it all
 - He is feeling exactly what the writer of Hebrews tells us we will experience in the face of discipline

Heb. 12:11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

- David must have known that he was reaping what he sowed in his own family
- But that didn't make it any easier to endure, and yet his faith in the goodness of the Lord gave him courage to face it
- David then receives more bad news and finally David makes the right response

2Sam. 15:31 Now someone told David, saying, “Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.” And David said, “O LORD, I pray, make the counsel of Ahithophel foolishness.”

- David hears that his wife's grandfather has joined the rebellion and is now giving Absalom counsel
- This man is dangerous since he was once David's counselor and would have known David's military forces well
- Ordinarily, this news would add to David's woes, except for David the news becomes opportunity for him to return to his better nature
 - David prays to the Lord that this man's counsel would be made foolish so that he could undermine Absalom
 - True to form, when David faced difficult odds, he learned to lean on the Lord and appeal to Him rather than relying on himself
- David's best side came out under pressure, and this moment seems to suggest that the Lord's discipline is finally achieving its purpose
 - The Lord is going to win this battle for David, and He's waiting for David to remember that
 - So David prays and worships on the mount, and then the Lord brings a moment of encouragement

2Sam. 15:32 It happened as David was coming to the summit, where God was worshiped, that behold, Hushai the Archite met him with his coat torn and dust on his head.

2Sam. 15:33 David said to him, "If you pass over with me, then you will be a burden to me.

2Sam. 15:34 "But if you return to the city, and say to Absalom, 'I will be your servant, O king; as I have been your father's servant in time past, so I will now be your servant,' then you can thwart the counsel of Ahithophel for me.

2Sam. 15:35 "Are not Zadok and Abiathar the priests with you there? So it shall be that whatever you hear from the king's house, you shall report to Zadok and Abiathar the priests.

2Sam. 15:36 "Behold their two sons are with them there, Ahimaaz, Zadok's son and Jonathan, Abiathar's son; and by them you shall send me everything that you hear."

2Sam. 15:37 So Hushai, David's friend, came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem.

- A messenger named Hushai comes to David, probably to tell David of Absalom's approach, and David sees opportunity
 - He tells the man not to join the flight but to stay in the city as David's spy
 - Go to Absalom, David tells him, and pledge yourself to him as a servant just as he had been David's servant
 - Given how many people had fled to Absalom's side, it was a believable proposal
 - And in that position, the man could help undermine the counsel of Ahithophel

- David tells the man that he will have the help of the priests who were also aligned with David
 - The priests' sons would act as couriers to bring news to David and relay instructions
 - This is David's first big break and it comes immediately after David prays to the Lord, the first time we've seen David praying since his son died
 - The thing David was most known for has slipped away for a time
 - And now that times are difficult again, David is back to working with the Lord in prayer and right away he sees the Lord respond
- As David flees and plots his return to the city, he will receive more help from allies and we'll study that next time
 - But to end tonight, I want to introduce a powerful picture in these events that connects David to Jesus
 - We all know that David is used in Scripture as a picture of Christ, and this scene is one of the most powerful comparisons
 - David's flight from the city is a picture of Jesus' departure from Jerusalem and from Israel after His first coming
 - First, let's remember how Jesus' first coming to Israel ended
 - After Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem during the last week of His life, he was first received by crowds declaring Him to be king
 - Hosanna in the Highest, they declared as Jesus entered the city on a donkey
 - But before the week was over, Jesus was rejected by Israel as Messiah and they were calling for Him to be crucified
 - Ultimately Jesus was led outside the city and crucified for the sins of the world
 - Three days later Jesus resurrects and spends times with His disciples before ascending to the right hand of the Father
- This story of David's flight from Jerusalem establishes a picture of Jesus' first coming, at least in the broad strokes
 - First, we know David was welcomed into the city by Israel and declared to be their king
 - He was received in joy on one day, but now in a later day the people have turned against him
 - And so he must leave the city and his throne as an enemy of the Jewish people
 - He is still the rightful king, but he must leave the seat of his power because the people will not have him
 - This is also Jesus' situation at the end of His first coming, rejected by Israel and prevented from ascending the throne and ruling
 - Jesus died and resurrected as part of the plan of redemption, but even still He didn't stay in the city and reign
 - He left to await a future day when all Israel will receive Him as king, and then He

will reign over them

- Notice the first parallel between how David exits Jerusalem and how Jesus exited the city in His day
 - David leaves eastward going through the Kidron Valley and up the Mount of Olives
 - Similarly, this is how Jesus leaves the city for the last time

Acts 1:4 Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, “Which,” He said, “you heard of from Me;

Acts 1:9 And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

Acts 1:10 And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them.

Acts 1:11 They also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”

Acts 1:12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away.

- Jesus leaves Jerusalem with His disciples and goes out eastward to the Mount of Olives and ascends to Heaven from there
- Then consider who supports David...apart from a few Jewish allies, David’s following is largely Gentiles
 - Chief among them was a man of Gath who pledged, as the Lord lives, he would devote his life to following David and doing as he commanded
 - And likewise, in the years after Jesus left Jerusalem, His following became largely Gentile apart from a few Jews
 - And those Gentiles also declare that as our Lord lives, we devote our lives to following Him anywhere and doing as He commands
 - And as David left, the priests thought they should follow and bring the ark with them as well
 - But David said his departure didn’t mean that God’s presence would be removed from the city of Israel
 - And in fact, the priesthood and the mercy seat of the Lord would remain behind even though God required that the king leave
 - Likewise, as Jesus (our King and High Priest) departed earth, He commanded that the priesthood and the mercy of God remain behind
 - The priesthood of the believer remains on earth, as we all serve as intercessors

- reconciling humanity with God
 - And we possess the Gospel, the proclamation of God's mercy and forgiveness to every person who comes to Him in faith
 - Jesus has gone away for a time because God the Father required it, but the presence of God remains behind in the Church
- Lastly, David saw opportunity to direct the affairs of his city in his absence by sending a hidden messenger to the city to serve his purposes
 - That messenger would work with the priests and their "sons" to do the king's business and prepare for the king's return to power
 - And likewise, we have been given a hidden Messenger, the Holy Spirit, Who works with the priests of God to serve the King
 - We receive word and direction from the King by way of the Spirit and we send our requests back to the King praying in the Spirit
 - This picture is just beginning, and we'll see the rest of it build out in the next few lessons
 - But already we can stand back in awe of how God writes history in a way that tells a larger story
 - This reality gives added meaning to what David was facing in that day
 - David may have acted foolishly at times in raising his family and attending to his sons, and now he is receiving the consequences
 - But seeing how God uses the whole scene to paint a picture of the plan of redemption shows us how powerful God is
 - You know God causes all things to work together for good for those who love God, but appreciate what that means
 - It doesn't just mean He can fix your messes or that He can use your mess to yield benefits later in your life
 - That's true, but it's not the half of it
- God is so powerful and wise that He can design your messes so that they fulfill the plan of God and even so they can glorify Christ
 - David's conflict with His sons was a giant mess, but in the midst of that pain and turmoil, God was using David to proclaim Christ
 - What story of glory is God proclaiming through your messes?
 - You may not know that answer yet, but you know He can do it, and if so, then we need to play our part well
 - We need to praise Him during trials, worship Him for our setbacks, and pray to Him in all circumstances so that we remain in His will
 - See opportunity in difficulty, learn the lessons, and trust the Lord in everything
 - Because God is using everything to His glory and for our good

- David has fled the city of Jerusalem in anticipation of his son Absalom's invasion
 - David is followed by a small army of loyal (mostly Gentile) men with no real plan for holding onto power
 - In the wake of David's departure, Absalom enters the city of Jerusalem declaring himself to be the new king
 - It was an audacious act on Absalom's part...trying to take the throne of his father while his father was still alive
 - It was an act of rebellion and presumption comparable to the prodigal son demanding his inheritance before his father died
 - Absalom's antics were directly related to David's handling of his family life, and in particular his unwillingness to hold his sons accountable
 - Absalom was spoiled, ignored, and marginalized by his father, and now his son has decided he is ready to replace David
 - But David knew Solomon was God's choice to follow David, so Absalom's rebellion couldn't stand
 - Therefore, David is escaping the city and biding his time expecting the Lord to solve the problem in His own way
 - And we will see David's confidence reflected in his responses to this trial, beginning with how he exited the city
 - Last week we heard David telling the priests to keep the ark in the city rather than following David into exile
 - This was not the pattern of kings fleeing enemies...normally a king kept the symbols of his power near to him at all times
 - But David correctly recognized that the ark was not a symbol of his power or his reign...it represented God's reign over Israel
 - So as David said, if God wants David gone, then David must accept that judgment
 - Likewise, if God wants to bring David back, He can, and David said in that day the ark would still be there waiting for him
- David recognized God's sovereignty in this situation, and that recognition allowed David to move with God through these circumstances
 - And as he does, two things happen...first, David is able to learn from the experience and receive the Lord's discipline
 - David will still make mistakes, and in fact, David makes some in the course of his flight
 - But David will also deal more strongly with his children and those around him in his later years than he did before
 - Secondly, David's willingness to follow the Lord creates a powerful picture of Jesus doing the Father's will
 - David's flight can be compared to Christ's departure after His first coming, and that connection is intended

- And I introduced that picture briefly last week as we finished Chapter 15
- To summarize, there were six points of comparison between the two events
 - David entered Jerusalem to a joyous reception as did Christ, but later David was rejected as was Christ
 - When David left he was followed mostly by Gentile supporters, and after Jesus departed, His Church became largely Gentile
 - And when David departed the city, he left by way of the Mount of Olives, and Jesus ascended to the Father the same way
 - And David ordered that the ark remain in the city just as Jesus commanded that His disciples await the arrival of the Spirit
- This picture continues today, and with it we find the purpose in the picture, that is why the Lord wanted us to see this connection
 - But first, we return to the story of David's departure

2Sam. 16:1 Now when David had passed a little beyond the summit, behold, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him with a couple of saddled donkeys, and on them were two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred clusters of raisins, a hundred summer fruits, and a jug of wine.

2Sam. 16:2 The king said to Ziba, "Why do you have these?" And Ziba said, "The donkeys are for the king's household to ride, and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat, and the wine, for whoever is faint in the wilderness to drink."

2Sam. 16:3 Then the king said, "And where is your master's son?" And Ziba said to the king, "Behold, he is staying in Jerusalem, for he said, 'Today the house of Israel will restore the kingdom of my father to me.'"

2Sam. 16:4 So the king said to Ziba, "Behold, all that belongs to Mephibosheth is yours." And Ziba said, "I prostrate myself; let me find favor in your sight, O my lord, the king!"

- As David passes beyond the summit of the Mount of Olives, David is met by a servant of Mephibosheth
 - David gave the crippled Mephibosheth all of Saul's property, which was substantial
 - And David reassigned Ziba, one of David's key servants, to care for Mephibosheth's property
 - Ziba was probably not happy about the reassignment, since it meant trading a place in the palace for working in the fields
 - No doubt Ziba has resented the change and resented Mephibosheth's good fortune
 - And now Ziba sees opportunity to play David's circumstances to his own advantage
 - In v.1 we're told that Ziba rides out on donkeys to meet David and brings with

- him a large provision of supplies
 - It's obvious Ziba has heard the news of David's departure and responded quickly, so David asks why Ziba has made the effort
- Ziba says these supplies are to support the army as they ride out, but given the high value of the provision, David begins to wonder
 - He notices that Mephibosheth is not present, and that's unusual because in times like this, men were pledging their support
 - David might have expected a man with as much power and wealth as Mephibosheth to make a personal appearance
 - After all, Mephibosheth is the only living relative of the prior king, so his loyalties would have been of great interest to others
- Ziba reports that Mephibosheth has gone to Jerusalem saying he expects his father's kingdom to be restored as a result of this infighting
 - This is a cleverly calculated ploy to gain control of Mephibosheth's property
 - Ziba knows that by showing his loyalty to David while reporting Mephibosheth's betrayal, David will likely reward Ziba
 - And that's exactly what David does, assigning all of Mephibosheth's estate to Ziba
 - Ziba's treachery will be exposed later, but even then David won't deal with it as he should
- This moment gives us another opportunity to highlight David's chief weakness as a leader and king: he was too trusting of bad men
 - Many of these bad decisions came to haunt David later, and ultimately his son Solomon had to deal with them when he came to power
 - Discernment is the ability to separate truth from falsehood and to recognize the difference between wisdom and foolishness
 - It's both a natural ability and it can also be given by God as a spiritual gift, and it's important in a leader
 - David lacked discernment at times, especially in the counsel he received and the counselors he trusted
 - David was forgiving to a fault at times, especially toward family or close aids like this man
 - Although mercy is a positive character trait, there comes a point where mercy taken too far works against the cause of godliness
 - Here is another example of David trusting too easily and not discerning that this man had good cause to lie
 - David's pattern of lacking discernment sets up his son, Solomon, to be gifted with an excess of discernment to his own folly
 - The juxtaposition of David's gullibility with Solomon's wisdom seems to be God's way to make a point

- By ourselves, we can never possess enough mercy or wisdom or anything else to substitute for God's provision in Christ
- So David's flight from the city was met by dishonest men attempting to take advantage of him, and by hateful men who curse him...

2Sam. 16:5 When King David came to Bahurim, behold, there came out from there a man of the family of the house of Saul whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera; he came out cursing continually as he came.

2Sam. 16:6 He threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David; and all the people and all the mighty men were at his right hand and at his left.

2Sam. 16:7 Thus Shimei said when he cursed, "Get out, get out, you man of bloodshed, and worthless fellow!"

2Sam. 16:8 "The LORD has returned upon you all the bloodshed of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned; and the LORD has given the kingdom into the hand of your son Absalom. And behold, you are taken in your own evil, for you are a man of bloodshed!"

- A short time later, still only a mile or two outside the city of Jerusalem, in a place called Bahurim, David comes upon another man
 - This man is called Shimei, and he is another relative of Saul
 - Remember, Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin, and the border of Judah and Benjamin ran through the middle of Jerusalem
 - So as David leaves Jerusalem, he immediately passed into the territory of Saul, which put David on unfriendly ground
 - So this man, Shimei, comes out of his home to see David and his men escaping from Absalom, and Shimei decides to mock David
 - He calls David a man of bloodshed and a worthless fellow and throws rocks at the king defiantly daring David to respond
 - Shimei is surrounded on both sides by a crowd of Benjamites and their leaders, indicating that Shimei spoke for all Benjamin
 - Then Shimei says what would have been obvious to everyone...his hatred for David resulted from David replacing Saul as king
 - They blamed David for Saul's death, for Jonathan's death and for Abner's death
 - Of course, this was not the truth, and David knew it, but notice how David responds

2Sam. 16:9 Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over now and cut off his head."

2Sam. 16:10 But the king said, "What have I to do with you, O sons of Zeruiah? If he curses, and if the LORD has told him, 'Curse David,' then who shall say, 'Why have you done so?'"

2Sam. 16:11 Then David said to Abishai and to all his servants, “Behold, my son who came out from me seeks my life; how much more now this Benjamite? Let him alone and let him curse, for the LORD has told him.

2Sam. 16:12 “Perhaps the LORD will look on my affliction and return good to me instead of his cursing this day.”

2Sam. 16:13 So David and his men went on the way; and Shimei went along on the hillside parallel with him and as he went he cursed and cast stones and threw dust at him.

- First, David gets counsel from Abishai, one of Joab’s brothers, who recommends killing Shimei, which meant attacking the whole group
 - That was the style of Abishai and his family in general...they sought to resolve their troubles with force as in their conference with Abner
 - But David saw the situation differently...he saw the Lord at work in his circumstances to accomplish His will
 - And by acknowledging God in his circumstances, David had good reason to be patient and trusting of God
 - In fact, our response to every set of circumstances will largely depend on whether we understand and acknowledge God’s sovereignty
 - When we forget God sets our circumstances, then we see them as merely happenstance or bad luck
 - And if so, then we will act on our own to address them, which means we often work against God, and He will frustrate us
 - But when we correctly acknowledge God works through difficulties to get our attention, to grow us and ultimately to change us, then we learn
 - That’s David’s response here...he rebukes Abishai and refuses his counsel
 - David asks if the Lord has led Shimei to curse David this day, how can David question the Lord’s decision?
 - So David reasons with his men that if David wasn’t willing to fight his own son for the throne, why would he fight this nobody?
 - So let him curse David, because the Lord has told this man to do so
 - And in the Lord’s providence, it must serve some good purpose and in time the Lord may reverse David’s fortunes
- Shimei was wrongly blaming David for killing Saul and Abner, but David correctly heard it as the Lord chastising him for killing Uriah
 - David knew this was a right and proper judgment, and so he asks his men how could he stand in judgment of God?
 - David was keeping God at the center of the circumstances, and in doing so, David was led to ask the right questions
 - David asked how can I challenge God’s judgments in these things?

- And he adds, if I respond well now, perhaps God will turn this cursing back to blessing
 - Can we say we respond to our trials this well? By saying, “God I know you are doing this for good reason so I accept it”
 - Or do we run ourselves ragged trying to fix the problem?
 - Do we appreciate that accepting the trial and learning the lesson through it is the fastest way to bypass it?
 - So David continues walking as Shimei swears at him and throws stones and dust at David
 - This man’s violation of the law by dishonoring God’s anointed will not go unpunished forever
 - David eventually brings this man to task, so don’t interpret David’s mercy as a sign that Shimei isn’t wrong
 - David is just saying that this wasn’t the time to take matters into his own hands...he believed God intended this situation
- Interestingly, these two stories reveal both David’s greatest weakness and strength back-to-back
 - On the one hand, David was too easily deceived by those close to him who ingratiated themselves to David
 - Men like Ziba pulled the wool over David’s eyes at times, and at other times David willfully turned a blind eye to their mistakes
 - This pattern led to cascading troubles for David, as bad actors close to the king often caused bigger problems later
 - On the other hand, David’s dependence on God often saved him from those very same bad actors because he allowed God to work
 - David readily accepted the rebukes of God as he does here with Shimei
 - That allowed David to recover quickly and move ahead in the plan of God
 - The best course of action is always to avoid sinning in the first place, but since we all sin, the next best plan is to accept God’s correction
 - Even as David continued to misjudge his enemies from time to time, he remained blessed by God for walking with Him
 - Perhaps more than anything else, this is what the Bible means when it calls David a man after God’s own heart
- So David hides out in Bahurim, and his men are freshened there, thanks to the provision of Ziba, and meanwhile Absalom enters Jerusalem
 - And David’s little spy sets up shop in Absalom’s presence

2Sam. 16:15 Then Absalom and all the people, the men of Israel, entered Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him.

2Sam. 16:16 Now it came about when Hushai the Archite, David’s friend, came to

Absalom, that Hushai said to Absalom, “Long live the king! Long live the king!”
2Sam. 16:17 Absalom said to Hushai, “Is this your loyalty to your friend? Why did you not go with your friend?”

2Sam. 16:18 Then Hushai said to Absalom, “No! For whom the LORD, this people, and all the men of Israel have chosen, his I will be, and with him I will remain.

2Sam. 16:19 “Besides, whom should I serve? Should I not serve in the presence of his son? As I have served in your father’s presence, so I will be in your presence.”

- We remember that as David was leaving Jerusalem, he encountered this man, Hushai
- Hushai was a man of integrity, and as such, he supported David because he knew David was the Lord’s anointed
- Hushai pledged his support to David, but David told him to stay in the city and serve as David’s spy in Absalom’s court
 - This put Hushai in a tough situation, because though he wanted to assist David, he was not a man to lie or deceive
 - So how could he fulfill his role without compromising his integrity?
- His solution was to speak truth at all times but in such a way that Absalom’s prideful and arrogant heart would hear them a certain way
 - For example, in v.16 as Hushai comes to meet Absalom in the king’s court, Hushai declares “Long live the king!”
 - In Hushai’s heart, he is thinking of David as he speaks these words – but of course Absalom hears them as if about himself
 - This pattern continues throughout the story of Hushai
- In v.17 Absalom begins to interrogate Hushai, since he knows the man was a friend of David and a counselor
 - He asks Hushai are you not loyal to David? Is he not your friend? Why don’t you go to be with David?
 - Hushai responds adamantly he will only follow the king that the Lord and the people of Israel have chosen
 - Here again, Hushai is speaking of David though it would sound to Absalom if he was speaking of the people’s support for him
 - In v.18 Hushai shows himself to be a master of the double entendre, saying should I not serve in the presence of the king’s son?
 - Just as Hushai served in David’s presence, now he shall serve in the presence of the king’s son, he says
 - Now Absalom hears the statement this way, “Just as I served David before, now I’m ready to serve you in his place.”
 - But what Hushai meant was, “Just as I served David when he was present, now I serve David in his absence by staying with you.”

- We can clearly see how Hushai is the answer to David's prayer request to God in 2 Samuel 15:31
 - After David learned his counselor, Ahithophel, betrayed him to join Absalom's court, David asked God to undermine his counsel
 - And immediately Hushai appeared as an answer to David's request
 - And with an ally on the inside, David can now thwart his son's military advantage through bad counsel
- And immediately Hushai begins to make an impact for David's side

2Sam. 16:20 Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, "Give your advice. What shall we do?"

2Sam. 16:21 Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Go in to your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house; then all Israel will hear that you have made yourself odious to your father. The hands of all who are with you will also be strengthened."

2Sam. 16:22 So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof, and Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.

2Sam. 16:23 The advice of Ahithophel, which he gave in those days, was as if one inquired of the word of God; so was all the advice of Ahithophel regarded by both David and Absalom.

- When Absalom turns to Ahithophel asking advice, Bathsheba's grandfather advises that Absalom sleep with David's concubines
 - A concubine was the word used for a slave wife...a woman who was taken as a wife but yet not a free woman
 - A concubine worked like any slave in the home or field, but she was also married to her owner which elevated her among slaves
 - But her status in the household was always below that of a free wife, and she was never treated as more than a slave
 - Moreover, concubines were property, which meant they were transferred as part of the estate when their master died
- David had at least ten concubines in addition to his multiple free wives, which as we've discussed before was contrary to God's plan
 - And again that decision brings problems for David, as Absalom sees opportunity to take advantage of these women
 - Ahithophel recommends that Absalom bed these ten concubines because of the symbolism involved
 - When a king died, the new king inherited the concubines, so he consummated the relationships as a symbol
 - Sleeping with the kings' slave wives was a bold statement that made it clear Absalom was taking over

- And to make sure that the message was communicated clearly, they pitched a tent on the roof of David's house
 - And then they paraded the ten concubines one at a time into the tent in full view of everyone
 - I'm supposing this was done over a series of evenings, so the spectacle would have built over the days until everyone knew
 - Ironically, this roof is where David stood spying Bathsheba, which seems to be the Lord's way of connecting the events
 - David's infidelity with Uriah's wife began a spiral of events that could be traced to this moment where David's son commits adultery on David
 - We can't say that God will always bring things back upon our heads in such a way
 - But we can say He uses everything we give Him to discipline us, to teach us and grow us
 - The effect of Absalom's behavior is to solidify his claims to the throne and to put an end to any hope of a compromise
 - The entire city is now on notice that Absalom intends to fight David for the throne and that fight has now become nasty
 - So if anyone was still on the fence over who they supported, everyone knew they had to pick a side now
 - Because they could expect that those who lose this fight will be put to death and perhaps all who sided with them as well
- Finally, the chapter ends in v.23 with a comment about Ahithophel's authority in Absalom's court
 - The writer says this man's counsel had become equal to the word of God for Absalom and even for David when he served in David's court
 - The point is that the man's counsel was never challenged, probably because he had proven to give sound advice
 - But the man's counsel wasn't without error, of course, and in the end Absalom's trust of Ahithophel gives Hushai an opening

2Sam. 17:1 Furthermore, Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Please let me choose 12,000 men that I may arise and pursue David tonight.

2Sam. 17:2 "I will come upon him while he is weary and exhausted and terrify him, so that all the people who are with him will flee. Then I will strike down the king alone,

2Sam. 17:3 and I will bring back all the people to you. The return of everyone depends on the man you seek; then all the people will be at peace."

2Sam. 17:4 So the plan pleased Absalom and all the elders of Israel.

- Ahithophel gives more counsel to Absalom recommending a battle plan to attack David,

and the plan is sound and likely to succeed

- He says to attack with 12,000 men, which was far more than David possessed at that time
- Attack now while David is weary and expect that such an overwhelming force will demoralize David's support
- They will flee David, and then Ahithophel can strike David personally, since few others were willing to do so
- Ahithophel correctly concludes that David is the key to winning the nation...if David dies, then the nation would fall behind Absalom
 - And the plan pleases Absalom, because as usual Ahithophel's advice is good and no one challenges it
 - Then Absalom sees an opportunity to test Hushai's loyalty

2Sam. 17:5 Then Absalom said, “Now call Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear what he has to say.”

2Sam. 17:6 When Hushai had come to Absalom, Absalom said to him, “Ahithophel has spoken thus. Shall we carry out his plan? If not, you speak.”

2Sam. 17:7 So Hushai said to Absalom, “This time the advice that Ahithophel has given is not good.”

2Sam. 17:8 Moreover, Hushai said, “You know your father and his men, that they are mighty men and they are fierce, like a bear robbed of her cubs in the field. And your father is an expert in warfare, and will not spend the night with the people.

2Sam. 17:9 “Behold, he has now hidden himself in one of the caves or in another place; and it will be when he falls on them at the first attack, that whoever hears it will say, ‘There has been a slaughter among the people who follow Absalom.’

2Sam. 17:10 “And even the one who is valiant, whose heart is like the heart of a lion, will completely lose heart; for all Israel knows that your father is a mighty man and those who are with him are valiant men.

2Sam. 17:11 “But I counsel that all Israel be surely gathered to you, from Dan even to Beersheba, as the sand that is by the sea in abundance, and that you personally go into battle.

2Sam. 17:12 “So we shall come to him in one of the places where he can be found, and we will fall on him as the dew falls on the ground; and of him and of all the men who are with him, not even one will be left.

2Sam. 17:13 “If he withdraws into a city, then all Israel shall bring ropes to that city, and we will drag it into the valley until not even a small stone is found there.”

- Abishai calls Hushai into the room to answer the same question, but first they tell Hushai

what Ahithophel counseled

- The trap was this: if Hushai was still on David's side, then surely he would try to talk Absalom out of the attack, since it was likely to succeed
 - Of course, Hushai can recognize the trap for what it is, so he searches for a way to respond that will maintain Absalom's trust
 - And yet, Hushai continues to preserve his integrity and steer around deception or lies
- So his strategy is to simultaneously undermine Absalom's confidence in his attack plan while arguing for the attack to take place
 - In v.7 Hushai opens provocatively by saying Ahithophel's advice was not good
 - He says that Absalom remembers how mighty David's army has always been and how good a military leader David is
 - Therefore, he should not expect David to be resting in the open in the city
- Instead, in v.9 Hushai insists that David is in a cave by now, out of sight and out of reach
 - And if his troops go looking for David, he will respond with a surprise attack and Absalom will lose
 - Then all the people will hear that those who follow Absalom were slaughtered and the tide will turn against him
- Instead, Hushai counsels, Absalom ought to gather everyone who sides with him, every man from Dan to Beersheba, and he should lead them
 - Then they would fall upon him in a place where he can be found and of him and all who are with him, none will be left
 - And if David should go into a city, then Israel shall destroy the city, as if pulling it down into the valley, to defeat David
- The entire story is make-believe and hyperbole designed to excite Absalom
 - Hushai was trying to buy David time by leading Absalom to alter his plan
 - Rather than attack right away, he would take time to build up a massive army from across Israel
 - And then he would enter into the open to attack David or perhaps he didn't know how the battle would go
 - The main point was delay to give David time to prepare
 - And predictably, Absalom likes the advice, since it seems even more likely to win and it plays to Absalom's ego
 - So Absalom gives orders to follow Hushai's advice over Ahithophel's advice
 - And in v.14 we're told that this was in keeping with David's prayer request that the Lord thwart Ahithophel's counsel
 - So now the cloak and daggers part of the story ensues, as Hushai must now get word to David of Absalom's plan

2Sam. 17:15 Then Hushai said to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, “This is what Ahithophel counseled Absalom and the elders of Israel, and this is what I have counseled.

2Sam. 17:16 “Now therefore, send quickly and tell David, saying, ‘Do not spend the night at the fords of the wilderness, but by all means cross over, or else the king and all the people who are with him will be destroyed.’”

2Sam. 17:17 Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz were staying at En-rogel, and a maidservant would go and tell them, and they would go and tell King David, for they could not be seen entering the city.

2Sam. 17:18 But a lad did see them and told Absalom; so the two of them departed quickly and came to the house of a man in Bahurim, who had a well in his courtyard, and they went down into it.

2Sam. 17:19 And the woman took a covering and spread it over the well’s mouth and scattered grain on it, so that nothing was known.

2Sam. 17:20 Then Absalom’s servants came to the woman at the house and said, “Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?” And the woman said to them, “They have crossed the brook of water.” And when they searched and could not find them, they returned to Jerusalem.

- We remember that David told Hushai that he had allies among the priests, Zadok and Abiathar
 - So Hushai directs that David be informed that he not remain in the town in the open
 - Although Hushai counseled against an immediate attack, he couldn’t be sure that his advice would be followed
 - He hopes he has bought David some time, but meanwhile he wants to warn David to hide his men
 - So the priests take the news and relay it to their sons, Jonathan and Ahimaaz, so they can run to David
 - If the priests themselves left, it would be noticed, but their sons could be gone without causing much suspicion
 - To further avoid arousing suspicions, the two sons stayed outside the city of Jerusalem in En-Rogel
 - En-Rogel was a town at the juncture of the Kidron and Hinnom valleys, just outside the walls of Jerusalem to the south
 - A maidservant was sent to find them with the message for David, and then they would leave En-rogel undetected
 - Except that a young boy did see them leaving, and for some reason this led the boy to report the news back to Absalom
 - The priests’ sons realize they were seen, so they decide to hide in the city of Bahurim rather than risk exposing David’s location
 - When Absalom’s servants came looking for the priests’ sons, they can’t be found

because a woman hid them in her well

- The story reads similar to the spies of Jericho and Rahab, and there is a similar feel to the story
 - In both cases, the Lord was working through undercover methods to preserve His people
- Hushai and the others with him are demonstrating an interesting principle of spiritual warfare at work: being wise as serpents and innocent as doves
 - The enemy is crafty like a serpent, always at work to undermine the church and God's work through us
 - And the Lord tells us that as we stand against the enemy, we need to understand what warfare looks like sometimes
 - It's not pretty...it involves working undercover and appreciating the need for creativity, resourcefulness and secrecy at times
 - The enemy has spies everywhere, people you think are on your side, yet secretly they are reporting back to Satan in one way or another
 - They are his eyes and ears and they can become his hands and feet
 - So when we work to advance the kingdom, we need to be wise in how we do it
 - We must not underestimate the enemy's power or his reach or resources
 - I've heard it said that in every new church that forms, the enemy will send some of his people into that body to serve as spies and agents
 - These people don't know they are serving Satan, of course
 - None of us see that in ourselves, especially before we come to faith in Jesus
 - But as Paul says, we do not war against flesh and blood, and therefore we should recognize that everyone is serving someone
- So we must be wise in how we pursue ministry, expecting the enemy to disrupt us at every chance and not making that easier than necessary
 - Which is why Jesus says being wise as a serpent must come with innocence
 - We must do as Hushai does here...being resourceful in the battle without sinning
 - Because when we lower our standards and use the enemy's tactics, he can turn that against us
 - If we sin, we give the enemy opportunity to accuse us, and that may come back to stop us
 - We need to remain above reproach but willing to do whatever is necessary short of sin to outmaneuver the enemy
 - These young men are acting as spies in a real-life war, but they are also working behind enemy lines in a battle with Satan

2Sam. 17:21 It came about after they had departed that they came up out of the

well and went and told King David; and they said to David, “Arise and cross over the water quickly for thus Ahithophel has counseled against you.”

2Sam. 17:22 Then David and all the people who were with him arose and crossed the Jordan; and by dawn not even one remained who had not crossed the Jordan.

- In this case, the young men are successful in hiding and avoid capture, and so they were able to continue to David and pass along the message
 - David receives the counsel, moves his men across the Jordan and into safety outside Absalom’s reach
 - At some point the news of David’s escape would have made its way back to Absalom’s court
 - And as it does, Ahithophel recognizes that this likely means Absalom’s eventual defeat
 - Hushai’s advice was correct: David was the superior military leader, and if Absalom tried to fight David on equal terms, he would lose
 - Absalom foolishly heard it as a challenge and opportunity for glory
 - But Ahithophel understood the folly of trying to challenge David on the battlefield, so David’s escape spelled doom for Absalom
 - And when Absalom lost, David would return to the city, and anyone who aligned with Absalom would die
 - So Ahithophel decides that he will come to his end in this way, and so he decides to take matters into his own hands

2Sam. 17:23 Now when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his donkey and arose and went to his home, to his city, and set his house in order, and strangled himself; thus he died and was buried in the grave of his father.

- Death was coming for this man one way or another, he knew, so he preferred it at his own hand on his own terms
- He had betrayed God’s anointed, yet in the end, it was he who was left without friends

2Sam. 17:24 Then David came to Mahanaim. And Absalom crossed the Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him.

- After David had crossed the Jordan, Absalom eventually amassed his army and begins his pursuit
 - The army also crosses the Jordan and heads toward Mahanaim, where David is encamped

- We will pick up the story there next time
 - But now it's time to revisit our picture of Christ found in this story
 - We began this picture looking at how David's departure paralleled Jesus' departure after His death and resurrection
 - And now we see more parallels emerge in today's chapter
 - But as we look at them, remember that the picture isn't being built in perfect chronological order
 - The parallels today, in some cases, relate to earlier events in Jesus' time on earth
 - The common factor in all these details is their relationship to Jesus' first coming
 - So we're not trying to find a chronological story of Jesus in the story of David
 - The connection is present in broad strokes, similar to the way the story of Joseph parallels Jesus in the broad strokes
- And we see that clearly today, beginning with the account of Zima meeting David
 - As David reaches the pinnacle of the Mount of Olives, he is given a donkey so the king may ride it
 - Which reminds us that as Jesus entered the city on Palm Sunday, He too was met in roughly the same place by a donkey
 - The disciples found the donkey where Jesus told them, and they brought it to Him to ride into the city
 - Next, we have the meeting of David and Shimei, and this man plays a particularly powerful role in creating a picture of Christ
 - We'll see much more of that picture later, but for now he serves as a representative of the people in Israel who rejected Jesus
 - As David walks out of the city, Shimei curses at him, throws stones and dirt and declares he is not the rightful king
 - And yet David does nothing to stop the man, and even declares that the cursing is from God
 - And likewise, as Jesus was taken to the cross, the crowd spit on Him and mocked Him and declared Jesus was not their rightful king
 - But in response, Jesus did not retaliate
 - Moreover, Scripture says that the crowd's rejection was Jesus taking a curse from God the Father on our behalf
 - And David's circumstances were made far worse by the betrayal of a close confidant, Ahithophel, who gave counsel to David's enemy
 - His counsel to David, in effect, was that it was expedient for the king to die for the people so that the whole nation not perish
 - But after that counsel came to nothing, Ahithophel decided to take his own life
 - And Jesus was betrayed by a close confidant, Judas, who went to Jesus' enemies as

an informant

- Judas assisted the Pharisees in their battle plan against Jesus
- That plan was in keeping with the High Priest who said it was good for one man to die so the whole nation would not perish
- But after his advice led to an unexpected outcome, Judas took his own life
- Here again, we see parallel after parallel between David's situation and the story of Jesus, though the parallels are scattered and not in order
 - Nevertheless, it does beg the question of why these parallels exist
 - And the answer is because of where it's leading us ultimately
 - The parallels to Jesus' first coming were never intended to be the point, because you couldn't see it in advance anyway
 - By the time someone could notice the parallels were evident, Christ's first coming was over and obvious to all
 - The purpose in the parallels is to prepare us for the second part of the story, David's return
 - And that's where our story is headed next...

- The fight between David and Absalom for the throne of Israel has reached a critical moment
 - David has retreated to a town in the north called Mahanaim on the east side of the Jordan along the banks of the Jabbok river

2Sam. 17:24 Then David came to Mahanaim. And Absalom crossed the Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him.

- Ironically, this town was Ishbosheth's capital city when he was challenging David for the throne
 - Perhaps David chose this place because he expected that Saul's family might be kind to him since he was kind to Mephibosheth
 - Now it's become David's stand against his own son
- And in a way it's sad for David that he has been forced to retreat across the Jordan river
 - Technically, the land God gave Israel spanned both east and west of the Jordan river, but historically the Jews stayed to the west
 - And therefore the view in David's day (as is the case still today) was that crossing the Jordan was leaving Israel
 - So to some in Israel, David's flight to Mahanaim was equivalent to exile outside the land of his people
 - And that does not sit well with some, as we will see later
- Meanwhile, after Absalom took up residence in the palace in Jerusalem, he was advised by Hushai, David's plant, to engage in a mighty battle
 - Hushai knew that David was by far the better warrior, so a meeting of forces in the open heavily favored David
 - For this same reason, other counselors told Absalom to strike more quickly with a smaller force while David was nearby
 - But Absalom falls for Hushai's deception and decides to raise a great army from across Israel which gives David time to prepare
- And now Absalom is ready to chase after David into the Transjordan in the hope of a decisive victory in Gilead
 - By his counsel, Hushai has done his best to help David gain the advantage in the coming contest for control of Israel
 - So now at the end of Chapter 17, we learn of the preparations each side makes for the battle

2Sam. 17:25 Absalom set Amasa over the army in place of Joab. Now Amasa was the son of a man whose name was Ithra the Israelite, who went in to Abigail the daughter of Nahash, sister of Zeruiah, Joab's mother.

2Sam. 17:26 And Israel and Absalom camped in the land of Gilead.

2Sam. 17:27 Now when David had come to Mahanaim, Shobi the son of Nahash from Rabbah of the sons of Ammon, Machir the son of Ammiel from Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim,

2Sam. 17:28 brought beds, basins, pottery, wheat, barley, flour, parched grain, beans, lentils, parched seeds,

2Sam. 17:29 honey, curds, sheep, and cheese of the herd, for David and for the people who were with him, to eat; for they said, “The people are hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness.”

- Being new in the position of king, Absalom chose a man with family ties to David’s commander, Joab
 - Amasa was the son of Ithra, and according to 1 Chronicles 2:17, his father was an Ishmaelite, not an Israelite as written here (another copyist error)
 - Ishmaelites descended from Ishmael, and were therefore not Jews
 - Amasa’s mother was Abigail, a cousin of Joab, and so it seems that Absalom was trying to gain legitimacy by association
 - By appointing a commander with ties to David’s commander, he reinforced the idea that he was a legitimate replacement king
 - But he appointed a non-Jew which showed his ignorance and a lack of relationship with the God of Israel Himself
 - So with Amasa, Absalom camps his forces in Gilead, the general region east of the Jordan that includes Mahanaim
- David’s forces led by Joab are in Mahanaim, and he has an assorted group of supporters and allies standing with him, we’re told
 - Among them are Shobi, the brother of the current king of Ammon
 - David had conquered Shobi’s father when he ruled Ammon years earlier, so Ammon was a vassal of David’s Israel
 - The fact that this man is supporting David demonstrates that Israel’s enemies are remaining aligned with David as king
 - Also present with David are a couple of men who knew David’s character and supported him in this time of need
 - One was Machir, who had hidden and protected Mephibosheth before David welcomed him to his table
 - He saw David’s faithfulness to Mephibosheth and offers his own faithfulness to David now
 - Finally there is Barzillai, wealthy man from northern Gilead, who sustained David with tremendous provisions
 - We don’t know how he knew David, but because of his kindness to the king here, David give his family a place at the king’s table
 - Both of these men demonstrate that God was moving in the background to help

David because David was His anointed

- From a human perspective, David would seem to be greatly disadvantaged in this fight, but God is the great equalizer
 - Whoever has God's approval has everything, and since David was in God's grace, Absalom literally had no chance
 - And God delights to show us that we are under His care in little ways like this...
 - Even as the big details of our story may suggest that God has forgotten us, the little details remind us He is with us
- God allows the big issues to come into our life to teach us, correct us, train us up in righteousness
 - But when they come, the Lord also desires to reassure us that these things have not come to crush us
 - So He will give us moments like this, moments when we see the Lord is on our side, even in the midst of our trials
 - Look for those encouraging signs from the Lord so you can withstand the trial with the right attitude and stronger faith
- Of course, David is God's anointed king and Absalom is not...and he never will be, so the outcome of this battle is never in doubt
 - David was the one cursed by Shemei, but it will be Absalom that pays the penalty of that curse
 - This is a classic display of the power over the hubris of mankind
 - Proverbs puts it succinctly

**Prov. 16:9 The mind of man plans his way,
But the LORD directs his steps.**

- The Lord is directing everyone's steps in this story to ensure the outcome He intended
 - David is experiencing a trial that will train him concerning his leadership deficits
 - But the trial isn't intended to crush David and his place as king is certain since the Lord placed him there
- In fact, in this next chapter, we will see subtle cues throughout to reinforce that David is king, not Absalom
 - For example, throughout this next section, David is referred to as king to emphasize his rightful place
 - And the story is constructed as a contrast between David and Absalom so that we see the difference in each man's heart
- The chapter opens by showing David's battle strategy

2Sam. 18:1 Then David numbered the people who were with him and set over

them commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds.

2Sam. 18:2 David sent the people out, one third under the command of Joab, one third under the command of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and one third under the command of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said to the people, "I myself will surely go out with you also."

2Sam. 18:3 But the people said, "You should not go out; for if we indeed flee, they will not care about us; even if half of us die, they will not care about us. But you are worth ten thousand of us; therefore now it is better that you be ready to help us from the city."

2Sam. 18:4 Then the king said to them, "Whatever seems best to you I will do." So the king stood beside the gate, and all the people went out by hundreds and thousands.

2Sam. 18:5 The king charged Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, "Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom." And all the people heard when the king charged all the commanders concerning Absalom.

- David's strategy is sensible, prudent and sound...beginning with sharing command of his forces among three trusted and competent men
 - When David proposed to go out in the fight, his people objected and argued that David was too valuable to place himself in harm's way
 - David is an older man by this point, and so his value as a leader had changed
 - When he was younger, David was an asset on the battlefield, but now he's more valuable in the rear ranks
 - And David wisely takes counsel and agrees with their concerns
 - Finally, notice David gives explicit instructions concerning Absalom...he is not to be harmed
 - He is to be treated gently, which is a subtle way of saying he should not be killed in battle
 - And David makes this explicitly known and clear to all and the people hear it too
 - The question, though, is whether David's choice to show his son an excess of mercy was the right thing to do or not
 - What would normally be the penalty for someone who did what Absalom did?
 - Wouldn't anyone else in his place be put to death for trying to take the king's throne, much less the king's life?
 - And in fact, isn't David's reluctance to hold his son accountable the very reason this situation has come to pass in the first place?
 - Remember, mercy and kindness are virtues, unless they become excuse for overlooking disobedience and rebellion
 - Justice absent mercy and kindness hardens hearts, since it is the kindness of God that brings us to repentance

- But kindness and mercy absent justice becomes license to sin, and that's the situation David has created with his sons
- So David's instructions show he is thinking more like a father unwilling to discipline his children than like a king at war
- So David's careful battle plan goes into action with the expected result

2Sam. 18:6 Then the people went out into the field against Israel, and the battle took place in the forest of Ephraim.

2Sam. 18:7 The people of Israel were defeated there before the servants of David, and the slaughter there that day was great, 20,000 men.

2Sam. 18:8 For the battle there was spread over the whole countryside, and the forest devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.

- The people refer to David's forces, while the term "Israel" refers to the army that Absalom raised from across the nation
 - The battle takes place in the forest of Ephraim, the location of which is not known precisely but lies somewhere in Gilead
 - It was called the forest of Ephraim because historically many Ephraimites settled there beginning in the time of Judges
- As the battle ensues, it's a bloodbath for Absalom's forces, as expected
 - They were not led well, trained well, or fighting on the right side
 - And as a result 20,000 men lost their lives...an unnecessary cost for the nation because of Absalom's insolence
- Curiously, in v.8 we're told that more of Absalom's men died in the forest as they were trying to run from the fight than in the battle itself
 - The forests of Gilead are not like the serene, spacious terrain of Sherwood Forest
 - They are desert forests overrun with dangers and obstacles, which W. M. Thomson describes this way:

...rocks piled in horrid confusion, and covered with prickly oak and other thorny coppice, which confound the unhappy traveler who gets entangled among them...Nothing is more impracticable than these stony, thorny [forests], and I can readily believe that such a 'wood' would devour more of a routed army than the sword of the victors.

- So Absalom's army has been routed and many of his men have been killed
 - Again, what should the punishment be for a man who instigated this unnecessary bloodshed?
 - Under any other circumstances, the commander of such a rebellion would be put to death

- And the Law in Deuteronomy 21:18-21 required it, in fact, since the man was guilty of insurrection against the king
- Since David issued orders for Absalom to be spared, so the Lord is going to ensure that Absalom receives the justice he deserves
 - And yet because of David's order, the Lord will bring justice in a certain way that leaves the guilty punished and preserves the innocent

2Sam. 18:9 Now Absalom happened to meet the servants of David. For Absalom was riding on his mule, and the mule went under the thick branches of a great oak. And his head caught fast in the oak, so he was left hanging between heaven and earth, while the mule that was under him kept going.

2Sam. 18:10 When a certain man saw it, he told Joab and said, "Behold, I saw Absalom hanging in an oak."

2Sam. 18:11 Then Joab said to the man who had told him, "Now behold, you saw him! Why then did you not strike him there to the ground? And I would have given you ten pieces of silver and a belt."

2Sam. 18:12 The man said to Joab, "Even if I should receive a thousand pieces of silver in my hand, I would not put out my hand against the king's son; for in our hearing the king charged you and Abishai and Ittai, saying, 'Protect for me the young man Absalom!'

2Sam. 18:13 "Otherwise, if I had dealt treacherously against his life (and there is nothing hidden from the king), then you yourself would have stood aloof."

- In his own retreat, Absalom is riding away on a mule, and as he passes under the thick branches of an oak tree, his flowing hair gets caught
 - We remember that Absalom had movie star looks, and among his key attributes was a great mane of hair
 - The text implied that he was very proud of his hair even to the point of making a public spectacle of getting a haircut
 - So it follows that the Lord should use that pride to bring about his fall
 - As his great mane gets caught, the entanglement is so severe that it causes Absalom to be ripped off his mule
 - He hangs suspended by his hair, likely in much pain since his hair is holding the weight of his body
 - We might suppose that Absalom didn't possess a knife that he could use to cut his own hair
 - Or perhaps he did have a knife but was too vain to cut his hair so he was seeking for another solution
 - Either way, a spy of David's camp sees Absalom hanging and goes away to report what he saw
 - When he reports to the commander of David's forces, Joab is incredulous that

- the soldier didn't use the chance to kill Absalom
 - For Joab, this was the perfect chance to end the rebellion and restore life to normal in Israel
- But this soldier responds that he was just following David's orders, and he was correct in doing so
 - To raise his hand against the king's son, especially when the king had directed otherwise, was rebellion itself
 - Surely people still remembered what David did to the man who killed Saul... and Saul was already dying
 - In fact, the man correctly says that had he killed Absalom, not even Joab would have defended him before David
 - So there was little doubt that David would have put this man to death had he killed David's son against orders
- Clearly, the Lord has captured Absalom in this ridiculous trap to humiliate the man and ultimately to bring him to a just end
 - But because David has commanded that no one kill him, the one who takes action will himself be guilty and due justice for disobeying David
 - So the Lord brings this innocent man to witness the scene and report back
 - But the man's godly character will not allow him to raise a hand against Absalom, and that's why the Lord has him report to Joab
 - Joab is already a man due justice for unlawful killing, so the Lord is going to allow that man to dig his hole a little deeper
 - And in the process, the Lord will harness the man's unwavering willingness to ignore orders to accomplish a good outcome
 - This story is a great example of that principle of Scripture at work...God is not the author of sin but He can harness it

2Sam. 18:14 Then Joab said, "I will not waste time here with you." So he took three spears in his hand and thrust them through the heart of Absalom while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak.

2Sam. 18:15 And ten young men who carried Joab's armor gathered around and struck Absalom and killed him.

2Sam. 18:16 Then Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing Israel, for Joab restrained the people.

2Sam. 18:17 They took Absalom and cast him into a deep pit in the forest and erected over him a very great heap of stones. And all Israel fled, each to his tent.

2Sam. 18:18 Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and set up for himself a pillar which is in the King's Valley, for he said, "I have no son to preserve my name." So he named the pillar after his own name, and it is called Absalom's Monument to this day.

- Joab reacts to the man's response in frustration...which is typical of the ungodly when confronted by godly men standing by their principles
 - Joab says he won't waste time in the conversation, because he's afraid that someone might come along and free Absalom
 - So Joab leaves quickly with spears and when he finds Absalom, he impales him while still hanging
 - These spears don't immediately kill Absalom, so Joab's armor bearers cut him down and finish the job
 - Again, Absalom's death was the correct outcome in terms of justice, but for someone to accomplish it meant defying David
 - So it fell to Joab just as God intended so that one guilty man might take the life of another
 - And though this will trouble David tremendously, that in itself is part of the lesson for him
 - His love for his family clouded his judgment to the point that he ruined his family through poor decision-making
 - And the death of his sons were the consequences of those decisions
 - With Absalom dead, Joab calls off the rest of the attack, because there was no point in pursuing fellow Israelites once their cause was no more
 - To make sure that Absalom wasn't treated as a hero or martyr, the body was disposed in a hidden grave
 - They buried him under a high pile of stones in the middle of the forest
 - That end is somewhat ironic, since the penalty for a rebellious son is stoning
- With the battle over and Absalom gone, the people flee, and the war ends
 - As a footnote to Absalom's story, we're told in v.18 that Absalom had previously set up a monument to himself
 - The monument was set up in the King's Valley, which is the Kidron Valley on the east side of Mt. Zion
 - There is a monument standing in the King's Valley today called Absalom's monument, but that is not the original
 - It was built in the first century as a Roman tomb for a wealthy individual and it may stand in the same general location
 - Apparently, Absalom had given some thought to the potential to die in battle and so he made this preparation for his legacy
 - His reasoning was because he had no children as yet, so he wanted something by which people would remember his name
 - It's an act of hubris and self-importance, and in the end it became a monument to his folly
 - The writer includes this detail to remind the reader that Absalom expected that his rebellion meant death

- Not even Absalom himself expected his father to spare his life should his rebellion fail
 - Which makes David's orders concerning his son look all the more foolish
- Absalom is the third son to die indirectly because of David's multiple wives and his subsequent unwillingness to discipline his sons
 - Joab was a man prone to acting against authority and against David, in particular, but his ruthlessness explained his success as a leader
 - God used Joab to further His plan at times, but not because God endorsed Joab's methods
 - Rather, Joab's methods were his own, but at times the Lord used Joab's sinful instincts to defeat even greater sin in Absalom
 - And ultimately, God used Joab to discipline David, and now the time has come for this lesson to reach its intended target

2Sam. 18:19 Then Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said, "Please let me run and bring the king news that the LORD has freed him from the hand of his enemies."

2Sam. 18:20 But Joab said to him, "You are not the man to carry news this day, but you shall carry news another day; however, you shall carry no news today because the king's son is dead."

2Sam. 18:21 Then Joab said to the Cushite, "Go, tell the king what you have seen." So the Cushite bowed to Joab and ran.

2Sam. 18:22 Now Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said once more to Joab, "But whatever happens, please let me also run after the Cushite." And Joab said, "Why would you run, my son, since you will have no reward for going?"

2Sam. 18:23 "But whatever happens," he said, "I will run." So he said to him, "Run." Then Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain and passed up the Cushite.

- A messenger named Ahimaaz pleads for the chance to deliver the news of Absalom's death to David
 - A messenger who brought good news would often be rewarded on the spot, and this man is longing for the chance to tell David
 - Clearly, he didn't appreciate the bigger picture, because if he had, he would not have volunteered for this assignment
 - David is not going to react to the news of Absalom's death with joy and he certainly was not going to reward the messenger
 - So Joab wisely spares the man by saying he will not deliver the message
 - In v.20 Joab clarifies that the man isn't being fired from his post...he will still deliver messages
 - But he won't deliver this one, because Joab knew better than to put a valued man in this position

- Instead, Joab sends another man, a Gentile soldier from Cush, to report to David, probably because this man was expendable
 - If David reacted in anger and killed the man, there would be little loss for Joab
 - But Joab valued Ahimaaz, and when Ahimaaz begged again to go with the Cushite, Joab tried to explain the situation
- In v.22 Joab assures the man there would be no reward for delivering this news to David
 - But the man insists, so Joab says go and Ahimaaz was so determined for reward, he ran fast enough to pass the Cushite
 - And as he reaches the outskirts of David's camp, a watchmen reports his approach to David

2Sam. 18:24 Now David was sitting between the two gates; and the watchman went up to the roof of the gate by the wall, and raised his eyes and looked, and behold, a man running by himself.

2Sam. 18:25 The watchman called and told the king. And the king said, "If he is by himself there is good news in his mouth." And he came nearer and nearer.

2Sam. 18:26 Then the watchman saw another man running; and the watchman called to the gatekeeper and said, "Behold, another man running by himself." And the king said, "This one also is bringing good news."

2Sam. 18:27 The watchman said, "I think the running of the first one is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok." And the king said, "This is a good man and comes with good news."

- Given the slower pace of travel in that day, the time required for a runner to make his way to the king gave opportunity to speculate about the message
 - David says that one runner means good news, because if the news were bad, there would be a great retreat of many people running back
 - When the man reports seeing the second runner, the Cushite, David holds to his optimistic outlook saying more good news
 - And when he's told the man was Ahimaaz, David doubles down on his bet, claiming that this is a good man
 - David seems to be working very hard to keep an optimistic attitude, and it makes you wonder if he was secretly worried that his son would die
 - David gave strict orders but that just indicated that he didn't trust his men to do the right thing
 - So it seems that David's primary concern is whether his son will survive the encounter
 - Meanwhile, the rest of the nation is worried about the kingdom
 - The nation's future lies in the balance, and those who aligned themselves with David will likely die if Absalom prevailed

- Once more the tension between David's public role as king and his private role as father is at odds
- Which is why the Lord brings about Absalom's death and why the news must reach David in this way

2Sam. 18:28 Ahimaaz called and said to the king, "All is well." And he prostrated himself before the king with his face to the ground. And he said, "Blessed is the LORD your God, who has delivered up the men who lifted their hands against my lord the king."

2Sam. 18:29 The king said, "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" And Ahimaaz answered, "When Joab sent the king's servant, and your servant, I saw a great tumult, but I did not know what it was."

2Sam. 18:30 Then the king said, "Turn aside and stand here." So he turned aside and stood still.

- Ahimaaz reaches David first, which was always his desire, and when he does, he reports on the outcome of the battle
 - The messenger buries the lede, so to speak, by emphasizing the outcome of the battle while ignoring the news of Absalom
 - He begins praising the Lord for a victory over Absalom's military force
 - But David fully expected to be victorious in battle, so this was not the news David was waiting to hear
 - David was far more interested in the outcome for his son, and when he presses for that news, Ahimaaz shows he had been paying attention
 - He knew that the Cushite was following close behind, so he elected to play dumb
 - He says when he left he knew that something had been heard but he didn't know what the news was
 - Clearly, the man knew that David's son was dead, since Joab told him, so his statement to David was a lie
 - So Ahimaaz must have decided that he would get credit for reporting the battle was won
 - But he would leave the bad news for the Cushite to deliver
- David knew that another runner was coming in shortly, so he tells Ahimaaz to stand aside

2Sam. 18:31 Behold, the Cushite arrived, and the Cushite said, "Let my lord the king receive good news, for the LORD has freed you this day from the hand of all those who rose up against you."

2Sam. 18:32 Then the king said to the Cushite, "Is it well with the young man

Absalom?” And the Cushite answered, “Let the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise up against you for evil, be as that young man!”

2Sam. 18:33 The king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And thus he said as he walked, “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!”

- Now it falls to the poor Cushite to deliver the bad news, but he does it diplomatically
 - He begins with the same opening announcement concerning the battle, but then predictably David asks about Absalom
 - The Cushite responded that all who would oppose the king should be as that young man, meaning dead
- David completely overlooks the news of the battle won and focuses only on the news of his son
 - He leaves the room deeply grieving for his son and as he walks away he weeps over and over again for his son
 - While we can sympathize for David over the loss of his son, David is more than a father...he’s the king of a nation
 - And in this moment he’s showing that he was more focused on his personal loss than on his nation’s gain
- Now it becomes clear what good news David had been expecting to hear from the messengers
 - David’s reaction to this news proves why it was necessary for the Lord to deliver this blow to David...he has to see the damage he’s done
 - By refusing to hold his sons accountable, he has enabled them to follow after the worst desires and instincts
 - Amnon pursued perverted lust while his brother Absalom pursued unbridled pride and ambition
 - And after Absalom divided the nation, sent the king packing, and caused 20,000 families to lose fathers, sons and brothers...
 - David mourns his death as if to say the outcome has been a disaster for the nation
 - When in reality the outcome is the best possible resolution for the nation...and ultimately for David too
 - Had Absalom lived and been allowed to remain in David’s house, he would have almost certainly sought other ways to disrupt the nation
 - And if he had been exiled, he would no doubt come back one day with a new army
 - There was little reason to expect Absalom to stop trying to have what he wanted, and David showed no inclination to stop him
 - This is what discipline from God looks like and how it works in our hearts...it takes us places we won’t go on our own

- It brings us to the end of ourselves so we have no choice but to contend with our pride or deception or rebellion or other issue
- And then when forced, we get an honest look at ourselves and realize we don't like what we see
- And then with God's help, we repent and move in a new direction, which ultimately brings us to somewhere better
- That's the path that David is on, and all that remains is for David to see himself in that mirror...

2Sam. 19:1 Then it was told Joab, "Behold, the king is weeping and mourns for Absalom."

2Sam. 19:2 The victory that day was turned to mourning for all the people, for the people heard it said that day, "The king is grieved for his son."

2Sam. 19:3 So the people went by stealth into the city that day, as people who are humiliated steal away when they flee in battle.

2Sam. 19:4 The king covered his face and cried out with a loud voice, "O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

- After David goes off weeping, someone reports this to Joab, because no one can believe David's response
 - In that time, a king's response to any situation was expected to be echoed by his subjects' response
 - So when a king was joyful, the nation was joyful, and when the king was agitated, the people got anxious
 - And when a king mourned, the people mourned with him
 - So David's response to the messengers' news led to several unintended consequences for the people of Israel
 - First, the people were surprised and worried by David's response to the news of victory on the battlefield
 - They simply hadn't anticipated such a strong negative response
 - It's not that David wasn't expected to mourn for his son privately
 - But it was that David's *primary* response to the victory was mourning, and that wasn't what they would have expected
 - Secondly, the people had already started celebrating the military victory, the biggest victory for the nation in some time
 - So when the news came out that David was mourning greatly for his son, the people suddenly found themselves embarrassed
 - They were in the middle of parties and song, when they should be engaged in mourning
 - Notice in v.3 we're told the people slink away from the celebrations in the field and

back into Mahanaim humiliated for having celebrated

- They act as if they had been the ones defeated and humiliated
 - Why are they feeling this way? Because David was mourning the son who brought this tragedy upon himself
 - Remember, even Absalom expected that death was a possible outcome for him...only David was unprepared to accept it
- The Lord has brought David to the end of himself and his unreasonable devotion to his family at the expense of his role as leader of the nation
 - Notice in v.4 the king is still in his room calling out Absalom's name in a full-fledged pity party
 - And after seeing the people of Israel humiliated by their own king after a great military victory, Joab has had enough
 - So he gathers the courage to go to David and give the king a piece of his mind

2Sam. 19:5 Then Joab came into the house to the king and said, “Today you have covered with shame the faces of all your servants, who today have saved your life and the lives of your sons and daughters, the lives of your wives, and the lives of your concubines,

2Sam. 19:6 by loving those who hate you, and by hating those who love you. For you have shown today that princes and servants are nothing to you; for I know this day that if Absalom were alive and all of us were dead today, then you would be pleased.

2Sam. 19:7 “Now therefore arise, go out and speak kindly to your servants, for I swear by the LORD, if you do not go out, surely not a man will pass the night with you, and this will be worse for you than all the evil that has come upon you from your youth until now.”

- Joab tells David like it is...David has covered the faces of his own people with shame, the very servants who saved David's life
 - Had David's forces lost, not only would David have died but his entire family would have died
 - His other sons, including Solomon, and his daughters and his wives and his concubines...everyone
 - In other words, Absalom's actions meant that someone was going to die...either one of David's children or all of them
- So in light of the alternatives, Absalom's death was – by far – the best outcome possible, and in light of God's grace, David should temper his mourning
 - Joab wisely describes David's action as loving those who hated him while hating those who loved him
 - We've all heard the phrase “blood is thicker than water” which means that the bonds of family are stronger than any other

- We may have chosen friends that we like better than any of our family members, but in the end blood bonds always win out
 - David seemed to live by that standard to a fault
- He was favoring a rebellious son who wouldn't have hesitated to kill his father if he had the chance
 - And in the process, David was forsaking those who put their lives on the line to save him and his family and the nation
 - Joab says you have shown today that princes and servants mean nothing to David
 - He adds that if Absalom were alive and all of them were dead, then David would be happier, and that seemed to be true
- This is the moment that God held up the mirror so David could see who he had become as a father and king
 - He was an indulgent, absentee father...or at the very least, detached and unwilling to hold his sons accountable
 - He tried to avoid bringing the penalty of the law upon his sons to spare them from punishment or even death
 - And his weakness simply led to even more bloodshed and death
- Ironically, David's son Solomon gives the wisest advice concerning parenting found in all the Bible...advice that David needed

**Prov. 19:18 Discipline your son while there is hope,
And do not desire his death.**

**Prov. 19:19 A man of great anger will bear the penalty,
For if you rescue him, you will only have to do it again.**

**Prov. 19:20 Listen to counsel and accept discipline,
That you may be wise the rest of your days.**

- A failure to deal with a child's rebellion while they are young will only lead to great rebellion when they are older
- Kids do not "grow out" of rebellion...they only get better at it, and if you rescue them from their rebellion, you get to do it again
- And that's why David is where he is...the Lord is showing David why this came to pass and where the problem truly lies
 - This is the moment we all face from time to time in one way or another...moments when the Lord puts a mirror in our face
 - We see ourselves honestly through a set of circumstances that God brings about so we can make changes
 - It's the way He disciplines us, and it works the same way as when we discipline our children

- We can learn our lesson or repeat it later...much better to obey and move on than to stay stuck in a cycle of discipline
 - So the question becomes what will David do with the Lord's discipline
 - We remember something else that Solomon wrote

Prov. 3:11 My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD

Or loathe His reproof,

Prov. 3:12 For whom the LORD loves He reproveth,

Even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.

- So Joab ends with a bold demand telling the king that he needed to go out before the people who fought for him and make things right
 - We'll look at David's response next time

After our 2-week break, we return to David's lesson of humility following his defeat of his son, Absalom, in near Mahanaim

- ○ At the start of Chapter 19, we last saw David focused on the loss of his son in the battle, weeping over Absalom and calling his name
 - David's mourning for rebellious Absalom was so over-the-top, it threatened to alienate and dishonor those who fought for David
 - David's men had placed their lives and fortunes on the line to defend David's dynasty from Absalom
 - And so once the battle was over and David was victorious, they would have expected thanks and honor from David
- Instead, David responded as if he would have preferred to lose the battle in order to save his son's life
 - David's response was both selfish and short-sighted
 - Had Absalom's forces won the battle, surely Absalom wouldn't have shown David and his army mercy
 - So, in a fight to the death, there's no place for such displays, and it finally caught the attention of David's commander, Joab
- Joab enters David's presence and boldly tells the king like it is
 - We looked at Joab's speech to David at the end of our last teaching
 - So by way of transition today, let's revisit the hard words Joab shared with the king

2Sam. 19:5 Then Joab came into the house to the king and said, "Today you have covered with shame the faces of all your servants, who today have saved your life and the lives of your sons and daughters, the lives of your wives, and the lives of your concubines,

2Sam. 19:6 by loving those who hate you, and by hating those who love you. For you have shown today that princes and servants are nothing to you; for I know this day that if Absalom were alive and all of us were dead today, then you would be pleased.

2Sam. 19:7 "Now therefore arise, go out and speak kindly to your servants, for I swear by the LORD, if you do not go out, surely not a man will pass the night with you, and this will be worse for you than all the evil that has come upon you from your youth until now."

- Joab tells David that his behavior had covered the faces of his own people with shame
 - Joab points out that when Absalom rebelled, he set in motion a series of events that inevitably meant death for someone
 - Had David's forces lost, Absalom would have killed David and his entire family, along with most of David's army

- Likewise, it was only natural to expect that Absalom and his men would die in battle if they lost
 - In fact, Absalom even erected a monument to himself before the battle in case he should die without children
 - So Absalom's actions meant that someone in David's family was going to die... either Absalom or else the rest of David's family
 - So Joab asks which would David prefer
 - Would he prefer that he and the rest of his family, including Solomon, have died or that Absalom should die?
 - David's actions suggested he would have preferred to die
 - And this shamed David's people because it suggested that David valued Absalom, a traitor, more than he valued his loyal men
- Joab characterized David's action as loving those who hated him while hating those who loved him
 - He was favoring a rebellious son who wouldn't have hesitated to kill his father if he had the chance
 - And he was forsaking those who put their lives on the line to save him and his family and the nation
 - In v.6 Joab tells David he has shown that princes and servants mean nothing to him compared to Absalom
 - This is the moment that God held up the mirror so David could see who he had become as a father and king, and it wasn't a pretty picture
 - David was self-absorbed and indulgent as a father and now it was beginning to impact his judgment as king of the nation
 - It's a basic principle of biblical leadership: who we are at home in leading our family is who we will be in leading God's people
 - So this now brings us to v.8, where David responds to Joab's demands that David speak to his men and to return honor to their victory

2Sam. 19:8 So the king arose and sat in the gate. When they told all the people, saying, "Behold, the king is sitting in the gate," then all the people came before the king...

- David's response to Joab may seem muted, but in reality David has done exactly what Joab requested
 - Remember, David is presently a visitor in a foreign town called Mahanaim, so he does not have a palace or court to occupy
 - Normally, in the days following a great victory, a king would sit on his throne at the palace to make himself available to his men
 - He would receive one-by-one all those who had fought on his behalf in battle,

bestowing medals of valor

- These receptions were a key part of the celebration, so when David hid himself in his room mourning, he denied his men this opportunity
 - That's why Joab told David to get out there before his men and do his job, and here we see David complying
 - David has no palace in Mahanaim, so instead he goes to sit in the city gate, which was the place of ruling in ancient cities
 - In v.8 we're told all the people came before the king, which means the men of the army come to receive commendations
- Once more, this is a demonstration of David's special ability to show humility and repentance in the face of rebuke or discipline
 - Like us, David wasn't perfect, and he had his weaknesses and blind spots like we all do
 - But unlike many of us, David was quick to repent, quick to humble himself before the Lord and quick to change course
 - This is another example of David's tender heart
- So now having won the battle and with Absalom dead, David is free to return to the palace in Jerusalem
 - We pick up again at the end of v.8

2Sam. 19:8 ...Now Israel had fled, each to his tent.

2Sam. 19:9 All the people were quarreling throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "The king delivered us from the hand of our enemies and saved us from the hand of the Philistines, but now he has fled out of the land from Absalom.

2Sam. 19:10 "However, Absalom, whom we anointed over us, has died in battle. Now then, why are you silent about bringing the king back?"

- After David's victory, there was a brief time of confusion within Israel, because people worried about what came next
 - Remember, Absalom had received the backing of a large majority of the tribes
 - Absalom was physically handsome and been popular with the people for some time
 - So when he rose up against David, many followed after him
 - But after Absalom dies in battle, we're told in v.8 that Israel (meaning those who sided with Absalom) flee to their tents
 - Absalom's army abandons the fight, retreats and returns home, but now the worrying begins
 - When you rise up in rebellion against the king and your rebellion fails, there will usually be consequences...dire consequences
 - So in v.9 we're told that all the people of Israel begin quarreling with one another in

fear of what David will do next

- Will he exact revenge against those who opposed him?
- And if so, should the tribes continue to back him as king?
- Some argue that David abdicated the throne by fleeing outside the land when Absalom entered Jerusalem, so he can't be king
- While others argue in v.10 that since Absalom is dead, who else would Israel have as king at this point besides David?
- So this is a dangerous and pivotal moment for the nation...civil war has led to a crisis of leadership, and it's unclear if David's dynasty will survive
 - So now David's strong leadership instincts return, and he decides that his tribe of Judah must lead the way in healing the nation

2Sam. 19:11 Then King David sent to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, saying, "Speak to the elders of Judah, saying, 'Why are you the last to bring the king back to his house, since the word of all Israel has come to the king, even to his house?'"

2Sam. 19:12 'You are my brothers; you are my bone and my flesh. Why then should you be the last to bring back the king?'

2Sam. 19:13 "Say to Amasa, 'Are you not my bone and my flesh? May God do so to me, and more also, if you will not be commander of the army before me continually in place of Joab.'"

2Sam. 19:14 Thus he turned the hearts of all the men of Judah as one man, so that they sent word to the king, saying, "Return, you and all your servants."

2Sam. 19:15 The king then returned and came as far as the Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal in order to go to meet the king, to bring the king across the Jordan.

- Ironically, some of Absalom's strongest supporters came from David's own tribe of Judah, probably because Absalom was also a Judahite
 - So now David extends an olive branch to the tribe expecting they will embrace him again as their king
 - David sends his priests, Zadok and Abiathar, to the elders of the tribe challenging them to be the first to receive David back
 - David asked rhetorically why should Judah be last (and not first)
 - If the other tribes were to accept David before Judah did, it would reflect poorly on David's own blood
 - Moreover, David offers concessions to those who aligned with Absalom, including Amasa
 - Amasa was Absalom's commander and a relative of David's commander, Joab
 - David has never particularly liked Joab, and he gave Joab the job only because

- Joab won the contest to enter Jerusalem first
 - Now that Joab has killed Abaslom against David's express wishes, David has the excuse he needed to replace Joab
 - So David kills two birds with one stone by offering Amasa the top job in place of Joab, but we'll soon see this was a poor decision by David
 - Though Joab was not an honorable man, he was a good military leader, while Amasa was neither
 - This seems to be another example of David trying to hard to make friends and overlook shortcomings
 - David's diplomatic moves persuade Judah, and the men come together in one heart to receive David back as king
 - They were probably relieved to hear that David had no interest in pursuing revenge against them
 - And so as David begins his journey home, the tribe of Judah sends representatives to meet David as he crosses the Jordan
- At this point I want to remind you of the prophetic picture that we see developed in these events
 - Previously, we saw that David's departure from the city of Jerusalem created a picture of Jesus' departure from Jerusalem at His First Coming
 - Jesus was the rightful king over Israel, but Israel rejected Jesus, and so He departed going up the Mt of Olives as did David
 - And in particular one man, Shimei, showed great contempt for David's rule in the same way that crowds called for Jesus to die
 - And like Jesus would do in His day, David withheld judgment against those who opposed him because he knew God appointed the outcome
 - Shimei's opposition to David, like Israel's opposition to Jesus, was ordained by the Father for good purpose
 - In David's day, Shimei was used by God to discipline David for his errors in judgment, and David received it as such
 - In Jesus' case, the Father appointed that Jesus should be rejected by Israel and die on the cross for the sins of the world
 - So David's departure from Jerusalem may be broadly compared to Jesus' departure after His first coming, which leads to the next comparison
 - David's return to the city offers additional parallels to Jesus' second coming
 - The first of these parallels is already evident: the king's return is prompted by an invitation to return by the clan of Judah
- The rest of the parallels to Jesus' second coming are revealed by a comparison to Zechariah 12, where the prophet describes the Messiah's coming
 - Time does not permit a full and complete explanation of these events (see Revelation), but we can review them briefly

- First, Jesus' Second Coming takes place at the end of a seven-year period called Tribulation
- Tribulation is a time of great judgments, centered on the Jewish nation, which God uses to fulfill His promises to His people
- These judgments ultimately bring the nation of Israel to a point of desperation and repentance
- Zechariah describes the ending moments of Tribulation, beginning with the nation of Israel under attack from a worldwide force

Zech. 12:2 “Behold, I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that causes reeling to all the peoples around; and when the siege is against Jerusalem, it will also be against Judah.

Zech. 12:3 “It will come about in that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who lift it will be severely injured. And all the nations of the earth will be gathered against it.

- As the nation is facing certain destruction from an army led by the antichrist, they fear they have reached their end
- But in that moment, the Lord will use Israel's dire circumstances to prepare hearts to receive Jesus as King

Zech. 12:9 “And in that day I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

Zech. 12:10 “I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.

- God sends His Spirit upon all remaining Jews at the end of Tribulation, and the Spirit's arrival causes all Jews to turn to Jesus in faith
 - They remember Him Whom they pierced and mourn that history
 - This is the moment of repentance that brings the nation of Israel to faith and salvation in preparation for Jesus' return
- What should be cause for celebration to the nation is at first a cause for mourning
 - As they recognize their forefathers were responsible for rejecting the Messiah and killing Him, they begin to fear Jesus' revenge
 - And so their repentance is accompanied by fear and they hesitate to embrace Jesus even as they believe in Him
- This pattern is mirrored in the events of David's life as he prepares to return to

Jerusalem

- A great battle has brought the nation of Israel back to David as their king, but initially this induces the people to fear David and mourn
 - They see David as king, because they see there is no one else who can lay claim to the throne
 - At the same time, the nation worries that David will reject those who rejected him, and exact revenge
 - So they too hesitate to receive the king though they know they should
- So then David reaches out to his people with kindness and forgiveness, which leads the tribe of Judah to act first to embrace him as king
 - And the same will happen for Jesus in His return to Israel after Tribulation
 - Just as the Lord sent His Spirit to Jerusalem and Judah first, so too did David reach out to that tribe first
- But what of the other tribes...will they follow Judah's lead in receiving David?
 - Well we should ask what happens to Jesus...is He received by every division of Jewish society at His Second Coming?

Zech. 12:11 “In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo.

Zech. 12:12 “The land will mourn, every family by itself; the family of the house of David by itself and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself and their wives by themselves;

Zech. 12:13 the family of the house of Levi by itself and their wives by themselves; the family of the Shimeites by itself and their wives by themselves;

Zech. 12:14 all the families that remain, every family by itself and their wives by themselves.

- Zechariah says that as the Spirit is poured out in Jerusalem, the impact touches every class of Jewish society
- Specifically, four representative families are mentioned, and these four represent the whole of Jewish society
 - David, Nathan and Levi represent king, prophet and priest; the noble class of Israel
 - All embrace Jesus as Messiah, and collectively they represent all tribes of Israel
- But a fourth name, Shimei, is mentioned specifically and we remember that name from David's departure
 - Shimei represents Jesus' enemies, those who opposed Him and drove him out of Jerusalem at His first coming
 - Now these too embrace their Messiah, though they had the most to fear in His return
 - Because of God's grace poured out on the entire nation, all receive Jesus and He grants forgiveness to all

- And this detail is also mirrored in David's return, as reflected in the rest of the story

2Sam. 19:16 Then Shimei the son of Gera, the Benjamite who was from Bahurim, hurried and came down with the men of Judah to meet King David.

2Sam. 19:17 There were a thousand men of Benjamin with him, with Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they rushed to the Jordan before the king.

2Sam. 19:18 Then they kept crossing the ford to bring over the king's household, and to do what was good in his sight. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king as he was about to cross the Jordan.

2Sam. 19:19 So he said to the king, "Let not my lord consider me guilty, nor remember what your servant did wrong on the day when my lord the king came out from Jerusalem, so that the king would take it to heart.

2Sam. 19:20 "For your servant knows that I have sinned; therefore behold, I have come today, the first of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king."

- As David reaches the Jordan, he is met not only by the men of Judah but by Benjamites, of the tribe of Saul
 - Leading them was Shimei, the man who made a scene of cursing David as David left Jerusalem
 - Shimei yelled false accusations against David motivated by his anger that David had taken the throne from Saul
 - But David accepted the man's insults because he knew the Lord was working through the situation to discipline David for his sin
 - So rather than retaliate at the time, David told his men to ignore Shimei
- Now Shimei has rushed out to meet David after hearing that he would be coming back to Jerusalem
 - Like before Shimei is accompanied by the elders of Benjamin, but this time he has many more, a total of a thousand
 - He also brings his chief servant Ziba and family members too
 - And they cross the Jordan to await David's arrival
- As David and his men approach the crossing, Shimei and his men immediately offer assistance to David and his army to cross the Jordan
 - They begin carrying equipment and people over the water making it easier for David to cross
 - It must have been a bit surreal to watch Shimei and his men working so hard to carry David's household
 - These were the same men who had thrown rocks at David and cursed him earlier

- Obviously, they fear for their lives and they are trying to appease the king in the hope he will overlook Shimei's previous error
 - And when the time came for David to cross the river, Shimei bows before David on the east side of the river seeking pardon
 - He acknowledges his sin in having opposed David earlier and now he says he was first to embrace David at his return
- This is paralleled by Zechariah's description of how the nation of Israel responds to Jesus
 - One of those families that mourns for Jesus in Jerusalem are the Shimeites, who represent the common Jew
 - But it's also a reference to this story and to Shimei's resistance to David
- Just as Shimei opposed David, so the nation of Israel opposed Jesus
 - Just as Shimei persecuted David at his departure, so did Israel persecute their Messiah at His coming
 - And just as Shimei repented and embraced David at his return, so too does even the least significant Jew embrace Jesus
 - This is the meaning of Paul's statement in Romans 11 when he says

Rom. 11:26 and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written,
**“THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION,
 HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.”**

Rom. 11:27 **“THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM,
 WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.”**

- So we can summarize the comparison with a simple chart...
- Moving on and similar to the last time David met Shimei, there are those around David who object to the prospect of showing forgiveness

2Sam. 19:21 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah said, “Should not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD’S anointed?”

2Sam. 19:22 David then said, “What have I to do with you, O sons of Zeruiah, that you should this day be an adversary to me? Should any man be put to death in Israel today? For do I not know that I am king over Israel today?”

2Sam. 19:23 The king said to Shimei, “You shall not die.” Thus the king swore to him.

- Abishai is one of the brothers who followed David most of his career, along with his brother Joab, David's former commander
 - Abishai is right, but David wants to pardon Shimei because it will help unite the country again under his leadership

- Abishai asks David why he should forgive Shimei, since he cursed David and under the law deserves death
- He is frequently shown giving David bad advice, including here
- David tells Abishai he is an adversary because he is opposing this good purpose through his bad advice
 - David's instincts are good, and when the kingdom divides after Solomon dies, Benjamin will side with Judah
 - That's a reflection of the bonds forged here by David's willingness to show mercy to Shimei and the Benjamites
- So David's return is a picture of Jesus' return at His Second Coming, and it shows us that David's willingness to show mercy was God's desire
 - It gets him into trouble at times with his family
 - But it also endeared him to the people of Israel and helped forge bonds between tribes
- There was another associate of David who also needed to set things right with David upon his return

2Sam. 19:24 Then Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king; and he had neither cared for his feet, nor trimmed his mustache, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came home in peace.

2Sam. 19:25 It was when he came from Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said to him, "Why did you not go with me, Mephibosheth?"

2Sam. 19:26 So he answered, "O my lord, the king, my servant deceived me; for your servant said, 'I will saddle a donkey for myself that I may ride on it and go with the king,' because your servant is lame.

2Sam. 19:27 "Moreover, he has slandered your servant to my lord the king; but my lord the king is like the angel of God, therefore do what is good in your sight.

2Sam. 19:28 "For all my father's household was nothing but dead men before my lord the king; yet you set your servant among those who ate at your own table. What right do I have yet that I should complain anymore to the king?"

- You may remember in Chapter 16 that as David left town, he was met by his old servant Ziba, who David had sent to work for Mephibosheth
 - At that time, Ziba greeted David with a large amount of provisions, and yet he was not accompanied by Mephibosheth, which was odd
 - When David asked, Ziba reported that Mephibosheth had gone to Jerusalem to welcome Absalom as king
 - Remember, Mephibosheth was a descendant of Saul, so David took a chance by welcoming the man to eat at his table
 - So Ziba made it appear as if Mephibosheth was turning his back on David's kindness

- Then when Shimei came out to greet David at his return, there was Ziba again without Mephibosheth
 - It seems Ziba wants for himself the property that David awarded Mephibosheth and he's scheming to gain it
 - But now Mephibosheth has found his own way to David without the help of his servant, Ziba
- And when Mephibosheth arrives, he has let himself go...never cutting his nails or trimming his beard or even washing his clothes
 - He stayed this way the whole time David is gone as a sign of mourning for David in exile
 - And he shows himself to David in this way as proof that he had been on David's side the whole time in contrast to Ziba's lies
- Still, when David sees the man he immediately assumes that Ziba's story was true and challenges Mephibosheth to explain
 - In v.26 the lame man says Ziba tricked him the first time, riding out with a donkey without taking Mephibosheth with him
 - And then Ziba slandered Mephibosheth when he claimed that the man was supporting Absalom
 - In fact, Mephibosheth acknowledges that he would be nothing without David's kindness
- Now what would we expect David to do at this point? I think the fair response would be to hold Ziba fully accountable, but David doesn't do that

2Sam. 19:29 So the king said to him, “Why do you still speak of your affairs? I have decided, ‘You and Ziba shall divide the land.’”

2Sam. 19:30 Mephibosheth said to the king, “Let him even take it all, since my lord the king has come safely to his own house.”

- David dismisses the entire conversation as not his problem, and applies Solomonic logic by declaring he's dividing the estate
 - The solution may sound unfair to Mephibosheth, and it is, except that these two men are clearly unable to work together
 - So David probably decided that it was better to divide the land and the men than continue the fight
- For his part, Mephibosheth says he is willing to give it all up, and whether sincere or not it shows that winning over David matters more
 - To be a friend of the king is worth any earthly sacrifice
 - As long as Mephibosheth had David's approval and support, it didn't matter how much he possessed
 - He could always count on the king to support him and his family in whatever they

needed

- On the other hand, if David wasn't on his side, then Mephibosheth's wealth couldn't save him
 - That's a very Biblical principle worth remembering...what we possess can't take the place of a close relationship with the King
 - If one stands in the way of the other, make sure you get your priorities straight
- Finally, our David "lovefest" ends with a man from the Transjordan region pleading his support to David as well

2Sam. 19:31 Now Barzillai the Gileadite had come down from Rogelim; and he went on to the Jordan with the king to escort him over the Jordan.

2Sam. 19:32 Now Barzillai was very old, being eighty years old; and he had sustained the king while he stayed at Mahanaim, for he was a very great man.

2Sam. 19:33 The king said to Barzillai, "You cross over with me and I will sustain you in Jerusalem with me."

2Sam. 19:34 But Barzillai said to the king, "How long have I yet to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem?"

2Sam. 19:35 "I am now eighty years old. Can I distinguish between good and bad? Or can your servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Or can I hear anymore the voice of singing men and women? Why then should your servant be an added burden to my lord the king?"

2Sam. 19:36 "Your servant would merely cross over the Jordan with the king. Why should the king compensate me with this reward?"

2Sam. 19:37 "Please let your servant return, that I may die in my own city near the grave of my father and my mother. However, here is your servant Chimham, let him cross over with my lord the king, and do for him what is good in your sight."

2Sam. 19:38 The king answered, "Chimham shall cross over with me, and I will do for him what is good in your sight; and whatever you require of me, I will do for you."

2Sam. 19:39 All the people crossed over the Jordan and the king crossed too. The king then kissed Barzillai and blessed him, and he returned to his place.

- We first heard of Barzillai in Chapter 17, when David first arrived in Mahanaim
 - This man from Gilead joined others from the region in welcoming David into exile and pleading to support him as king
 - Now that David is returning to Jerusalem, this man accompanies David to the Jordan River and offers to cross with him
 - It's a symbolic act showing he will even leave his own people behind to support David
 - But David suggests he come to Jerusalem too, and Barzillai objects saying he's too

old to be useful in the court

- So he will return home, and in his place he appoints Chimham, who Josephus reports to be his son
 - So David receives a new counselor in his court from the Transjordan region
 - And David pledges his support to Barzillai for life
- Finally, as the king crosses and enters back into the land, the leaders of the other ten tribes of Israel catch up with David and the Judahites

2Sam. 19:40 Now the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him; and all the people of Judah and also half the people of Israel accompanied the king.

2Sam. 19:41 And behold, all the men of Israel came to the king and said to the king, “Why had our brothers the men of Judah stolen you away, and brought the king and his household and all David’s men with him over the Jordan?”

2Sam. 19:42 Then all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, “Because the king is a close relative to us. Why then are you angry about this matter? Have we eaten at all at the king’s expense, or has anything been taken for us?”

2Sam. 19:43 But the men of Israel answered the men of Judah and said, “We have ten parts in the king, therefore we also have more claim on David than you. Why then did you treat us with contempt? Was it not our advice first to bring back our king?” Yet the words of the men of Judah were harsher than the words of the men of Israel.

- As the other tribal leaders see David entering back into the land, they also see that the leaders of Judah were already with David
 - These leaders had gone out specifically to greet David and show their support, but now they find they’re late to the party
 - And this makes them look bad and it undermines their claim to be on David’s side
 - So they quickly engage in a “who loves David more” contest with the tribe of Judah
 - In v.41 they tell David that the Judahites had “stolen” David away from them preventing the other tribal leaders from the opportunity
 - They are trying to save face with David and convince David they are no less loyal or supportive than the Judahites
 - It’s like someone who forgot your birthday complaining they weren’t invited to the party
 - The Judahites respond that David is a member of the tribe, so naturally they made the first effort to receive him
 - Moreover, they say they never did anything to undermine the other tribes or take advantage of that relationship

- They were just doing their duty to greet their brother
 - Finally, the other tribes defend their right to greet David first since they were ten tribes compared to Judah and Benjamin
 - In fact, they claim it was their idea to bring David back first, a thoroughly unsubstantiated claim
 - And the writer ends the chapter saying the response the Judahites give in return was even harsher still
- So we imagine the war of words escalates, each side trying to out do the other to show how they have greater right to David as king
 - And that ending leaves us with an almost comical reversal to the way this story started
 - In the beginning, David was weeping as he left Jerusalem, not a single ally except Gentile mercenary soldiers
 - He literally had to pay for friends at the start of this episode
 - Much like Jesus at His crucifixion, virtually all of David's friends abandoned him
 - God allowed David to experience this downfall as a consequence for a series of missteps in his personal and family life
 - And David willingly accepted the rebuke of Israel and the discipline of the Lord
 - And because David was willing to accept it, the Lord worked in David's heart to teach him lessons that will mature the man
 - Moreover, David's repentance and humility also gave God opportunity to restore David, and restore David He did
 - As David returns to Israel, he finds himself in the exact opposite situation
 - The whole point of this chapter is to show David's complete support within the kingdom
 - Judah, Benjamin and every other tribe is now strongly behind him
 - His earlier detractors and even those who curse him have fallen into line and now beg forgiveness
 - Foreigners outside the land recognize David as king also
 - The tribes are even arguing hotly among themselves for who loves David more or has greater right to receive him as king
 - One more time, we see a connection to Jesus' Second Coming
 - When Jesus returns, He will be embraced by all Israel in the land
 - He will also be received by those who previously cursed His name and rejected His rule
 - And he will also be received by other nations outside Israel
- In fact, Jesus will rule over the entire world of nations from the seat of David, the Bible says

Zech. 14:9 And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one.

Mic. 4:1 And it will come about in the last days
That the mountain of the house of the LORD
Will be established as the chief of the mountains.
It will be raised above the hills,
And the peoples will stream to it.

Mic. 4:2 Many nations will come and say,
“Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD
And to the house of the God of Jacob,
That He may teach us about His ways
And that we may walk in His paths.”
For from Zion will go forth the law,
Even the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Mic. 4:3 And He will judge between many peoples
And render decisions for mighty, distant nations.
Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares
And their spears into pruning hooks;
Nation will not lift up sword against nation,
And never again will they train for war.

- The whole world embraces Jesus as Lord at His Second Coming, and that embrace is pictured by this universal reception of David
 - It also reminds us that if we are humble in the face of correction, we stand to gain far more than we may lose
 - The discipline itself may be painful, as David’s exile and the loss of his son hurt him greatly
- But the writer of Hebrews reassures us that if we receive it as God intends, we will find fruit

Heb. 12:11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

- The moment of discipline can seem not to be joyful, because our emotional response is a lie of sorts
- We feel sad so we conclude things are bad, but the writer says that it only seems not to be joyful
- If you could see the benefits you’re reaping as you endure difficult moments with grace

and humility, you would feel differently

- You might still be sad about your circumstances, but you would be at peace with them
- Moreover, you would have a sense of hope and anticipation for the fruit that will come later



VERSE BY VERSE MINISTRY
INTERNATIONAL

TEACHING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

2 Samuel - Lesson 20

Chapter 20:1-26

P.O. Box 702107
San Antonio, Texas, 78270
210.319.5055

©2023. Verse By Verse Ministry International.
All rights reserved

versebyverseministry.org/lessons/2-samuel-lesson-20

2 Samuel series originally taught by Stephen Armstrong. Chapter 20 onwards taught by Wesley Livingston

- As we continue in this study of 2 Samuel, I want to put out a disclaimer that tonight’s teaching will not provide an entire recap of 2 Samuel Chapter 1 to where Pastor Steve left off in Chapter 19.
 - We would not have adequate time to provide the immense amount of history through David’s rise to his decline.
 - So, we encourage you to start your study of 2 Samuel with Pastor Steve’s teaching beginning in 2 Samuel 1, that way you will be all caught up to where we will begin tonight.
 - I believe the most logical pick-up approach to Chapter 20 of 2 Samuel, would be to review the last 3 verses of Chapter 19.
 - Verses 41-43 are going to provide us with the buildup moment of this narrative as David and his army are preparing to cross over the Jordan river back into Jerusalem after the defeat of his son, Absalom.
 - If we were to have an outline of our flow through the text tonight, we are going to see quite a few things as we complete the entire chapter.
 - As mentioned earlier, we will begin with:
 - 1. Background and recap (2 Samuel 19:41-43)
 - 2. Unfortunate move at a vulnerable time (v.1-2)
 - 3. Failed Rallying of the Troops (v.3-7)
 - 4. Overturned with a Kiss (v.8-12)
 - 5. Pursuit of Sheba (v.13-22)
 - 6. David’s Cabinet Members (v.23-26)
 - If I were to place a tag on our text tonight it would be: Sheba’s Rebellion
 - With that being said, I invite you to open a copy of the scriptures and meet me in verses 41-43 of 2 Samuel 19 for a quick recap.

2 Samuel 19:41 And behold, all the men of Israel came to the king and said to the king, “Why have our brothers, the men of Judah, abducted you and brought the king and his household and all David’s men with him, over the Jordan?”

2 Samuel 19:42 Then all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, “Because the king is a close relative to us. Why then are you angry about this matter? Have we eaten at all at the king’s expense, or has anything been taken for us?”

2 Samuel 19:43 But the men of Israel answered the men of Judah and said, “We have ten parts in the king, therefore we also *have more claim* on David than you. Why then did you treat us with contempt? Was it not our advice first to bring back our king?” Yet the words of the men of Judah were harsher than the words of the men of Israel

- So, it’s at the end of Chapter 19 that we find David entering back into the land of

Jerusalem, initially accompanied by the men of Judah.

- However, this “victory parade” back into the land, in the eyes of the northern tribes, was a bit of a problem.
 - In the sense that Israel felt their invitation somehow got lost in the mail.
- Israel wanted to show their support of David as king too, however, it seemed as if this party had already started.
 - In other words, this victory parade looked as if Israel had no claim to the king or better yet no dog in the fight.
 - So as you could imagine some animosity brews within the bunch causing Israel to ask the question in verse 41, “Why have our brothers, the men of Judah, abducted you, the king, and brought you to your household over the Jordan?”
- It’s at this point that Judah responds by pulling the family card, “Because we are close relatives to the king”.
 - Well, it doesn’t take a rocket scientist to see that Israel didn’t take kindly to that assertion.
 - This then triggered a “war of words” between Israel and Judah.
- Israel responds by saying “We have 10 parts in the king which is more claim than you”.
 - In other words, we have more in number than you – our ten to your one tribe.
 - This conversation gets so heated that verse 43b says, “Yet the words of the men of Judah were harsher than the words of the men of Israel”
- Being that the writer of 2 Samuel did not include the dialogue between the two groups but describes the conversation as a “harsh exchange” means that these weren’t a bunch of pleasantries being exchanged.
 - Ultimately, what we see from these 3 verses becomes a foreshadow of what will result in 1 Kings 12 which leads to the eventual separation of Israel and Judah into two kingdoms.
 - So, this growing disunity and animosity between Israel and Judah under David, although David tries his best to unify a divided people, doesn’t seem to be happening in a timely manner.
- Friends, this ultimately points us to the reality that true peace and unity amidst division and power-hungry men will never be resolved until Jesus’ return in His Second Coming.
 - As James 1:20 says, “the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.”
- Furthermore, considering what has just taken place between Israel and Judah, we will now see an individual, amid this back-and-forth contention, use this as an opportunity to exacerbate the tension.
 - Check out verses 1-2 of 2 Samuel 20.

2 Samuel 20:1 Now a worthless fellow happened to be there whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite; and he blew the trumpet and said,

**“We have no portion in David,
Nor do we have inheritance in the son of Jesse;
Every man to his tents, O Israel!”**

2 Samuel 20:2 So all the men of Israel withdrew from following David and followed Sheba the son of Bichri; but the men of Judah remained steadfast to their king, from the Jordan even to Jerusalem.

- The instigator between Israel and Judah is a man by the name Sheba, the son of Bichri.
 - Note how the text begins with a description of who this man is rather than beginning with his name.
 - He is described as “a worthless fellow”.
 - The word “worthless” in Hebrew is “*ish beliyya’al (ble-ya-all)*” which means good for nothing, wicked, or lawless.
 - This same word is used of Eli’s sons, Hophni and Phineas, in 1 Samuel 2:12-13 regarding their behavior and ways.
 - Sheba was a Benjamite, meaning he was from the same tribe as King Saul, however the text doesn’t mention explicitly that Sheba necessarily favored a Benjamite king.
 - In any case, Sheba takes the liberty in maximizing the disunity at this point by blowing a trumpet, which was a shofar.
 - This action was significant because it served as either a declaration of war or an introduction to royalty.
 - And in this case, according to verse 1a, this was a revolt against the rightful king of Israel, in which Sheba convinces “all the men of Israel” to pull away.
 - As you could imagine, this had to feel like another devastating blow for David. It is as if David can’t get a break!
 - If it wasn’t Saul pursuing David to kill him, it was David’s son, Absalom, trying to usurp the throne.
 - So, all the men of Israel parted ways from David in his procession home to Jerusalem and returned to their respective destinations.
 - So, despite the withdrawal of Israel, the tribe of Judah remained loyal to the King.
 - And what a picture this is of the Christian life, that our allegiance and submission to Christ should weather ever trial.
 - So, David and Judah will make their way back to Jerusalem to establish David as the rightful King of the land.
 - Check out verses 3-7.

2 Samuel 20:3 Then David came to his house at Jerusalem, and the king took the ten women, the concubines whom he had left to keep the house, and placed them under guard and provided them with sustenance, but did not go in to them. So they were shut up until the day of their death, living as widows.

2 Samuel 20:4 Then the king said to Amasa, “Call out the men of Judah for me within three days, and be present here yourself.”

2 Samuel 20:5 So Amasa went to call out *the men of Judah*, but he delayed longer than the set time which he had appointed him.

2 Samuel 20:6 And David said to Abishai, “Now Sheba the son of Bichri will do us more harm than Absalom; take your lord’s servants and pursue him, so that he does not find for himself fortified cities and escape from our sight.”

2 Samuel 20:7 So Joab’s men went out after him, along with the Cherethites and the Pelethites and all the mighty men; and they went out from Jerusalem to pursue Sheba the son of Bichri.

- David returns to Jerusalem after having been across the Jordan for some time to escape the treacherous acts of Absalom.
 - However, because of Sheba’s rebellion having followed Absalom’s attempt to take the throne, David sees that he needs to put an end to this immediately.
 - But before he can re-establish himself in the land, he must first get his household in order.
 - Verse 3 mentions that upon arrival to his home, David immediately took his 10 concubines whom he had left in Jerusalem and placed them into their living quarters until they died.
 - Now, this section of the text, to some, may seem a bit out of place, especially if you are just jumping into this section of the text with no prior background.
 - If you recall, it was the counsel of Ahithophel to Absalom in 2 Samuel 16:21-22 to have sexual relations with his father’s concubines.
 - In this case, this sexual act was not consensual which means that these women were raped by David’s son.
 - Not only was this a treacherous act of Absalom, but it also delegitimized David’s rule as King.
 - For an act of this magnitude, it symbolized a transfer of royal power.
 - So, this was a political move by an illegitimate successor.
 - So, with this act having been committed against David’s concubines, he could no longer take back these women for himself.
 - However, out of an act of kindness and grace, being that these women could no longer marry, David brings them into a lifetime of widowhood, and provides food and shelter for them.
 - Otherwise, these women would have been left with nothing and isolated in society unable to marry.
 - So, upon David’s finalizing arrangements for his ten concubines, he wastes no time to address the issue at hand – a potentially divided kingdom.
 - And he does so by assembling his troops for battle to find Sheba and bring him to justice.
 - So, he calls forth his new commander, Amasa, to reorganize the army of Judah in preparation to quickly secure the Kingdom’s unity.

- Now as a quick refresher, if you recall, Amasa replaced Joab as commander in 2 Samuel 19 because of Joab's disobedience to the King's command to not kill his son.
 - So, this change in leadership may have been a retaliation on David's part because of Joab's hard-headedness.
 - And to add fuel to the fire, Amasa was Absalom's commander.
 - So, to have made this decision to prove a point to Joab, it becomes clear that David's decision was unwise, or was it?
 - I say this because as we will see in a few verses, there will seem to be an opportunity for Joab to get what he wants, while David's potential suspicion of Amasa will be brought to light.
 - So, David calls for Amasa to assemble the men of Judah within three days in Gibeon to take down Sheba.
 - However there seems to be a delay that was longer than anticipated because the text tells us that Amasa delayed "longer than the appointed time."
 - And in response to this incompetent act, David calls up Abishai to take David's personal elite troops to pursue Sheba in an effort to bring this division to an end.
 - What's important to recognize here is the urgency to get to Sheba. It's less about Sheba's act, and more about the potential growth of division amongst Israel and Judah.
 - So, time is of the essence and David recognizes this and assembles his A-team.
 - And what do you know, accompanying Abishai on this military mission is none other than his brother, Joab, the previous loyal leader of David.
 - Hopefully, you see the building tension between Joab and any individual that stands in the way of his position of authority as David's military commander.
 - Verse 7 mentions that it was "Joab's men" who went out to pursue Sheba.
 - Notice, the subtle transfer of who is supposedly commanding at this point.
 - That where David sends Abishai in charge, it now seems as if Joab takes his rightful place as the prospective leader in this endeavor.
 - This is classic Joab! He is the opportunist who looks for ways to prove himself even if not called upon.
 - And we will see his loyalty to David rise, momentarily.
 - And perhaps David anticipates Joab to be himself in an effort to protect the Kingdom.
 - It's in verses 8-9 that Abishai, Joab and his men arrive in Gibeon to meet Amasa and rally together all the men for battle.
 - Well, it's at this meeting place that Joab and Amasa meet.
 - And upon meeting, the text describes Joab's military attire being armed with a sword fastened at his waist.
 - At this point, there seems to be no sense of caution for Amasa towards Joab for two reasons:

- They are relatives through marriage and on top of that they are both seeking to take on the same enemy in a military act.
- However, something seems to be brewing in the heart of Joab, because right as he comes up to his brother-in-law, he greets him with a traditional kiss of greeting as he pulls him in with his right hand.
 - All the while, as their exchange of greeting commences, Joab picks up his dropped sword and pulls the wool over Amasa's eyes.
 - And Joab strikes with the masking of a kiss.
- Now, much suspicion has been brought up regarding Joab's killing of his brother-in-law.
 - In one sense, this is a retaliatory action from Joab because of his loss of rank against an Absalom sider.
 - And on the other hand, this could very well have been Joab's loyal response to a disloyal Amasa.
- As we discussed earlier, Amasa wasted no time to side with David's son, and going against God's king was going against God Himself.
 - This is why David made mention earlier in verse 6 regarding how Sheba's rebellion would do more harm than Absalom.
- And perhaps this is the case because although both rebellions were horrible, Absalom was David's son. (Preservation of the Davidic lineage)
 - Therefore, Joab's killing of Amasa becomes a response of Joab's fast-acting nature while, at the same time, eliminating enemies from inside the camp.
- Furthermore, the failure of Amasa gathering the troops for battle and not reporting this to the king in an immediate nature showed a "lack of loyalty" to David.
 - Perhaps, Amasa's failure to accomplish the command of David speaks to a potential rouge commander.
 - Therefore, in Joab's mind this could have been seen as a necessary task.
 - And at best, Joab's response was a jealous outbreak that kindled against Amasa.
- And I think this speaks to a very important point of how our sin nature, if not controlled or submitted to Christ, can get the best of us.
 - In many ways, our lack of self-control can lead one to make decisions that, at the moment, may seem beneficial to their end-goal.
 - However, when we take matters in our own hands, it becomes the result of unwise decisions that will ultimately have to be dealt with in the end.
 - And this will be a pattern that will further be emphasized by Joab in Chapter 20.
- Well, it's after this gruesome murder of Amasa, that one of Joab's young leaders makes a statement of resolve.
 - He says, "Whoever favors Joab and whoever is for David, let him follow Joab."
- This statement is power packed with extreme subtle messaging and brings about the point we identified earlier.

- Joab's young man begins with those in whom favor Joab, which suggests that there may have been some animosity amongst the army of Judah regarding Amasa being in charge.
 - That perhaps there was loyalty to Joab amongst the ranks, however, the latter half of his statement becomes even more insightful.
 - He continues by saying, "...and whoever is for David, let him follow Joab."
 - In other words, Joab is David's right hand man, so you either get with the picture or end up like Amasa.
 - Perhaps this statement of resolve was to either weed out those who had secretly sided with Amasa to delay David's mission.
 - Either way, the message was clear: Get on the right page and let's move forward in the mission.
 - Therefore, the warning of sorts came across to all who were, or claimed to be, for David and a possibility for those who may have been against him to turn to the right side.
 - But most importantly, this demonstrated to the masses who is now fully in charge of the army.
 - So, although Abishai was leader of this mission by the decree of David, Joab has once again found a way to get what he wants control of; his military.
 - And if we were to be honest, we come across many Joabs in life.
 - These individuals seem well intended and loyal to a degree, but the moment that something or someone gets in the way, a challenge has now presented itself and they seek to get rid of the "extra weight".
 - However, it's clear that this means of behavior is not praised by God nor is it a demonstration of the character of believers.
 - That when it boils down, it is God who will exalt individuals to where they need to be and it is God who will remove individuals from their places of position.
 - God alone is Sovereign and when we get involved in trying to move the pieces of the chess board, we end up causing more damage than good.
 - Ultimately, these moves being made are simply God's sovereignty at work bringing about His purposes through the broken means of individuals.
 - Well, it's in verse 12 that the message, by way of killing of Amasa, was received and established fear in the men, but it also became a distraction towards the mission at hand.
 - Imagine, if you were there seeing the dying body of Amasa wallowing on the ground, it would be quite a disturbing sight.
 - And furthermore, without a proper burial, this was a huge problem for these men. (It was dishonoring especially according to the Law)
 - So, in an effort to remove the distraction, the young man removed the body from the road and into the nearby field and covered Amasa as an "attempt" of respect.
 - We now arrive to the pursuit of Sheba. Check out verses 13-22.

2 Samuel 20:13 As soon as he was removed from the highway, all the men passed on after Joab to pursue Sheba the son of Bichri.

2 Samuel 20:14 Now he went through all the tribes of Israel to Abel, even Beth-maacah, and all the Berites; and they were gathered together and also went after him.

2 Samuel 20:15 They came and besieged him in Abel Beth-maacah, and they cast up a siege ramp against the city, and it stood by the rampart; and all the people who were with Joab were wreaking destruction in order to topple the wall.

2 Samuel 20:16 Then a wise woman called from the city, “Hear, hear! Please tell Joab, ‘Come here that I may speak with you.’”

2 Samuel 20:17 So he approached her, and the woman said, “Are you Joab?” And he answered, “I am.” Then she said to him, “Listen to the words of your maidservant.” And he answered, “I am listening.”

2 Samuel 20:18 Then she spoke, saying, “Formerly they used to say, ‘They will surely ask *advice* at Abel,’ and thus they ended *the dispute*.

2 Samuel 20:19 I am of those who are peaceable *and* faithful in Israel. You are seeking to destroy a city, even a mother in Israel. Why would you swallow up the inheritance of the Lord?”

2 Samuel 20:20 Joab replied, “Far be it, far be it from me that I should swallow up or destroy!

2 Samuel 20:21 Such is not the case. But a man from the hill country of Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, has lifted up his hand against King David. Only hand him over, and I will depart from the city.” And the woman said to Joab, “Behold, his head will be thrown to you over the wall.”

2 Samuel 20:22 Then the woman wisely came to all the people. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri and threw it to Joab. So he blew the trumpet, and they were dispersed from the city, each to his tent. Joab also returned to the king at Jerusalem.

- So as soon as the body is removed from the road, the men can go about their way in pursuit of Sheba, to the north.
 - And in doing so the army makes about a 90 mile trip north of Gilgal and approximately four miles west of the region of Dan to a town called Abel also known as Beth-maacah.
 - So, as you can see in this map, this journey went through much of the land of Israel, and all this to pursue one man.
 - So as Sheba and his group are going from town to town to recruit and enlist aid and shelter.
 - However, there seems to be failure in that assistance because they continue to move north.
 - It happens that Joab’s army has found wind of the fact that Sheba has found refuge within the city walls of Abel.
 - So, they surround Abel and set up a siege ramp against the city.

- A siege ramp can best be defined as mounting up earth and material in an effort to scale the exterior walls of a city to breach the gates.
 - On top of that, these siege warfare tactics consisted of preventing the supply of food, water, and ability to communicate to outside cities for assistance.
 - And with all of this in mind, this became a huge issue!
- Because as with any type of war that is to take place, there is always rules of engagement.
 - Just as we have today the International Humanitarian Law, we also find in scripture the rules of engagement in war as well.
 - And it is in Deuteronomy 20:10 that we find that before besieging a town, there must first be offerings in terms of peace.
 - Check out Deuteronomy 20:10-11. Keep verse 11 in mind, because it will bring clarity to verse 24.

Deut. 20:10 “When you approach a city to fight against it, you shall offer it terms of peace.

Deut. 20:11 If it agrees to make peace with you and opens to you, then all the people who are found in it shall become your forced labor and shall serve you.

- So, with the Mosaic Law having established this reality, we find once again that Joab’s plan of attack is not wrapped in wisdom but rather vengeful instinct.
 - Notice verse 15b, the text mentions that “all the people who were with Joab were wreaking destruction in order to topple the wall.”
 - The Hebrew word for “wreaking destruction” is *šāḥat* (*she-het*), which means to ruin, destroy, or to annihilate.
 - This means that Joab’s sole mission was going to kill all in his path for the sake of destroying one man, and Joab’s first instinct is far from peace.
 - However, there was a wise woman in the city who called from the city gate to broker peace.
 - I love how the text doesn’t provide her name but rather her character, she was a wise woman.
 - And apparently, she knows the rules of engagement because she calls from the wall for the man who is in charge; she calls out for Joab.
 - It was typical in that day to have either an elderly woman of wisdom or an elderly man in the town to be used as delegates to proctor peace for the city.
 - So, this woman calls out to Joab to which Joab responds in a receptive manner.
 - She uses proper reasoning with Joab by presenting the reality of war and the requirement to broker peace according to the Law of Moses.
 - In few words, she says, in verse 18, “Abel is a place where they practice the art of reconciling before being led to violence.”
 - What a peaceful approach to the start of the conversation.

- Here continued dialogue in verse 19 reminds me of the elderly mothers where my family grew up in Louisiana.
- That when it came down to discipline or corrective measures, all the kids who lived on that street knew that if Mother “So and So” said it’s time to go home, then it’s time to go home.
- So, there is clearly an establishment of respectful grounds.
- From there she makes a general statement representing her and those of her city who are peaceable and faithful in Israel.
 - This statement is huge, because although the 10 tribes of Israel had turned their backs on David as King, this woman made very clear that those are not her sentiments.
 - Both she and the inhabitants of Abel are not their enemies nor enemies of the King.
- To put it plainly, Yahweh has chosen David as King, therefore Yahweh is our God and David is our King!
 - What a beautiful expression of how there is safety and security found in the Lord. And it is through wisdom that there is safety.

Ecc. 7:12 For wisdom is protection just as money is protection, But the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the lives of its possessors.

- From this point, she provides Joab with the issue at hand, and that is Joab is seeking to destroy the city, to which she continues by saying, “even [destroying] a mother city”.
 - During that time, cities were surrounded by network towns or villages which were called “daughters”.
 - It’s like saying that the city of San Antonio, TX is a “mother city” to Leon Springs or Castle Hills.
 - These smaller “cities” usually utilize infrastructure support from these “mother cities”. And the same relationship existed during those days.
 - So once this truth has been spoken to Joab, he begins to pull the denial card, “I would never desire to destroy the land, who me, never, not I.”
 - And in this case, the reality versus his perception were two completely different things.
 - And it’s from this point that Joab agrees to broker a deal with the wise woman by clarifying that he is looking only for a man named Sheba who has not only gone against the King, but ultimately against God.
 - So, Joab says, “If you deliver Sheba to me, I will depart from the city.”
 - And the immediate response from the woman is to make the arrangement happen.
 - However, not with handing Sheba over alive but rather handing over his head.
 - The wise woman proceeds by going back into the city, locating Sheba and severs

his head for proof of identity.

- Now, unfortunately there were no cameras that could record the capture of an individual to properly identify who the person of interest was.
- However, one thing that would not be forgotten was the face of the individual who has committed unjust crimes, especially against a sovereign.
- And as agreed, once the head had been given, Joab did as he promised and retreated from the city. And how he did it had a flare of poetic justice.
 - If you recall at the beginning of this chapter, Sheba began this revolt with the blowing of the shofar in verse one of Chapter 20 along with telling the men to go to their tents.
 - And now Joab concludes the revolt with Sheba's head in hand, blowing the shofar to end the battle and for each man to return to his tent.
 - If there ever was a petty moment documented in the bible, it is here in 2 Samuel 20:22.
- Well, we now get to our last three verses of the night, verses 23-26.

2 Samuel 20:23 Now Joab was over the whole army of Israel, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites;

2 Samuel 20:24 and Adoram was over the forced labor, and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was the recorder;

2 Samuel 20:25 and Sheva was scribe, and Zadok and Abiathar were priests;

2 Samuel 20:26 and Ira the Jairite was also a priest to David.

- The revolt is now over, Sheba has been taken down, and David's authority as King has been established once again.
 - And we know this is the case because verses 23-26 make mention of David's list of administrators.
 - It's like establishing a list of individuals on your A-team who have proven trustworthy and are now deemed as cabinet members for your organization.
 - They have put in the blood, sweat, and tears, but most importantly it displays the servants of David as men of loyalty.
 - And with any Kingdom, it required other governing members who report to the King regarding their areas of expertise.
 - This official list was originally established in the beginning of David's reign as King in 2 Samuel 8:15-18.
 - And now we find that this list has been recorded again (affirming David's rule), now only with a few adjustments.
 - Here is a list (the slide) to see the changes in David's official list.
 - Notice, Joab is now over Israel's entire army.
 - However, I want us to notice an addition to this list.
 - Adoram was named over the forced labor.
 - This is important to note as I mentioned earlier in our time together regarding

siege battles.

- It is possible that some individuals who had rebelled were captured as forced labor now for the kingdom.
- So, what we find in the end is that although David's position as King has been solidified once again, it has fallen under a "shadow of opposition by some".
 - The position of the kingdom and where it stands under David's leadership at this point has proven to be a bit weak and all this due to David's choices over the course of his Kingship.
- However, the beautiful news in all of this is that despite the mistakes and missteps that David has taken, God remains faithful to His promises regarding the reigning rule of David's descendants.
 - That after David would be Solomon and even in Solomon's reign would be a series of even greater failures and misleadings.
 - But all of this shows that there is a greater King who is yet to come.
- No matter one's pursuits of establishing good leaders into positions of leadership, human sin always finds its way in the door.
 - No matter how many governmental programs established, or efforts of peace are explored, there will never be peace apart from the Prince of peace.
- That through this eternal descendant of David, Jesus Christ, there will be perfect rule and reign.
 - And with the Lord will be co-heirs who reign with Him in resurrected bodies and who will serve to the pleasure of the King.
 - That those who are in Christ, once we have passed out of this life, will no longer be in the presence of sin nor controlled by the power of it.
- So, at this current point, although the kingdom has been met with much opposition, poor decision making, unwise choices and the like, yet it remains.
 - But that present reality points us to an even greater hope, that in the Coming Kingdom, that governmental rule will look nothing like what we have seen, or currently see in this world.
 - But Jesus, in His Second Coming, will rule with perfect power, peace, and justice as King of Kings.
- Next week, we will see how David responds to the Judgement of God due to the sins of Saul in 2 Samuel 21.
 - Let's Pray.



VERSE BY VERSE MINISTRY
INTERNATIONAL

TEACHING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

2 Samuel - Lesson 21

Chapter 21:1-14

P.O. Box 702107
San Antonio, Texas, 78270
210.319.5055

©2023. Verse By Verse Ministry International.
All rights reserved

versebyverseministry.org/lessons/2-samuel-lesson-21

- Last week, we witnessed the immense opposition of the Northern tribes as a result of Sheba's rebellion.
 - David and Judah were preparing to enter back into Jerusalem to re-establish David's position as King over Israel.
 - However, feelings got in the way and folks got heated as emotions stirred regarding relations to accompanying David.
 - Sheba saw a way to sow division amongst the disunity which caused Israel to head to the North while Judah went with David.
 - And if you remember, time was of the essence because David had been through something like this not too long before with his son, Absalom.
 - As a matter of fact, David knew that if this situation was not settled, it would be worse than Absalom's coup.
 - So, to respond, David sends Amasa to take the charge, although potentially a bit weary of Amasa's intent, and to gather the men of Judah.
 - We then witnessed that through the jealousy of Joab, he took out Amasa and regained control of the army.
 - Upon arrival to Abel, Joab is confronted with a great woman of wisdom who sought to broker peace instead of bloodshed.
 - This ultimately led to the severed head of Sheba in one hand and the shofar blown in victory, in the other hand.
 - So, it is on the hills of this great victory for David that we transition into our text tonight, 2 Samuel 21.
 - We will find that the Kingdom of Israel is befallen by a famine, and something will have to be done to make things right.
 - If I were to outline our time in the text tonight, we are going to see the following things:
 - 1. Famine in the land (v.1-6)
 - 2. Restitution made (v.7-9)
 - 3. Rizpah's grief and mourning (v.10-14)
 - If I were to put a tag on our text tonight it would simply be: Biblical Justice: A Response to Saul's Actions.
 - With that being said, I invite you to open a copy of the scriptures and meet me as we begin our time in 2 Samuel 21:1-6.

2 Samuel 21:1 Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year; and David sought the presence of the Lord. And the Lord said, "It is for Saul and his bloody house, because he put the Gibeonites to death."

2 Samuel 21:2 So the king called the Gibeonites and spoke to them (now the Gibeonites were not of the sons of Israel but of the remnant of the Amorites, and the sons of Israel made a covenant with them, but Saul had sought to kill them in his zeal for the sons of Israel and Judah).

2 Samuel 21:3 Thus David said to the Gibeonites, "What should I do for you? And how can I make atonement that you may bless the inheritance of the Lord?"

2 Samuel 21:4 Then the Gibeonites said to him, “We have no concern of silver or gold with Saul or his house, nor is it for us to put any man to death in Israel.” And he said, “I will do for you whatever you say.”

2 Samuel 21:5 So they said to the king, “The man who consumed us and who planned to exterminate us from remaining within any border of Israel,

2 Samuel 21:6 let seven men from his sons be given to us, and we will hang them before the Lord in Gibeah of Saul, the chosen of the Lord.” And the king said, “I will give them.”

- Chapter 21 begins with the word “Now” which means there is a transition in events or times from the previous chapter.
 - In this case, the text mentions that there was a famine in the land “in the days of David”.
 - And this famine occurred for three consecutive years – notice the wording “year after year”.
 - On the onset, this detail may not seem like much, however this ongoing famine in the land was something that gained David’s attention.
 - It moves David to inquire of the Lord as to what was going on.
 - The question becomes, “Why does this famine gain the attention of David to the point that he inquires of the Lord?”
 - Secondly, “If this drought was such an issue, why did David wait so late to inquire of the Lord?”
 - To best understand the first question, we need to recognize the significance of famine in the land of Israel.
 - The fact that there were three years of crop failure meant that the land was not yielding its supply and as a result the economy was beginning to fail and people not eating.
 - Therefore, this would have triggered a sign of sorts that God was displeased with His people.
 - So, David concludes in his observation of unusual weather patterns and lack of rain fall, that Israel has somehow fallen under God’s divine discipline. (Leviticus 26:20; Deuteronomy 28:18 – Torah curse)
 - And from that, David is moved to seek the face of the Lord.
 - Perhaps this was accomplished through prayer and assistance from the priest, Ira, wearing the revelatory ephod.
 - So, it is in seeking the face of the Lord, regarding this famine in the Land, that the Lord reveals to David the reason behind the famine.
 - And quickly, as a side note, here is a beautiful example of the Lord at work answering prayer when we diligently seek Him in wisdom.
 - So, the Lord speaks and tells David that the famine upon the land has been caused by Saul and his “bloody house” having put the Gibeonites to death.
 - This word “bloody” is interesting. It is the Hebrew word *dam (dom)* which speaks to the shedding of blood or bloodguilt.

- Secondly, it identifies that those within Saul’s household were involved in this shedding of blood against the Gibeonites.
 - Now regarding who in the household were involved, we will find out soon enough.
- But a greater question arises which is, “What would have caused such a dire famine during David’s reign for something that Saul committed?”
 - Keep in mind that 2 Samuel was not necessarily written in chronological order, but simply is unfolding the events and life of David.
 - Furthermore, we can assume that within this time frame, this event, more than likely, could have occurred in the beginning of David’s reign.
 - Most scholars estimate that this event must have occurred earlier in David’s reign, whereas others suggest this was later in David’s reign.
- It’s in verse 2 that David wastes no time to attempt to make right what had been done wrong to alleviate the drought in the land of Israel. (Biblical Justice)
 - What a beautiful characteristic of true leadership from David.
 - That a true leader is willing to make amends for wrongs done even if it cost them something.
- So, verse 2 provides us some background as to what brought forth the drought in the land.
 - And we discover within the writer’s commentary that a covenant was broken between Israel and the Gibeonites.
 - Now, the current text doesn’t provide us any further information as to when this covenant was established.
 - However, if we were to go back in Israel’s history, we do find a record of how this covenant got established. Turn with me to Joshua 9:15-18.
- While you are turning there, I want to provide you with some background information to Joshua 9:15-18.
 - During Joshua’s leadership, they came across the Gibeonites who disguised themselves as foreigners from afar.
 - They attempted to seem as down-trodden men in need of protection.
 - Most importantly, the Gibeonites used the fame and name of the Lord and His hand upon Israel to win Israel’s favor of them.
- Now as a means of application, this is no different from someone such as a false teacher or unbeliever using the banner of Christianity to push a particular agenda.
 - They will try to look the part and seem that their intentions are one thing, yet in the end, they intend to take advantage of a group.
 - This is what this group of Gibeonites did and to add insult to injury, Joshua fell for the okie doke.
 - And here is where Joshua and the men of Israel went wrong. Check out Joshua 9:14-15.

Joshua 9:14 So the men of Israel took some of their provisions, and did not ask

for the counsel of the Lord.

Joshua 9:15 Joshua made peace with them and made a covenant with them, to let them live; and the leaders of the congregation swore an oath to them.

- Israel failed to seek the counsel of the Lord regarding the wisdom and approval necessary before entering a covenant with these men.
 - As a quick note, this should be a biblical principal in which every believer should put into practice: “Seek the counsel of the Lord!”
 - Proverbs 16:9 says this about our plans in light of God’s providence:

Proverbs 16:9 The mind of man plans his way, But the Lord directs his steps.

- Now regarding the term covenant, when I have taught before about covenants, I mentioned to consider them as legally binding contracts.
 - It is something that you are obligated to or bounded by and if you break the contract, there are dire consequences.
 - And being that they made this contract and swore an oath before the Lord, they were bound to this promise.
 - Well, it wasn’t much later that Joshua and Israel realized what they had done.
 - They had been tricked and realized the Gibeonites were neighbors within their land.
 - Therefore, they could not strike them because as Joshua 9:19 says, “We have sworn to them by the Lord, the God of Israel, and now we cannot touch them.”
 - In other words, let our yes be yes and our no be no.
 - As believers we must uphold the truth at all costs and in all circumstances.
 - This was Jesus’ point in Matthew 5:33-37! Truth must be upheld!
 - So, verses 3-6 we find that David is going to bring in the Gibeonites to resolve the matter.
 - In verse 3, David asks, “And how can I make atonement that you may bless the inheritance of the Lord.”
 - That word for atonement in Hebrew is *kpr* (*kepeo*) which means to make amends, cover over, or make propitiation.
 - In other words, biblical justice (better known as restitution) is to be made regarding the sin committed against the Gibeonites.
 - And David is wanting to satisfy their requirements to bring about justice that has been wrongfully committed against them.
 - However, notice what the Gibeonites did not ask for: They didn’t ask for a payout, nor did they ask for the lives of the men of Israel.
 - Now consider for a moment that the Gibeonites are technically slaves to Israel, so to go before the King for injustice done against them, they are at the mercy of the King.

- But David puts himself at the mercy of the Gibeonites, because he says in verse 4b, “I will do whatever you say.”
 - Here we see David as a Justifier, he sets himself up to make right what has been done wrong.
 - And what a beautiful picture of Christ this paints!
- That Jesus, who committed no sin and did no wrong, took upon Himself our sinfulness so that we could be made right with God.
 - Friends, Jesus’ death on the cross is the means by which true cosmic justice is served. (Restitution)
 - You and I were deemed guilty before a Holy God! And before the Divine gavel was struck, Christ stepped in and took our guilty verdict Himself.
- So, David, listens to their request in which the Gibeonites requested that 7 men from the household of Saul be given to them to hang to death.
 - Now some of you may be thinking, “How is it that Saul’s sons have to pay the price for what Saul did?”
 - Some will argue, “Doesn’t the scripture say that the sins of the Father won’t fall upon his sons?” Yes (Deuteronomy 24:16).
 - Yet, the same pairs with Deuteronomy 5:9-10 regarding visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and grandchildren to the third and fourth generation.
- In other words, human responsibility was essential as it pertained to the Law, therefore what an individual wrongfully did against God, he/she alone was reprimanded.
 - The same was true regarding a father who has rebelled against God and influenced his children to do the same.
 - Both the father and the children must be held responsible because of their personal sins regardless of the means of influence. (Personal Responsibility)
- So, the Gibeonites apply the Law, rightfully in this situation, known in Latin as “*lex talionis*” which means – eye for an eye, tooth for tooth, life for life.
 - So, the fact that the Gibeonites are requesting 7 of Saul’s sons means that not only was Saul involved but his sons were too.
 - Therefore, according to Exodus 21:23-25, David tells these men, “I will give them.”
 - Here’s how Exodus 21:23-25 reads:

Exodus 21:23 But if there is any further injury, then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life,

Exodus 21:24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,

Exodus 21:25 burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.

- What becomes such a beautiful moment within this transaction is that David will demonstrate his commitment to upholding his oath of prior.
 - Check out verses 7-9.

2 Samuel 21:7 But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of the oath of the Lord which was between them, between David and Saul's son Jonathan.

2 Samuel 21:8 So the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, Armoni and Mephibosheth whom she had borne to Saul, and the five sons of Merab the daughter of Saul, whom she had borne to Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite.

2 Samuel 21:9 Then he gave them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the mountain before the Lord, so that the seven of them fell together; and they were put to death in the first days of harvest at the beginning of barley harvest.

- The text here provides this juxtaposition between the unrighteous king, Saul and the righteous king, David.
 - That where Saul's failure to uphold a centuries old oath causes calamity in the land, David's upholding of his oath with Jonathan and execution of Justice for the Gibeonites brings about peace for the land.
 - Now if you recall, Mephibosheth was Jonathan's son who was a grandchild of Saul's household.
 - And it was in 1 Samuel 20:15-16 that David had made a covenant with Jonathan regarding his offspring.
 - Turn with me quickly to 1 Samuel 20:15-16 for the establishment of this covenant:

1 Samuel 20:15 You shall not cut off your lovingkindness from my house forever, not even when the Lord cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth."

1 Samuel 20:16 So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "May the Lord require it at the hands of David's enemies."

1 Samuel 20:17 Jonathan made David vow again because of his love for him, because he loved him as he loved his own life.

- So, David spares Mephibosheth and singles out Saul's other offspring to make amends for the breaking of a long-standing covenant.
 - And in return, he submitted two sons of Saul's concubine, Rizpah, named Armoni and another Mephibosheth.
 - And the other 5 sons were from Merab, Saul's daughter who was married to Adriel (1 Samuel 18:19)
 - And with these seven in total, the Gibeonites put them to death in the first days of the barley harvest, which would be an early springtime in Israel.
 - And the location of their death was in Gibeah which was in Benjamite territory, where Saul was from.
 - Check out verses 10-14.

2 Samuel 21:10 And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it for herself on the rock, from the beginning of harvest until it rained on them from the sky; and she allowed neither the birds of the sky to rest on them by day nor the beasts of the field by night.

2 Samuel 21:11 When it was told David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done,

2 Samuel 21:12 then David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from the men of Jabesh-gilead, who had stolen them from the open square of Beth-shan, where the Philistines had hanged them on the day the Philistines struck down Saul in Gilboa.

2 Samuel 21:13 He brought up the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from there, and they gathered the bones of those who had been hanged.

2 Samuel 21:14 They buried the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son in the country of Benjamin in Zela, in the grave of Kish his father; thus they did all that the king commanded, and after that God was moved by prayer for the land.

- Now, if we were to imagine this scene for a moment, this had to be devastating for both Rizpah and Merab to witness. We see this immense amount of grief from Rizpah's point of view.
 - Her sons whom she carried have now been led out to slaughter for actions they participated in with her father, Saul.
 - This is a scene that allows us to witness both the grief of a mother but also the abounding mercy of God.
 - The text mentions that Rizpah, from the start of the harvest until the breaking of the drought, prevented the animals to eat at the now corroding bodies of her sons.
 - This detail lets us know that Saul's descendants were hung on display for more than a week, at best.
 - Consider the fact that from early march through the summer, the rising aroma of death had to be quite overwhelming.
 - The fact that the text mentions there was a time of rain signified that the curse upon the land, due to their breaking of a covenant, had been lifted.
 - This furthermore spoke to the reality that God's curse had rested upon these 7 sons.
 - For as the Law made known in Deuteronomy 21:23, "anyone who hung on a tree was under God's curse."
 - So, they have been made public spectacles of what disobedience to God looks like – what a piercing image.
 - However, that same text also mentions that the individuals had to be buried that same day.
 - So, the fact that these boys had been hanging for a prolonged period signified something.
 - It signified that either the Gibionites were unaware of this statute or were

spiteful or God was using this in preparing to get the people's attention somehow.

- So it's in verse 11 that David gets wind of Rezpah's perseverance through alienating herself to preserve her children's dignity, that it moves David to respond.
 - Isn't it interesting how at times that our humiliation and desperation can garner the active participation of the King!
 - Rezpah remained where she was because she knew that the Law required the honor of burial.
 - So, it's in her state of utter humiliation and desperation to protect her sons because she loved them, that David responds.
 - Perhaps, questions around the palace were circulating as to where Rezpah was.
 - In any case, when individuals got wind that she was still at the place of execution, David was moved with much compassion to do something. In this case to respond according to the requirements of the Law.
- Herein lies a principal of scripture, that God responds to those in whom diligently seek Him.
 - However, it comes through means of great humility to seek God to respond to His word.
- So not only does David respond to Rezpah's need in response to the Law for a proper burial, but it causes David to remember about two others.
 - David tells his men to take the bones of Saul and Jonathan from the men of Jabesh-gilead and to give them a proper burial in the country of Benjamin, in Zela.
 - That distance alone is a little over 50 miles of travel. (See slide)
- I could imagine this sight for David probably hit close to home, having to grieve the loss of your child, especially given the fact that he just lost Absalom not long ago.
 - Well, it's here that the text tells us that after David brought the bones of Saul and Jonathan to their land (sense of honor) along with the sons, that God was moved by prayer for the land.
- This is an astounding reality, because it seems as if the prayers from the people of Israel in that day were not being answered.
 - That somehow, amid this famine and drought, while their prayers were going up to the ears of the Lord, He was not responding.
 - For some this may seem to be a bit harsh given the circumstances of the people.
 - However, we see that God does not respond until obedience to His word has come about.
- We often can try to go to our prayer closets or send up the best prayers we know how to get God's attention.
 - However, we see that there are instances in which your and my prayers are delayed or not responded to.

- In other words, God’s response to our prayers is based upon being in right fellowship with Him.
- To put it differently, God responds when obedience is realized.
- Check out what Psalm 66:18-20.

Psalm 66:18 If I regard wickedness in my heart,
The Lord will not hear;
Psalm 66:19 But certainly God has heard;
He has given heed to the voice of my prayer.
Psalm 66:20 Blessed be God,
Who has not turned away my prayer
Nor His lovingkindness from me.

- So, it took a desperate mother, to get the attention of a mighty King for David to see what God had been hearing from this woman night after night.
 - And it’s in David seeing the need that He responds gracefully which makes way for God to respond to the long-awaited prayers of His people.
 - If you see nothing else in the text tonight, don’t miss this point – God sees all and He knows all.
 - However, may this serve as a lesson for us to recognize that answered prayers are tied to obedience to the Lord.
 - It doesn’t make Him less attentive to our needs or less loving of a father.
 - God is not a genie you can send your prayers up to and expect Him to respond when we are out of line.
 - Isaiah 59:2 puts it this way:

Isaiah 59:2 But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God,
And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.

- ◦ And in Israel’s case, they were in sin and needed of be made right with God.
- How selfish and self-centered of us to expect God to answer our prayers, yet we do not submit to His word in obedience.
 - And at the same rate, how great of a response to prayer will we see once we are submitted and obedient to God.
 - That He is able and willing to respond!
- May we always seek to be in right fellowship with the Lord and if we find ourselves out of fellowship with the Lord, may we humbly confess our sins and approach the throne of grace.
 - For in that He is waiting to forgive us our sins and cleanse us of our unrighteousness.
- Next week, we will round out Chapter 21 as we move into Chapter 22.

- Let's Pray.



VERSE BY VERSE MINISTRY
INTERNATIONAL

TEACHING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

2 Samuel - Lesson 22A

Chapter 21:15 - 22:20

P.O. Box 702107
San Antonio, Texas, 78270
210.319.5055

©2023. Verse By Verse Ministry International.
All rights reserved

versebyverseministry.org/lessons/2-samuel-lesson-22

- Tonight, we will pick up where we left off, in Chapter 21 where David transitioned from a famine in the land to mighty battles that he won.
 - The reason for this odd break is because when you are teaching through a narrative, you want to follow the flow of the story line.
 - As a matter of fact, these next few verses we are going to cover would not have made any sense with the previous context of the chapter.
 - However, they do flow quite well with 2 Samuel 22:1-20 in which we will cover tonight.
 - Remember, verses and chapter breaks aren't inspired, they simply serve as means of breaks within the reading itself.
 - So instead of providing an outline at this point in the teaching we will continue where we left off.
 - With that said pick me up in 2 Samuel 21:15-22.
 - And prayerfully you will see why this break in the reading was necessary and how it flows with our text tonight.
 - Here's how the text concluded in Chapter 21.

2 Samuel 21:15 Now when the Philistines were at war again with Israel, David went down and his servants with him; and as they fought against the Philistines, David became weary.

2 Samuel 21:16 Then Ishbi-benob, who was among the descendants of the giant, the weight of whose spear was three hundred shekels of bronze in weight, was girded with a new sword, and he intended to kill David.

2 Samuel 21:17 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah helped him, and struck the Philistine and killed him. Then the men of David swore to him, saying, "You shall not go out again with us to battle, so that you do not extinguish the lamp of Israel."

2 Samuel 21:18 Now it came about after this that there was war again with the Philistines at Gob; then Sibbecai the Hushathite struck down Saph, who was among the descendants of the giant.

2 Samuel 21:19 There was war with the Philistines again at Gob, and Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim the Bethlehemite killed Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam.

2 Samuel 21:20 There was war at Gath again, where there was a man of great stature who had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in number; and he also had been born to the giant.

2 Samuel 21:21 When he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimei, David's brother, struck him down.

2 Samuel 21:22 These four were born to the giant in Gath, and they fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.

- Verses 15-22 read as documented battles over a period in which although victorious in battle, David is now older in age.
 - The text mentions in verse 15b that "David became weary."

- That word in Hebrew speaks to one that has fainted or is losing consciousness.
- In other words, although David has become older in years, he still attempts to win a young man's battle.
- And this becomes possible not because of David's personal agility, but because of God's supernatural abilities.
- If you recall from earlier in David's rise to become King, there was a time in which the people chanted, "Saul killed a thousand; David killed ten thousand."
 - Well, it now seems as if that chant of David's youthful vigor has begun to fade.
 - This further indicates for us that the writer at this point in 2 Samuel is detailing for us David's older years as king in Israel.
- Notice time and again in verses 16-17 that the Philistines are persistent in their pursuit to kill David.
 - Yet each time David's young men such as Abishai, Sibbecai, Elhanan, and Jonathan go out to battle with David, these men vigilantly protect and defend David.
 - At one point, another descendant of the giants, named Ishbi-benob, who carried a spear that weighed 7.5lbs was about to strike David, yet Abishai struck down the giant.
- Apparently, David's weariness gets so bad that Abishai tells him, "You shall not go out to battle with us so that you do not extinguish the lamp of Israel."
 - Did you catch that? "...that you may not extinguish the lamp of Israel". It's an interesting phrase worth pausing to consider its meaning.
 - What did they mean that David was the "lamp of Israel"?
- Well, being that it was through David that God's Covenant blessings (Davidic Covenant) would flow, so they saw it as David's life being too precious to lose.
 - And it becomes an even greater picture to witness how even in David's weakness, God showed Himself strong and mighty through these men and their enemies!
- This should remind us of the words of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10.
 - The context here is the means of God's grace through the ministry of Paul despite Paul's thorn in his flesh (his weakness). Check out the text:

2 Corinthians 12:9 And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

2 Corinthians 12:10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

- So even in David's greatest moments of weakness, it was always God behind David, fighting his battles.

- And what a principal this is for us to recognize and that is, it is the Lord who is strong and mighty, not us.
- That we must learn to lean and depend upon our Warrior-King who sees all, knows all, and directs our steps.
- Understand that these Philistines that Israel went up against weren't weak men – these were giants, like Goliath in which David defeated.
 - And David defeated Goliath because God was with David, just as God is with us and is our very present help in our time of trouble. (Psalm 46:1-3)
- Close to four times we see the words, “There was war” which indicates these were multiple instances in which David faced the Philistines and God provided victory.
 - I love how verse 22 summarizes these battles because it's in verse 22b that we see how these battles were won.
 - The text says, “...and they fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.”
- Friends, the mere fact that David is the human Messiah-King over Israel yet in his weakened state, demonstrates that the Lord is a promise-keeper.
 - Here is a question worth considering and reflecting on: “How is or has God demonstrated His power through your weakness?”
- I believe what the writer of 2 Samuel is showing us through these verses are reminiscent moments in which David is reflecting upon the faithfulness of God.
 - I'm sure there are times in your life where you can look back over the years and say, “If it had not been for the Lord who was on my side, where would I be.”
 - Friends, the fact that David's life was spared even in his weakness is a testament to the grace of God in David's life and upon Israel as a whole.
 - And it is fair to say that God's grace has been more than enough for you and I as well.
- Well, we now move into David's Psalm of Deliverance in 2 Samuel 22.
 - I like to think of this section of 2 Samuel 22 as David's personal praise and adoration for Yahweh.
 - As the graphic shows us, 2 Samuel 22 is set up in a chiastic structure.(Slide)
 - David provides the reader with a window into his personal prayer journal if you will.
 - This response of David is not surprising because we too have these moments of expressed and random joy throughout life!
- It is where you are driving down the street or walking in the neighborhood and it dawns on you through thought, how good God has been to you.
 - For some, this reflection period can bring you to tears as you consider God's faithfulness throughout your life.
 - How God's “*hesed*”, His steadfast faithful love and faithfulness, has kept you from dangers seen and unseen.
- This is David's poem of celebrating God personally delivering him from the hands of his enemies.

- You may notice as we work through the text that 2 Samuel 22 is nearly identical in wording to Psalm 18.
- Let's begin with the first four verses of 2 Samuel 22.

2 Samuel 22:1 Now David spoke the words of this song to the Lord on the day that the Lord had saved him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul.

2 Samuel 22:2 He said,

“The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer;

2 Samuel 22:3 My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge,
My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge;
My savior, You save me from violence.

2 Samuel 22:4 I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised,
And I am saved from my enemies.

- The chapter opens with the writer addressing this song of praise to Yahweh and provides us with the time period in which David pens these words.
 - It would seem as if these words were composed after David had been king in Israel for several years.
 - And these words express the immense gratitude of David towards Yahweh and how He has provided and protected David, time after time.
 - However, at the time of the composition of these words, David is still on the run from Saul.
 - There is a sense within the opening of the first few verses that David and the Lord have walked with one another for some time, and indeed He has.
 - On the onset of these verses you may notice the word “My” used 10 times between verses 2-3, alone.
 - David's personal experience regarding Yahweh amidst times of great distress and trouble, show us that David was quite intimate with God.
 - David has seen the Lord as a solid foundation in which holds him up when all ground around him seemed shaky and unstable.
 - Each description in which David writes speaks to the steadiness and fortitude of our great God.
 - Not only that, but it speaks to immense intimacy in the sense that David has experienced God providentially in a multitude of situations.
 - This gives us insight into the God of scripture and that is: He is a personal God that draws near.
 - God is not one in whom stands on the sidelines twiddling his proverbial thumbs as if He is uninvolved in human affairs.
 - No! God is very much at work within the lives of His children and the world, today.
 - And sometimes we must pause and recognize that reality throughout the busyness of life.

- For a moment, if we consider the constant attacks both externally and internally within Israel towards David, it is clear that he was surrounded by violence.
 - Yet, even when his own son sought to take his life, David didn't respond in his own might, but rather trusted the Lord.
 - Oh, that we may learn the benefits of leaning not on our own understanding, but rather, upon God's Divine provision and strength.
 - For it is in God that true deliverance is found!
- Verse 4 rounds off David's praise of the Lord by mentioning how when David "calls upon the Lord", that he is saved from his enemies.
 - Again, David's means of calling upon the Lord demonstrates how the Messiah-King remains dependent upon God for all His needs.
- Within Jesus' earthly ministry, within the Gospel accounts, we see that Jesus is consistently entrusting Himself unto the Father for all provision and needs.
 - And Jesus does this even unto death.
 - And furthermore, Jesus teaches His disciples to depend upon the Father for their provision, protection, and the like.
- So as David is fulfilling his role as Messiah-king for Israel, so does Jesus Christ, the Son of God accomplish this with full submission and obedience to the Father.
 - So, David's dependence and obedience to the Lord serves as a pattern for the believer even today.
 - That despite our shortcomings and frailty, we too must remain ever dependent and submitted upon the Lord for all we need – even in our greatest time of need.
 - And isn't that what we even see from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ who sinned not? He entrusted Himself to the Father even unto death!
 - Check out verses 5-7

2 Samuel 22:5 For the waves of death encompassed me;

The floods of destruction terrified me;

2 Samuel 22:6 The ropes of Sheol surrounded me;

The snares of death confronted me.

2 Samuel 22:7 In my distress I called upon the Lord,

Yes, I called out to my God;

And from His temple He heard my voice,

And my cry for help came into His ears.

- David provides great words of encouragement and comfort here in verses 5-7.
 - And he does so by use of metaphorical language with phrases such as "the waves of death" and "floods of destruction".
 - Anyone familiar with the nature of the sea knows that waves and winds at sea can provide either direction or destruction.
 - That if one is not familiar with the steering of the ship and the proper protocol of the sea, they can find themselves in a bit of a conundrum.

- So, although waves and floods are used in a metaphorical sense, the reality of death and destruction surrounding David was a serious matter.
 - If it was not Saul who sought David’s life prior to his rise as King, it was his own son Absalom who sought to kill his father for prominence and power.
 - And to make matters worse as we witnessed a few teachings back, Sheba brought about even greater threat to the kingdom.
 - These devastating actions from merciless men were quite a scare for David, and he spares no expense in expressing that outright.
- You must love and appreciate David’s candor in these instances because he makes it known that although he was in position of power, that position did not push aside his fear and trepidation.
 - Verse 6 mentions that “the ropes of Sheol surrounded him; the snares of death confronted him.”
 - The word for Sheol here is not to be confused with hell, although in other contexts it can refer to hell.
 - So, David is not saying that the ropes of hell surrounded him.
- Sheol in other contexts can mean death and in this context that is what David is referring to.
 - Death is ever present around him as if it were seeking to draw him in.
 - And this is true of David’s rise as King and even within his occupancy as King of Israel.
- What I find most interesting within this text, especially as it relates to the parallel verse of Psalm 18, is how there seems to be “Exodus” type language.
 - It is almost as if David is recalling back the history of Israel becoming a nation as Moses delivered the Israelite people out of Egypt.
 - The waves of death most definitely encompassed them as Moses used the staff to split the Red Sea that they may cross over into safety. (Exodus 14,15)
 - We will see similar language a little later on tonight.
 - Imagine those waters in its great heights as the people of God walked between them on dry land to safety and refuge on the other side.
- David can recall not only the faithfulness of God in the lives of those in the Exodus generation, but also God’s faithfulness to David himself.
 - If that wasn’t praiseworthy enough, David goes a step further as he mentions the ever-present help of God amid trouble.
 - Notice at the start of verse 7, David writes, “In my distress I called on the Lord”
- David seems to know where his help came from and that he need not look to his left or right for relief.
 - David knows exactly who he needed to go to and that was to the Lord.
 - And how does David do that; He calls on the name of the Lord.
- If we were to be honest, calling on the Lord during our time of great need is not the go to scenario – at least for some.
 - In some cases, the Lord tends to be the last resort if we haven’t depleted all of

our energy trying to find a way on our own and in our own strength.

- If you are familiar with Jonah, you may know that Jonah utters similar words to that of David.
 - Jonah too found himself in a fishy situation (all pun intended).
 - The composition of David, as you know, came before Jonah which means that Jonah was able to draw on the words of 2 Samuel even in his time of distress at sea.
 - Check out Jonah 2:1-2.

Jonah 2:1 Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the stomach of the fish,
Jonah 2:2 and he said,
**“I called out of my distress to the Lord,
 And He answered me.
 I cried for help from the depth of Sheol;
 You heard my voice.**

- So, with the distress of David’s troubles surrounding him from both an external and internal aspect, He is able to find refuge, comfort, and strength in calling upon the Lord.
 - Not only did David call upon the Lord for help, but the text mentions that the Lord responded to his very need.
 - The Lord’s response to David wasn’t a “one and done” type of engagement, but when David called upon the Lord, He responded.
 - Perhaps this confidence that David has in calling upon the name of the Lord stems from the relationship that David has established with the Lord over time.
 - That as David’s intimacy with the Lord increases, his comfort and dependency on the Lord grew as well.
 - And this holds true in the life of the believer too. That the more that we grow in intimacy with the Lord, the more we call upon Him knowing He will make a way.
 - If I were to put it differently, with greater dependency comes greater intimacy!
 - The more that we come to know Jesus in our walk with Him, the greater we can lean upon Him, because He has shown Himself tried and true.
 - I’m reminded of the prayers of the children of Israel in their captivity in Egypt under Pharaoh.
 - The people had prayed and cried out, seeking the Lord because of the great oppression faced in Egypt under the hand of an oppressive ruler, Pharaoh.
 - Check out Exodus 3:7-8.

Exodus 3:7 The Lord said, “I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings.

Exodus 3:8 So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the

Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite.

- In this context, when the Lord was called upon, not only did He see the condition of His people, but He responds with the very care and attention needed.
 - This confidence we see in David as well, over a period of time.
 - And might I suggest, this is the assurance that you and I as believers in Jesus Christ should have as well!
 - To know that when we call upon the name of the Lord, that He hears our prayers and is faithful to respond!
 - I pray that as we grow in our obedience and dependence upon the Lord, that we too will have the confidence of going before the throne of grace to pray like what we find in David's writing in Psalm 116:2.

**Psalm 116:2 Because He has inclined His ear to me,
Therefore I shall call upon Him as long as I live.**

- What a great mercy it is to know that the Lord responds to the needs of His own and He responds in great love.
 - What great confidence we have in our great God to know that He is not only Sovereign in all His ways, but personal in His Person.
 - Well, it's from this point that we see, after David's call to the Lord for deliverance David sees the response of our mighty God.
 - Check out verses 8-18.

**2 Samuel 22:8 “Then the earth shook and quaked,
The foundations of heaven were trembling
And were shaken, because He was angry.**

**2 Samuel 22:9 “Smoke went up out of His nostrils,
Fire from His mouth devoured;
Coals were kindled by it.**

**2 Samuel 22:10 “He bowed the heavens also, and came down
With thick darkness under His feet.**

**2 Samuel 22:11 “And He rode on a cherub and flew;
And He appeared on the wings of the wind.**

**2 Samuel 22:12 “And He made darkness canopies around Him,
A mass of waters, thick clouds of the sky.**

**2 Samuel 22:13 “From the brightness before Him
Coals of fire were kindled.**

**2 Samuel 22:14 “The Lord thundered from heaven,
And the Most High uttered His voice.**

2 Samuel 22:15 “And He sent out arrows, and scattered them,

Lightning, and routed them.

2 Samuel 22:16 “Then the channels of the sea appeared,

The foundations of the world were laid bare

By the rebuke of the Lord,

At the blast of the breath of His nostrils.

2 Samuel 22:17 “He sent from on high, He took me;

He drew me out of many waters.

2 Samuel 22:18 “He delivered me from my strong enemy,

From those who hated me, for they were too strong for me.

- Within these verses we can witness the mighty response of a Holy God to the desperate cries of His royal son in whom He is in covenant with.
 - This response is regal in demonstration and catastrophic in its measure.
 - For not only does the response of the Lord rumble the very earth but it causes the very heavens to tremble at His anger.
 - In other words, there is nothing and no one that can escape the wrath of our Great God nor can thwart His plans or his chosen king.
 - Verses 8-10 speak metaphorically of how God moved and rearranged the political landscape for David.
 - Literally, the Lord moved heaven and earth, if I were to use the expression, to solidify David as King of Israel.
 - The imagery of God’s response to David’s need is one that should not only grasp our imagination but garner the very attention of our lives!
 - The sense of “fire coming from His mouth” speaks to the Lord as an all-consuming fire, completely obliterating any who stand against Him. (Hebrews 12:29)
 - The same fate awaits the enemies of the Lord and all who stand against God and His plan in the end.
 - Check out what Revelation 11:5 says regarding the two witnesses and those who try to bring harm to them.

Revelation 11:3 **And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.”**

Revelation 11:4 **These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.**

Revelation 11:5 **And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way.**

- ◦ Therefore, any interference of God’s plans from His enemies results in total destruction on a massive level.
- Furthermore, in verse 11, David describes the swift actions of the Lord!
 - The language in Hebrew for “the wings of wind” suggest that the speed of His

coming is with great haste.

- That He delays for nothing and no one, as His royal king has called upon Him.
- This is comforting to note because even within our own lives as believers, we can confidently go before the Lord seeking a response from Him, too.
 - For He hears the cries of His children and will respond to the need.
- In verses 12-13, we find that the very canvas of the skies is rearranged to accommodate Yahweh's response.
 - For not only does this speak to the fact that God is Creator, but it also recognizes Yahweh is powerful and strong.
 - Most certainly, the crushing might of Israel's army against her enemies was accomplished through the mighty deeds of God on their behalf.
- If we need to, we need look no further than seeing how Gideon led an army of 300 to defeat thousands – nobody but the Lord. (Judges 7)
 - When we consider the verses we covered at the start of this teaching and how David's men defeated these giants with unusual features...
 - It was nobody but the Lord fighting for His chosen people.
- Surely, if the Lord spoke and the very world was brought into order, how much more can the Lord act and His creation respond to His very will.
 - Verses 14-16 offers no less a sense of the majesty and grandeur of God.
- Verse 14 begins with David describing the thunderous voice of the Lord from the heavens.
 - Notice the name distinction of God in verse 14b alone.
- David begins by saying "Yahweh thundered from heaven..."
 - To which he then says "And the Most High (Elyon) uttered His voice"
 - Here we find another name given to God regarding what He has done and who He is.
- Elyon is a title or name given to God which means "the Most High" or highest.
 - It is a title for the true God with an emphasis on Him being supreme and high in status.
 - We see this name given to God in numerous passages in Scripture. (Genesis 14:18,19,20,22; Numbers 24:16; Deuteronomy 32:8; 2 Samuel 22:14; Psalm 7:18;9:3, etc)
- Lastly, one detail to note in verse 14 is that the Most High speaking in a thunderous voice should bring about the Israelite people's experience with God at Mount Sinai.
 - In Exodus 19:16, the people of God on the third day are standing at the base of the mountain and can hear the voice of the Lord in thunderous sounds!
 - As my professor of Christian Framework, Dr. Charlie Clough once said, "If the people there at Mt Sinai had a digital recording device, they would have been able to hear the Lord speaking in Hebrew."
 - This, once again, demonstrated how our Great God who is invisible and dwells in unapproachable light is willing to come down to man and speak in verbal

language.

- This is why we can rest assured that the verbal and written words of scripture are in fact God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16) and made known to us.
 - One must consider how God communicated and communed with Adam and Eve in the garden.
 - It wasn't through osmosis or through telepathic communication, but rather through a known language that Adam could understand and comprehend, and most importantly through communing with Him to provide intimacy with His creation.
- Therefore, in the same way, God's response to the needs of David in battle was heard and the surrounding nations came to know about the God of Israel!
 - So, all that we need to know about God and the means by which we can hear Him speak is through these 66 books and the leading of His Spirit as it relates to the word of God!
 - I want to re-read verses 16-18 so that we can grasp both David's historical record of the faithfulness of God through Israel's history, but also God's faithfulness to David and those who trust in God.

2 Samuel 22:16 “Then the channels of the sea appeared,
The foundations of the world were laid bare
By the rebuke of the Lord,
At the blast of the breath of His nostrils.

2 Samuel 22:17 “He sent from on high, He took me;
He drew me out of many waters.

2 Samuel 22:18 “He delivered me from my strong enemy,
From those who hated me, for they were too strong for me.

- David, once again, figuratively speaking, describes how the Lord on High has dispersed his enemies.
 - That where there once was chaos and devastation surrounding him, he now seems to be walking on solid ground.
 - In other words, David's enemies are laid waste and he and Israel are able to walk on sure footing and not plundered under the burden of defeat.
 - Now, if we were to just stop here and see how the Lord has responded to David's need and ignore this similar language, we would miss how God has done this before!
 - Notice how David describes his deliverance from his enemies.
 - The “channels of the sea” appeared. Channels meaning that a division of some sort has occurred.
 - And by that division, the foundation of the world was laid bare, meaning, there was dry ground.
 - That where things may have been rocky or uncertain, it was now settled.
 - Well, who else within scripture experienced a similar situation – Moses and the Israelites through the Red Sea.

- Not only does God use Moses to lift the rod to divide the waters, but as a result of Moses' obedience, they walk across on dry ground.
 - The fact that the waters on both sides are upheld alludes to the fact that the Lord was upholding the waters' flow.
 - What a picture of God's Divine deliverance amid coming devastation!
- So as David draws from the Exodus historical experience, He too finds that God has done the same for him!
 - And maybe you have seen God in your own life part some situations that seemed extremely overwhelming for you.
 - If you haven't, continue walking with God a little while longer and you will see Him blow your mind.
- It's in verse 18b that we see that God's strength was shown strong and mightily in David's weakness!
 - David does not try and alter this personal account as if to paint himself as the valiant one.
 - No! Rather, He ascribes the praise, adoration, and thanksgiving to Yahweh for all He has done despite David's frailty.
 - As one Pastor said, "I don't walk with a strut. I walk with a limp!"
- The limp signifying weakness and frailty and many times brokenness.
 - And I pray that when you see me walking, and teaching, and preaching, that you know WHO is holding me up – God alone!
 - And that's how David summarizes this section of the chiasm in verses 19-20. Check out the text!

2 Samuel 22:19 “They confronted me in the day of my calamity,
But the Lord was my support.

2 Samuel 22:20 “He also brought me forth into a broad place;
He rescued me, because He delighted in me.

- As we come to a close in tonight's teaching, take note of David's confidence as mentioned earlier.
 - That though his enemies confronted him in the day of calamity, “the LORD (Yahweh) was his support.”
 - This is such an interesting section of the text, especially when you consider the Hebrew language within this poetic structure.
 - David mentions that the Lord was his support.
 - That word “support” in Hebrew is *mis'an* (mesh-an).
 - It means to support for basic needs of life or help, however it can also mean a staff.
 - This use of the word would become quite familiar for David because before his rise to prominence as king, he served as a shepherd boy.
 - And as a shepherd, David would use a staff to both direct the sheep and bring

them in as a means of discipline when they wandered off.

- And as you think through the many psalters, which one comes to mind – Psalm 23.
- Let's read just a section of that text:

**Psalm 23:4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I fear no evil, for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.**

- The Hebrew word for “staff” here is *mis-i-net* which shares the root word of *mis'an*. (In the same family word structure)
 - So, David sees the Lord as both His Shepherd, leader and corrector.
 - That even in David's failures, he still knew who he needed to run to for forgiveness, correction, and direction.
 - And this becomes the means by which the Lord responds to David's needs so urgently and readily. Check out verse 20.
 - The Lord has rescued David, why? Because the Lord delighted in him!
 - That word “delighted” is *ha-pes* which means to be pleased with or be favorable towards.
 - Now, as we will see in the coming weeks, there are many commentators and theologians who find David's next sections to be egotistical or haughty.
 - However, as we approach these verses next week, we will see that the Lord taking pleasure in David is not because David is perfect.
 - But rather it's because of David's obedience to the Lord that he finds favor with the Lord.
 - And we will see that obedience to the Lord is what He has always desired of man.
 - This reality is seen even in the Shema in Deuteronomy 6.
 - That in all that we do, we are to obey the Lord for that is how we demonstrate our love and reap the reward of His righteousness.
 - No work or pursuit of pleasure outside of God can achieve this response and so is true of our faith in Christ.
 - No one can be saved apart from faith alone in Christ alone by grace alone to the Glory of God alone.
 - Let's Pray.

Citations:

- Victor Hamilton, *Handbook on the Historical Books* (Baker Academic, 2008)
- Swanson, James. *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)*. Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997
- Brown, Francis, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs. *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977



VERSE BY VERSE MINISTRY
INTERNATIONAL

TEACHING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

2 Samuel - Lesson 22B

Chapter 22:20-51

P.O. Box 702107
San Antonio, Texas, 78270
210.319.5055

©2023. Verse By Verse Ministry International.
All rights reserved

versebyverseministry.org/lessons/2-samuel-lesson-22b

- Our last time together, I said that the verses we would cover tonight, according to some, would seem controversial.
 - The reason being is due to some individuals' interpretive approaches in understanding David's expression of thankfulness.
 - However, as we will see tonight and as we began to see last time, David's reflection of God's goodness and provision was based upon God alone.
 - David, through his writing will speak to God's blessing and provision as an outworking of man's obedience and submission to God.
 - To put it another way, the blessings of the Lord come through our obedience to the Lord.
 - Time and again, we see in the second giving of the Law in Deuteronomy 28, the Law outlines for Israel the reward for their obedience and their curses regarding disobedience.
 - As you dive more into the Old Testament and the Law, you find that the Law was the guide by which Israel was to obey.
 - And in return, because of their obedience, the Lord would provide blessing.
 - So when we move to the New Testament, for those in Christ, the principles of the Old Testament set the template by which the believer experiences growth and blessing in Christ.
 - That for the believer, through your obedience comes blessing and reward which will be seen at the Bema Seat Judgement.
 - And for the believers who do not obey but continue in sin, there is loss of rewards at the Bema Seat.
 - So, where salvation is connected to physical deliverance by obeying God's Law which renders long life, and blessing for Israel in the Hebrew Bible...
 - Salvation in the New Testament is directly linked to one's faith in the only Living Hope, Jesus Christ.
 - So what we discover from the Hebrew Bible are the principles by which can be applied or reveal for us how and what the New Testament writers express we have richly in Christ.
- What we are going to see tonight in our text regarding David's song of deliverance are the following:
 - 1. Obedience and Faithfulness to the Lord (vv.20-25)
 - 2. How Yahweh Rewards the Faithful (vv.26-30)
 - 3. The Excellence of the Lord experienced in the Lord (vv.31-51)
- If I were to put a tag on tonight's text, it would simply be: David's Praise to the Lord.

2 Samuel 22:21 “The Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness; According to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me.

2 Samuel 22:22 “For I have kept the ways of the Lord, And have not acted wickedly against my God.

2 Samuel 22:23 “For all His ordinances were before me, And as for His statutes, I did not depart from them.

2 Samuel 22:24 “I was also blameless toward Him, And I kept myself from my iniquity.

2 Samuel 22:25 “Therefore the Lord has recompensed me according to my righteousness, According to my cleanness before His eyes.

- On the onset of verses 21-25, it seems as if David is speaking to his own personal righteousness as if his moral capacity or standing has kept him well before the Lord.
 - But if we were to assess David’s life from a 30,000 ft view, it won’t take us too long to see the many failures and misdeeds of his life.
 - So, to assume that David’s hands and life is somehow clean of sin and guilt would be a far stretch.
 - However, what is not a far stretch is the success that David possessed because of his obedience and faithfulness to the Lord.
 - Notice that the benefits in which David receives God’s righteousness is not based upon any meritorious works that David has done.
 - Rather, David has been deemed righteous.
 - The question becomes how has David been awarded righteousness or deemed righteous.
 - Well, the text tells us in verse 22, because he has “kept the ways of the Lord”.
 - In other words, David has dedicated himself to obey the word of the Lord and His ways, as best he could.
 - David is made righteous and clean before a Holy God because he has set himself to do the word of God.
 - Friends, this same principle stands true for how men and woman come to faith in Christ today!
 - We are counted as righteous before God when we respond to the provision in which God has made for us to be made right before Him.
 - Plainly put, salvation cannot be attained by our own meritorious works and efforts (works).
 - As Paul would say, our works are like filthy rags and do not appease the wrath of God.
 - Only what the Son has accomplished on the cross has fully satisfied God’s condition of payment.
 - And through the Son’s blood is there remission of sins and forgiveness by which saves us!
 - The same goes for how Abraham was made righteous.
 - It was not based upon Abraham’s perfect track record or his ability to do things right before God, but rather Abraham simply believed.
 - Check out Genesis 15:4-6.

Genesis 15:4 Then behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, “This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he

shall be your heir.”

Genesis 15:5 And He took him outside and said, “Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”

Genesis 15:6 Then he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

- ○ So, in Genesis 15, we see the first expression of Justification.
 - Abraham trusted God’s word as being true and trustworthy and in the same way so did David trust what God told him regarding his rule and descendants (Davidic Covenant).
- Plainly put, salvation is attained through the work that the Son accomplished.
 - At the same rate we find both, in scripture and life, that the opposite of obedience is the rejection of truth and righteousness.
 - That to oppose God is to find the path of utter demise!
 - It’s like driving on the road knowing what the speed limit is yet you make a personal decision to disobey the limits the Law has established.
- So, it’s through David’s faithful obedience to the Lord and His Law that David, in the sight of the Lord, is found righteous.
 - Moving on in verses 23-25 we find that in rightfully pursuing and adhering to God’s ways and commands, that there is benefit and blessing.
- Verse 23 begins by saying that the ordinances or commands of the Lord were before David.
 - And as David kept his eyes and diligence towards the things of God, despite the things around him, he says that his steps were ordered.
 - As we move throughout the duration of this chapter, we will see how David’s ability to overcome the external and internal threats come about because of God’s divine provision.
- We can’t get past verses 20-25 without seeing how David is blameless, preserved, kept from iniquity, and deemed righteous.
 - That means God’s provision and grace towards David is because of David’s faithful loyalty and obedience to God.
 - Paul states a similar point in Colossians 1:21-22 regarding how Christ’s finished work on the cross has accomplished this spiritual reality for the believer in Him. Check out the text:

Colossians 1:21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds,

Colossians 1:22 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach

- We all, prior to placing our faith in Christ, were alienated and hostile in mind towards

the things of God.

- However, Paul further explains this point by making known how those far from God can be made right with God.
- What is such good news is identifying the fact that it is not us presenting ourselves before a Holy God.
- For if this were the case, our efforts would not even get us to the starting line.
- Paul tells us that it is in Christ, through His death, which is the penalty of sin, Who presents us before Holy God as blameless and beyond reproach.
 - Here's the good news: Being that we are in Christ, the maintaining of our blamelessness and righteousness rest in Christ alone.
 - And even when we fall short of the Glory of God and fail because of our sin nature, Christ is faithful to forgive our sins.
 - This is why John says these words in 1 John 1:9:

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- David understood that the strength, provision, and safety of the Lord was fully realized in his trust and obedience in the Lord.
 - We cannot expect the blessings of God if we are not yielding to the word of God!
 - Check out verses 26-30.

2 Samuel 22:26 “With the kind You show Yourself kind, With the blameless You show Yourself blameless;

2 Samuel 22:27 With the pure You show Yourself pure, And with the perverted You show Yourself astute.

2 Samuel 22:28 “And You save an afflicted people; But Your eyes are on the haughty whom You abase.

2 Samuel 22:29 “For You are my lamp, O Lord; And the Lord illumines my darkness.

2 Samuel 22:30 “For by You I can run upon a troop; By my God I can leap over a wall.

- David continues in verses 26-30 by providing statements of reciprocation regarding God's response to those in whom respond to Him in sincerity and faithful obedience.
 - As a reminder, understand what this does not mean; this does not mean that those who are believers in Christ won't make mistakes (sin).
 - However, it does indicate that, because we are in Christ, we have an Advocate with the Father, as Christ is seated in His Session.
 - 1 John 2:1 puts it this way:

1 John 2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may

not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;

- In other words, those in who's faith is in Jesus, finds a righteous response in Christ according to His own faithfulness.
 - Friends, this is good news because it speaks to the reality that we hold no stake in the upholding of our spiritual walk with God.
 - Our sanctification is upheld through the person of Christ according to what He has done in obedience to the Father's Will.
 - So, what David has documented for the reader here is God's faithfulness to His word when those who trust in Him abide by His very word and promise.
 - David says that with those who demonstrate kindness in their ways to the Lord, so the Lord returns that kindness to them.
 - With those who seek to be blameless (walk in integrity) in the sight of the Lord, by keeping with the commands of the Lord, so does the Lord return that same integrity of faithfulness to them.
 - Plainly put, the measure of trust and obedience that is displayed in our walk with the Lord is the measure in which the Lord rewards to you and I.
 - It's like going to the gym for your daily workout routine and you expecting to gain muscle and accomplish your body goals.
 - Yet you fail to come under the pressure and pain of the weights in the gym.
 - If you don't bear under the weight of the weights in the gym, how can you expect to gain fruitful growth in your goals.
 - The same holds true to our spiritual development in Christ!
 - That although you may be a believer in Christ, if you fail to come under the weight of the Lordship of Jesus in your obedience to His word, then you will not gain the benefits of the spiritual life you have been graciously given.
 - David's point is, what you put in regarding your abiding relationship with the Lord is what you will get out.
 - So, the question is how intimate do you desire to be with the Lord?!
 - As Frances Ridley Havergal wrote in her hymn, "Like a River, Glorious is God's Perfect Peace" she says towards the end:
 - "Those who trust Him (God) wholly find Him wholly true."
 - David demonstrates this great sense of familiarity and intimacy with the Lord and so does the Lord desire of you and I.
 - It's in verse 27b that we see this sense of reciprocity holds true in the reverse for those who are not believers.
 - In other words, the Lord's response to the haughty, the perverted and the evil, renders them a similar response as well when they reject His Law.
 - That the same way in which God is both Just and the Justifier, the integrity within Himself must hold true the same.
 - So, when there are those who stand opposed to a Holy God and who seek to

distort His truth, the Lord will handle them accordingly.

- This is why we must learn as believers that vengeance is not ours but the Lord's.
 - There is no greater retaliation or response to evil or wrongdoing than when it is accomplished by a Just and Holy God.
- We often find ourselves in situations where we want to retaliate or make someone suffer because of how they may have treated us in various situations.
 - However, there is nothing more satisfying than when you allow the Lord to fight your battles for you.
 - Why? Because it causes you to maintain your integrity before the Lord and as the scriptures tell us vengeance belongs to the Lord. (Romans 12:19-21)
- This is why David can say in verse 28, “And you save an afflicted people;”
 - David had seen time and again the faithfulness of the Lord toward Him.
 - That when the enemies of Israel sought to bring about destruction, the Lord upheld David and his army.
 - When David was being chased by Saul who sought to kill him, it was the Lord that shielded David.
 - When Absalom concocted a coupe to tear away the Kingdom from David, it was the Lord who had the final say in Absalom's demise.
 - David's battle against the Philistines, even in his weariness, the Lord strengthened those around David to defend and protect David as the “lamp of Israel”.
- I could go on and on providing example after example of how David overcame despite his shortcomings.
 - And what we see in every instance is that David knew who He served and most importantly David knew that His God was a promise-keeping God!
 - He kept entrusting himself unto the Lord!
- Verses 29-30, David begins both verses beginning with the object of His help.
 - He says, “For You are my lamp” meaning that the Lord shined forth the direction in which David should go even with calamity all around him.
 - “For by You I can run upon troops” meaning that the Lord provided the strength and ability necessary to accomplish the victories over his enemies.
- What powerful pictures and imagery of how David describes his own frailty and inability.
 - Yet, in the very same stroke of his pen he acknowledges who provides the wind beneath his wings.
 - David can do these things because God is at work through David!
- How much could we accomplish for the Lord through the opportunities He provides for us if we took the effort to abide in Him, daily?
 - Better yet, how much of our spiritual lives are handicapped, in a sense, because of our lack of faithfulness to His word?
 - Imagine if we walked by the Spirit according to the power that is at work

within us (Holy Spirit)?

- Observe David’s unyielding and fearless trust in the Lord as he pens Psalm 27:1-6:

Psalm 27:1 The Lord is my light and my salvation;

Whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the defense of my life;

Whom shall I dread?

Psalm 27:2 When evildoers came upon me to devour my flesh,

My adversaries and my enemies, they stumbled and fell.

Psalm 27:3 Though a host encamp against me,

My heart will not fear;

Though war arise against me,

In spite of this I shall be confident.

Psalm 27:4 One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I shall seek:

That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,

To behold the beauty of the Lord

And to meditate in His temple.

Psalm 27:5 For in the day of trouble He will conceal me in His tabernacle;

In the secret place of His tent He will hide me;

He will lift me up on a rock.

Psalm 27:6 And now my head will be lifted up above my enemies around me,

And I will offer in His tent sacrifices with shouts of joy;

I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the Lord.

- ○ I pray that each of us can attain to this great level of intimacy that David experienced with God.
 - What becomes so encouraging is that although the Holy Spirit did not permanently indwell men in the Old Testament, He does today in believers.
 - So, how much more can we experience all that the Lord desires for us to experience in Him by and through His Spirit?
 - Let’s check out our last chunk of Chapter 22 by reading through verses 31-49.

2 Samuel 22:31 “As for God, His way is blameless; The word of the Lord is tested; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him.

2 Samuel 22:32 “For who is God, besides the Lord? And who is a rock, besides our God?

2 Samuel 22:33 “God is my strong fortress; And He sets the blameless in His way.

2 Samuel 22:34 “He makes my feet like hinds’ feet, And sets me on my high places.

2 Samuel 22:35 “He trains my hands for battle, So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

2 Samuel 22:36 “You have also given me the shield of Your salvation, And Your help makes me great.

2 Samuel 22:37 “You enlarge my steps under me, And my feet have not slipped.

2 Samuel 22:38 “I pursued my enemies and destroyed them, And I did not turn back until they were consumed.

2 Samuel 22:39 “And I have devoured them and shattered them, so that they did not rise; And they fell under my feet.

2 Samuel 22:40 “For You have girded me with strength for battle; You have subdued under me those who rose up against me.

2 Samuel 22:41 “You have also made my enemies turn their backs to me, And I destroyed those who hated me.

2 Samuel 22:42 “They looked, but there was none to save; Even to the Lord, but He did not answer them.

2 Samuel 22:43 “Then I pulverized them as the dust of the earth; I crushed and stamped them as the mire of the streets.

2 Samuel 22:44 “You have also delivered me from the contentions of my people; You have kept me as head of the nations; A people whom I have not known serve me.

2 Samuel 22:45 “Foreigners pretend obedience to me; As soon as they hear, they obey me.

2 Samuel 22:46 “Foreigners lose heart, And come trembling out of their fortresses.

2 Samuel 22:47 “The Lord lives, and blessed be my rock; And exalted be God, the rock of my salvation,

2 Samuel 22:48 The God who executes vengeance for me, And brings down peoples under me,

2 Samuel 22:49 Who also brings me out from my enemies; You even lift me above those who rise up against me; You rescue me from the violent man.

- This is a lengthy section of the text, but it provides us with a full scope of the grandeur and greatness of the Lord.
 - David in verses 31-41 summarizes the Lord’s deliverance of him throughout his life.
 - Notice that David begins by establishing the fact that the Lord’s ways are blameless.
 - Meaning that the Lord’s workings and dealings throughout human history and all eternity is faultless and has been proven true. (Psalm 18:30)
 - If we consider even our own plans in life, it tends to be a trial-and-error type of deal.
 - You may even hear some individuals say that their teacher in life was the “School of Hard Knocks”.
 - However, David mentions that the Lord didn’t need to be instructed in His ways nor sought the counsel of others, because He is God.
 - Isaiah 40:28 says this:

Isaiah 40:28 Do you not know? Have you not heard?

**The Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth
Does not become weary or tired.
His understanding is inscrutable.**

- Clearly, the word of the Lord is pure and therefore it makes him trustworthy and one in whom we can trust in for all we need.
 - This is why David says in verse 31c that the Lord is a shield to all who take refuge in the Lord.
 - As David scans his life and reflects upon the goodness of the Lord, he sees that there is no one like the Lord.
 - He is described as a shield, a rock and a strong fortress!
 - In other words, the Lord is dependable to those in whom have placed their faith in Him.
 - What this demonstrates to the reader is how the Lord draws near to those in whom trust in Him.
 - There is a great sense of intimacy with Yahweh drawing near and those who trust in Him, abiding with Him.
 - Verse 33b makes a revelatory statement in that we see how the ways of those who trust in the Lord become blameless themselves.
 - Those who trust in the Lord become blameless because the Lord makes them blameless.
 - This is a significant aspect to consider theologically for believers today and speaks to what David mentioned earlier in Chapter 22.
 - To be set means “to be made”. In other words, the blameless position before God is not based upon human meritorious effort.
 - Rather, this is the righteousness of the Lord, making those who have trusted in Him righteous because of His doing!
 - David continues by speaking to God’s justifying work through those who have trusted in Him.
 - Notice time and time again from verses 34-44 David’s wording:
 - “He makes my feet” (v.34)
 - “He trains my hands” (v.35)
 - “Your help makes me great” (v.36b)
 - “You enlarge my steps” (v.37a)
 - “For you have girded me” (v.40a)
 - “You have subdued under me those who rose against me” (v.40b)
 - “You have made my enemies turn their backs (v.41a)
 - Time and again, David recounts how the Lord has provided sure footing for him and has kept him from missteps that could have led to danger.
 - As the King of Israel, David’s decisions would have to be calculated and wise to provide security for the Kingdom.

- And although David made many missteps in his life as King, the Lord provided the necessary wisdom and people in His life to steer the ship in the right direction.
- In verse 35 the text says that David's hands were trained for battle by the Lord.
 - Simply put, it is Yahweh who has made David the skilled fighter that he is. The Lord is David's strength.
 - And how refreshing is it to know that David does not take credit for any of the victories under his belt.
 - He attributes them all to the Lord who is strong and mighty and who provides the stability he needs.
 - Psalm 46:1 says it this way:

**Psalm 46:1 God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.**

- You might ask how this relates to believers today in how we experience Christ, fully.
 - Well, in the same way that the Lord provided David with the shield of victory, we too possess the shield of faith in Christ.
 - Paul mentions this very means of God's outworking power and grace to believers in Christ in Ephesians 6:16-17. Check out the text:

Ephesians 6:16 in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

Ephesians 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

- Paul outlines the armor of God by first mentioning that we should be strong in the Lord and by the strength of His might.
 - Nowhere does Paul speak to our own human strength or ability, but rather God in Christ.
 - That all that we need and all that we are is found and is complete in the person of Jesus Christ.
 - When we come to the realization that God is at work through us when we submit to the spiritual resources He has provided, everything changes.
 - It is then where we can experience what David did!
 - We will see the Lord make us great, in the sense that we will see Him respond to our needs and make ways of victory, when we respond to His truth! (Sanctification)
 - As believers, circumstances that face us and surround us don't seem as gigantic when we face them through with Christ.
 - Difficult people don't become so overwhelming when we allow our steps to be ordered by the Lord.

- Family drama doesn't become burdensome when we approach it in the grace and tenderness of the Lord.
- Understand that the presence of these circumstances is not an indication that God is not there.
 - Rather, it is an opportunity to see that God is nearer than you know. The question is will you call upon the name of the Lord?!
 - So as David says in verse 37, because the Lord has ensured secure footing, David's ways have not been shaken but sure.
- David speaks confidently in verses 38-41 because he mentions how his enemies have been trampled.
 - That every attack against them was counted and returned until they were fully consumed by the wrath of the army of Israel.
- Verses 40-41 then proceeds to mention why David and his army have been so victorious.
 - It is because the Lord has girded Him for battle!
 - It is because the Lord has caused David's enemies to stumble when they attempted to rise up against him.
- If you recall, every enemy of David from external nations to internal threats, each were accounted for and received their due penalty of death.
 - And this serves as a reminder to all who stand in enmity with God – that there will come a day that if they do not respond to the Lord and believe, they too will meet a similar fate. (This is the mercy of God! His enemies are given time!)
- It is those who humbly cry out to the Lord and have placed their faith in Him who will see Him respond to their cry.
 - For verse 42b makes clear that even when those who are enemies of the Lord call out to Him for help, that He will not respond.
- Well, David continues in verses 43-44 by continuing in his victory over his enemies through the might of Almighty God.
 - That the enemies of David become a spectacle of defeat among the nations and to those domestic threats.
 - One could quickly think through Absalom and Sheba's assault against the King to remove David from his kingship.
- It's in verses 45-46 which offers us some brief insight into how David's rule in partnership with the Lord garners desired mercy from surrounding nations.
 - David writes that foreigners "pretend" obedience to him.
 - That word for "pretend" in Hebrew is *ke-hesh* which speaks to a false sense of perceived obedience.
- In other words, to proctor peace and refrain from future bloodshed, one will demonstrate a placated sense of loyalty or obedience to preserve oneself.
 - Perhaps David is reminded of King Toi of Hamath in 2 Samuel 8:9-12 who sends his son to bring gifts to David after David had defeated his Father.
- Imagine you and a coworker both went after a job posting at your job and your coworker received the job instead.

- So out of an attempt to get over your anger you send a bouquet of flowers to show that you have no hard feelings.
 - All the while you believe in your heart you deserve the job, but to protect yourself and be on guard for the next promotion, you befriend the winner with all sorts of gifts.
 - This is what is expressed by David from how these foreigner nations are responding to him.
 - Recognize however, it's less about David and more about the power that is behind David keeping him afloat and above the chaotic waters of war.
 - These surrounding nations realize that it is David's God who is behind him and it would be to their benefit to be on his good side.
- David utilizes the remainder of his time in Chapter 22 to speak to the greatness of his deliverer.
 - It's in verses 47-51, that David gives praise and adoration to the Lord.
 - He begins by saying that the Lord lives.
 - That God is not dead or uninvolved in the affairs of His creation, but rather, God is intimately intertwined in the lives of His creation.
 - God is a solid rock in which David could stand on and not be moved or tossed to and from.
 - He declares that the Lord is the rock of his salvation.
 - Understand, that David is not speaking in the sense of eternal salvation in this context.
 - Salvation in the Old Testament is almost always centered on physical deliverance from danger.
 - So, David is speaking to the delivering power of God in a physical sense.
 - What is interesting to observe within the text is that the Hebrew word for salvation here is *ye-sha* which means deliverance, rescue, or help.
 - And it's not by chance that this word is a derivative of Yeshua, which was the name given to Jesus which means to save, to deliver, or to rescue.
 - David sees that the Lord has been his very present help during every battle, every coupe, every trial and circumstance.
 - And in that intimate relationship between David and Yahweh, we see that David's confidence increased, time after time.
 - Think in terms of a marriage. That you can be married to your spouse, but you two never grow if there is not life encountered together.
 - There is no growth if there has been no communication.
 - That growth in intimacy demands communing with one another.
 - You show me a marriage that has no communication and I'll show you a failing marriage.
 - But you show me a marriage that is rooted in intimacy and communication, and I will show you a marriage that is thriving and sustained.
 - At the very foundation of David's relationship with Yahweh is the reality that

David sees he is nothing without the Lord.

- This reality is what brought about immense grief when he sinned against God.
- This reality is what brought about David's dependency upon the Lord.
- That where David's dependency increased, David also witnessed the Warrior-King fighting on his behalf. (Fellowship with God)
 - That where David's enemies rose up in great number and skill, the Lord increased David's ability to overcome them all.
- And in return to the Lord's faithfulness to David's house and descendants, David extends constant adoration and thanksgiving.
 - Check out the last two verses, verses 50-51.

2 Samuel 22:50 “Therefore I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the nations, And I will sing praises to Your name.

2 Samuel 22:51 “He is a tower of deliverance to His king, And shows lovingkindness to His anointed, To David and his descendants forever.”

- David concludes Chapter 22 in verses 50-51 by beginning with the word, “Therefore”.
 - In other words, because of all the things in which he has listed regarding God's provision, faithfulness, mercy, and kindness, he ascribes the following to the Lord.
 - And David says, “I will give thanks to you, O LORD...”
 - Not only will this be a personal praise of thanksgiving regarding who the Lord is and what He has done, but this praise becomes a public proclamation.
 - Notice where David proclaims his praises to the Lord – among the nations and to the Lord Himself.
 - David's adoration of the Lord is both a public and private praise.
 - This is key in the identity of Christian worship even today. That our lives are to exalt and make much of the Lord both in private and in public.
 - Why would David want to hide who the Lord is to him and what the Lord has done for him?
 - Might I push a bit further to ask: “Why would you want to hide all that the Lord has done for you?”
 - Those whom the Lord has been a strong tower for, a provider for, a way maker for, a healer for, a deliverer for, we can't keep it to ourselves!
 - There was a song we used to sing in church when I was a teenager, and the lyrics went like this:

**What He's done for me
Is so amazing
The Love He has for me
I can not explain
All I know is I once was lost but now I'm found
I was blind, but now I see**

And I know he will do for you What He's done for me

- The love of God is an experiential type of love.
 - Meaning, it requires one to not only believe in His word for the assurance of being justified, but to grow in intimacy with Him requires you to walk with Him (abide) – this is sanctification.
 - David knew God to be a tower of deliverance because the Lord had delivered him from many attacks and surrounding nations.
 - Verse 51b says that the Lord showed “lovingkindness to His anointed.”
 - That word “lovingkindness” is the Hebrew word *hesed* which is an unending love as it relates to faithfulness to His covenant.
 - In other words, God's response to David is due to God's promise to David because He chose David. (Davidic Covenant)
 - And through God's promise of His word, and David's submission to God's truth in obedience, David reaps the many blessings of the Lord.
 - And beyond that, David can see for Himself the faithfulness of God in all things – even in David's failures.
 - Finally, it's in verse 51c, that David says that this covenant-keeping God will continue His loving faithfulness (*hesed*) to David's descendants forever.
 - In other words, this is a perpetual promise that will extend to David's eternal seed, Jesus Christ.
 - David recalls Yahweh's promise to him in 2 Samuel 7:12-16 which says this:

2 Samuel 7:12 When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom.

2 Samuel 7:13 He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

2 Samuel 7:14 I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men,

2 Samuel 7:15 but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you.

2 Samuel 7:16 Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.”””

- And what a beautiful glimpse the Lord provided David to see exactly what Yahweh meant when He said that this promise of a seed forever would be blessed.
 - Turn with me quickly to Psalm 110:1-2 because David, in the Holy Spirit, sees the following as it relates to his eternal descendant.
 - Furthermore, Jesus uses this very verse to address the religious leaders in 1st century AD as it relates to who He is.

Psalm 110:1 The Lord says to my Lord:

“Sit at My right hand

Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”

Psalm 110:2 The Lord will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, saying,

“Rule in the midst of Your enemies.”

- In the Hebrew it reads, “Yahweh said to Adoni, Sit at My right hand.”
 - In other words, David’s descendant was given the seat of high position next to God Himself as a Son to his father.
 - David was given a glimpse of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, his descendant, being given authority and power by God Himself in which Messiah would rule over all.
 - What a gift that must have been for David to have received that vision as to God’s plan!
 - And this plan is accomplished fully in the work of God through the Son of God to the Glory of God.
 - God’s choosing (the elect of God) are instruments of mercy by which we are able to see His plans accomplished in our lives.
 - Not because of who we are or what we have done, but because of His great doing.
 - And what a blessing it is to know that just as God showed Himself to be a promise-keeping God in David’s time, He is doing the same through His Son, Jesus Christ, who’s Spirit indwells us, even today!
 - Let’s Pray.



VERSE BY VERSE MINISTRY
INTERNATIONAL

TEACHING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

2 Samuel - Lesson 23A

Chapter 23:1-7

P.O. Box 702107
San Antonio, Texas, 78270
210.319.5055

©2023. Verse By Verse Ministry International.
All rights reserved

versebyverseministry.org/lessons/2-samuel-lesson-23a

- Tonight, we move into Chapter 23 of 2 Samuel where we will only have time for 7 verses.
 - These 7 verses are what is known as “David’s last words” and what a fitting title for these verses.
 - However, before we begin 2 Samuel 23, I want us to first understand how biblical narratives speak to the believer in Christ today.
 - As we know, with any section of scripture, we study the scriptures to:
 - Grow in knowing more about our Savior, Jesus Christ,
 - Be conformed into Christ’s image,
 - And understand God’s Redemptive plan regarding all things.
 - If we were to boil it all down, all of scripture points to the Glory of God and His goodness.
 - Tonight’s text will, for some, be approached with interpretative difficulty.
 - For some pastors and theologians, they only see this section of the text as speaking about David as the ideal king and his reign over Israel.
 - However, as we will see, this poem speaks beyond David as the ideal King, and points to what David sees regarding the promised future of the eternal King and His Kingdom rule.
 - The struggle for many in this portion of scripture is David’s use of personal pronouns.
 - However, if we were to just stop our understanding there, we fail to see the whole of scripture and in turn miss the key point of the text.
 - The Apostle Peter mentions this point in how even prophecy comes not from one’s own interpretation, but by the Holy Spirit. (2 Peter 1:20-21)
 - Even as we walk through the New Testament, we find over and over again, Jesus mentioning that the Law and the prophets point to Him.
 - In John 5:39-40, Jesus says these words:

John 5:39 You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me;

John 5:40 and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.

- Even today, some individuals ask the question, “Where does the Old Testament mention anything about Jesus?”
 - And to that I would say, “Let’s see what 2 Timothy 3:16-17 tells us about that”.
 - It’s there we see Paul mention that “All scripture is breathed by God and is profitable...”
 - In other words, both the Hebrew Scriptures and New Testament are God-breathed and inspired.
 - So, if Jesus mentions that the Hebrew scriptures point to Him in John 5, and the Hebrew bible is all that they had during that day...
 - Then it becomes clear, that all of the Hebrew bible in some way, shape, or

form, points to Jesus and His arrival on the scene.

- So, as we approach this text tonight, our approach is no different than that of the New Testament writers.
 - And that is by searching the scriptures, even in a biblical narrative, finding that it speaks to who Christ is, His nature, and character.
 - And in searching the scriptures, we must be willing to allow the Holy Spirit to guide our thinking and understanding.
 - So, with that being said, let's open up a copy of the scriptures and I invite you to meet me in 2 Samuel 23:1.

2 Samuel 23:1 Now these are the last words of David. David the son of Jesse declares, The man who was raised on high declares, The anointed of the God of Jacob, And the sweet psalmist of Israel,

- Although Chapter 23 begins with the phrase, “Now these are the last words of David”, it should not be seen as his “very last words” spoken before death.
 - David's last breath is drawn in 1 Kings 2:10 after he has given his final instructions to his son, Solomon who will be king over a United Kingdom.
 - So the best way to understand his phrasing in 2 Samuel 23:1 would be that these are his final statements regarding his writings and kingship.
 - In other words, this final song of David would be, as one theologian put it, David's final literary legacy to Israel.
 - It's like your favorite author who you have followed for some time, and they finally release the book you have been longingly anticipating.
 - Only this time, they provide a final detail and that is this will be their last book and final interview.
 - So it would be the expectation of the reader to hold near every word spoken and written.
 - Within these final writings of David, what he is speaking about and referring to has become the topic of much debate within evangelical scholarship.
 - And that issue is in regard to the authorship and intent of the majority sum of the psalters in scripture written by David.
 - The root of this debate is based upon individuals viewing the psalms either as:
 - One, a stand-alone postexilic collection of writings during a time when there was no Davidic king.
 - Or two, the psalters point forward to a messianic hope of a fulfilment of the Davidic covenant to a true and better descendant of David, Jesus Christ.
 - The implications of these debates stir further trouble in matters of interpretation.
 - Because if someone sees these poetic words of David only as him speaking about himself, it causes the interpretation of the text to be a bit off-base.
 - And herein lies the issue we find in this section of our text tonight.
 - That if David, in verses 1-7 is merely talking about himself as an ideal king for

Israel, then the anticipated hope in which he longs for, regarding the fulfillment of the Davidic promise, is lost.

- Therefore, as we approach the text tonight and examine it in the original language, we will see that David is not talking about himself.
- Rather, David is pointing the reader to a far greater King in whom Yahweh has promised, David has trusted, and longingly anticipates.
- So, David states in his final public statement to Israel that he is in fact the writer of this poem.
 - In Hebrew, the text actually reads that this is “an oracle from David”.
 - That word “oracle” in Hebrew is *ne’um* which means a prophetic declaration.
 - Typically, in scripture, this word, *ne’um*, is followed by Yahweh. That is to say, this is the “declaration of Yahweh” or the utterance of the Lord.
 - However, we find in 2 Samuel 23 that the word *ne’um* is linked to the phrase “a man” which is only found in three other places in the Hebrew bible. (v.1)
 - Those other places outside of 2 Samuel 23 are Numbers 24:3-4, 15-16, and Proverbs 30:1.
 - And in these particular instances, they are all prophetic messages about the Messiah.
 - For example, check out Numbers 24:15-17.

Numbers 24:15 He took up his discourse and said,
**“The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor,
 And the oracle of the man whose eye is opened,
 Numbers 24:16** The oracle of him who hears the words of God,
**And knows the knowledge of the Most High,
 Who sees the vision of the Almighty,
 Falling down, yet having his eyes uncovered.
 Numbers 24:17** “I see him, but not now;
 I behold him, but not near;
 A star shall come forth from Jacob,
 A scepter shall rise from Israel,
 And shall crush through the forehead of Moab,
 And tear down all the sons of Sheth.

- ◦ So with this context in mind, let’s continue to see if the text will confirm if David is talking about himself or the promised Messiah.
- After David mentions in whom the oracle has been given to (himself, being the son of Jesse), he then states the following:
 - “The man who has raised on high declares, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel”.
 - So, from the remainder of verse one, it reads as if David is providing descriptions of himself. Again, it reads:
 - David the son of Jesse declares

- “The man” who was raised on high declares
- The anointed of the God of Jacob
- The sweet psalmist of Israel
- However, within this text there is what is called a textual variant that if it holds true actually assists in pointing out who David is truly talking about.
 - These varying differences of transcription lie between the Masoretic text and the Septuagint.
 - And the heart of the issue deals with the translation of one Hebrew word, and that is *al*/which is translated here for “on High”.
 - “*al*” can mean height, according to, on account of, or concerning.
- The difference between these two texts boils down to vowels and consonants.
 - Being that the original Hebrew language was only written in consonants, the Masoretic text added a system of vowels and accents to help standardize the pronunciation and interpretation.
 - Whereas the Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Old Testament, provides a straightforward approach to translation without compromising the strict adherence of the Hebrew structure.
- So, with all that in mind, you can see how there would be varying approaches to the understanding of who David is talking about.
 - J.H. Sailhamer, who is considered a notable Hebrew scholar, provides this insight on the different readings:

“The effect of the difference in the length of the vowel is such that the title ‘anointed one’ in the Masoretic Text refers to King David, whereas in other, non-Masoretic versions of the text, David’s words are taken as a reference to Messiah.”

- So here’s what we see from both versions of the text:
 - David has been exalted as King, he too is the anointed of God, as well as a psalmist over Israel.
 - But, from a Messianic perspective, David’s priority subject is not himself, but this greater King, one who is of God and is God.
 - And we will see this point fully, later on.
 - So, if we are to view the alternative reading of this textual variant for verse 1, according to one Messianic Jewish scholar named Michael Rydelnik, it would read as follows:

**“The oracle of David son of Jesse
the oracle of the man raised up
concerning the Anointed (Messiah) of the God of Jacob
the Delightful One of the songs of Israel”**

- It becomes clearer that David is not the subject of his poem, but rather the Messiah is

the subject and object of the poem.

- You may say, “Pastor Wes, this is a bit of a far stretch, do you have other evidence?” I Do!
- We are given external evidence in the Rabbinic Targum of Jonathan that interprets David’s last words being about the Jewish Messiah.
 - However, as we continue throughout the night, we will see the most important evidence comes to light.
 - And that internal evidence is scripture itself which will reveal how this poem is not about David, but about Messiah.
- The question becomes: “How is it that David has been informed about Messiah in such an intimate way?”
 - And as we will see, it is the same way in which the Lord revealed to David regarding his future descendant in Psalm 110.
 - Check out verses 2-4.

2 Samuel 23:2 “The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue.

2 Samuel 23:3 “The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spoke to me, ‘He who rules over men righteously, Who rules in the fear of God,

2 Samuel 23:4 Is as the light of the morning when the sun rises, A morning without clouds, When the tender grass springs out of the earth, Through sunshine after rain.’

- David provides the reader, in this section of the poem, with the means of how he has come to such detailed information regarding the future Messiah.
 - He mentions in verse 2 that his knowledge of the future Messiah had come through Divine Illumination, by the Holy Spirit.
 - And as we know, this very means of distributed knowledge and understanding of Divine things only comes by way of the Spirit Himself.
 - Another way to say what David expressed regarding how the Holy Spirit communicated to him, was that the Spirit spoke “through him”.
 - In other words, this knowledge did not originate from David but rather it was given to Him to speak.
 - Peter makes mention of how no prophecy of scripture comes by one’s own interpretation in 2 Peter 1:20-21. Check out the text:

2 Peter 1:20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation,

2 Peter 1:21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

- So, the very fact that David utters not his own words but a prophetic utterance of the Lord, connects directly to the use of the word *ne’um* in verse 1.

- This is a prophetic utterance which shows us that David viewed himself, in this sense, as a prophet.
- For the role of a prophet during that day was to utter the very messages of God to the people, and here David does this through poem (song).
- And David is given this ability because he served as the Mashiach (Messiah) for Israel in the sense of its human-ruler and king.
 - Throughout our time in this study of 2nd Samuel, Pastor Steve and I both have been drawing similarities between David and Jesus...
 - That David being the King of Israel, during his day, was simply pointing to a true and better King and Kingdom, yet future.
 - And that the Messiah in whom David was pointing to was Jesus Christ, Himself.
 - And in this case only Jesus Christ could serve as prophet, in His first coming, priest in His current Session, and King in His Second Coming.
- In addition, I mentioned last week how David speaking to his blamelessness and righteousness was not speaking about himself. (2 Samuel 22:20-51)
 - In other words, where David was corruptible and sinful, Jesus Christ was incorruptible and sinless.
 - As a matter of fact, Peter picks up on this typological connection in Acts 2:29-31. Check out the text:

Acts 2:29 “Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

Acts 2:30 And so, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne,

Acts 2:31 he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay.

- So, David too operated in the way of a prophet when instructed by the Lord.
 - And the Holy Spirit, through David, writing these very words in song was no different.
 - That David, under Divine inspiration would speak to and point to Christ as the Holy One and Righteous One to come.
 - And what a blessing it is for us to know that the very words of God have been *theopneustos* or breathed out, by God.
 - And that through the words of scripture, they serve to benefit our lives through teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness.
 - For when we too submit to the leading of the Spirit of God, His very words conform us to the obedience of Christ and equip us to serve Him well.
 - Well, as David gets to verses 3-4, his point becomes fixed not upon his own kingship, but rather the One to come that would be perfect in His reign.
 - Friends, the reality is, if this section were speaking about David there would be a bit of confusion.

- Because although David was a good king and attempted to rule righteously among all men, He did not rule in perfect righteousness.
 - We need not trace every step of his misdeeds, but if we are to be honest David fell short time and again.
 - David, in the Spirit, now speaks to two demands in which an ideal King for God would rule.
 - And that is One who rules righteously.
 - The Hebrew word is *sad-diq* which means innocent, upright, or just.
 - And the cause of such upright rule is due to this King ruling in the fear of God.
 - In other words, every decision, every judgement, every direction is exercised under the obedience and submission of the Lord.
 - Clearly, David is seeing a glimpse of someone, more specifically, the promised seed in whom the Lord told Him about in 2 Samuel 7.
 - David was told by the Lord that his promised seed, who would rule on his throne, would be:
 - 1. An Eternal descendant- 2 Samuel 7:12, 1 Chronicles 17:14
 - 2. Have an Eternal Kingdom – 2 Samuel 7:12,16
 - 3. Rule on an Eternal Throne. 2 Samuel 7:13, 1 Chronicles 17:12b,14
 - 4. Have an Eternal House – 2 Samuel 7:11, 13a,16; 1 Chronicles 17:10
- Additionally, within the Old Testament, there were several things in which the people were told which were characteristics of Messiah.
 - Here are some scriptures that speak to what Messiah would be like:
 - 1. Messiah is true humanity – Genesis 3:15
 - 2. Messiah is God – Genesis 4:1
 - 3, Messiah is a Jew – Genesis 22:17-18
 - 4. Messiah is a King from the tribe of Judah – Genesis 49:10, Psalm 2, Psalm 89, Psalm 110; Zechariah 6:11-13
 - 5. Messiah is a Prophet – Deuteronomy 18
 - 6. Messiah is born of a virgin – Isaiah 7:14
 - 7. Messiah is eternal God, true humanity, and a King born in Bethlehem – Isaiah 9:6-7; Micah 5:2
 - 8. Messiah will have a forerunner – Isaiah 40:3
 - 9. Messiah would die for the sins of the world – Isaiah 53; Psalm 22
 - 10. Messiah is a priest – Psalm 110
 - Clearly, this King in whom David is talking about is unlike any king of Israel.
 - To further push the point, we need not go beyond 1 and 2 Kings to see the track records of kings throughout Israel’s history, both the Northern and Southern kingdoms, respectively.
 - And this reality settles in for David as he even introspectively and reflectively looks at his own life – “I haven’t met this standard”.

- Yet, at the same time, he stands hopeful in the fact that what the Lord has told him regarding the Davidic Covenant is true!
- David continues in verse 4 by describing this King in which the Lord is showing him, by the Holy Spirit.
 - David compares this king to the “light of the morning”, and a morning without clouds.
- In other words, this future Messiah-King will radiate God’s Divine Glory and will provide light to all by way of His obedience to God.
 - This King will be a blessing to all who come under Him and will be the epitome of a caring and compassionate king.
- The prophet Malachi spoke about the Messiah in a similar way in Malachi 4:2
 - Check out Malachi 4:2 beginning in verse 1 to provide context.

Malachi 4:1 “For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze,” says the Lord of hosts, “so that it will leave them neither root nor branch.”

Malachi 4:2 “But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall.

- So, the prophet Malachi is speaking about the immense blessing and joy that will come through and by the Messiah in the Kingdom.
 - For those who ascribe to a Kingdom now, or the Kingdom is in our hearts, spiritually, fail to understand the literalness of these passages.
 - We don’t have to keep the news on for too long or look around the world today to see that there is no peace, healing, or blessing in our midst.
 - That is to say that based upon scripture, David was not spiritualizing about the future King or His Kingdom, but that this would be a literal reality in human history!
 - This is the hope that we have as believers!
 - That in Christ’s Second Coming, when Israel responds positively to her King, that we will enter the Kingdom with Him! (Mt.23:39)

Matthew 23:39 For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’”

- ○ And with that we (the Church-Age believers) will be beneficiaries of these future blessings alongside Israel and we will experience the glory of the Lord in the Millennium Kingdom!
- So, although David does not yet see this glory of the King and the Kingdom, he believes that what God promised him in 2 Samuel 7 will come to pass.
 - And David expresses his profound confidence in the Lord and His word in

verse 5. Check out the text.

2 Samuel 23:5 “Truly is not my house so with God? For He has made an everlasting covenant with me, Ordered in all things, and secured; For all my salvation and all my desire, Will He not indeed make it grow?”

- At first glance, this verse reads as if David were asking a rhetorical question.
 - More specifically, the way in which the text is phrased would seem as if David is suggesting that his household is right with the Lord apart from God alone.
 - So with this reading (translation), one can see how some commentators could assume David is seemingly arrogant.
 - However, we face yet another textual issue regarding translation from one language to another.
 - I want to re-read verse 5 again, but this time we will read the King James Version against the NASB 95 and see the differences.

2 Sam 23:5 (KJV) Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.

- ◦ Notice that most English translations such as the NASB, ESV, NIV translate this verse as a question.
 - Whereas the KJV and the NKJV, along with the Septuagint, translate this verse as a statement.
- As Dr. Rydelnic points out in his work in the Moody Handbook of Messianic Prophecy on this verse:
 - *“Translating this [verse 5] as a question is an attempt to harmonize these words with 2 Samuel 23:1 in the Masoretic Text.”*
- In other words, for the translators, making this text fit more of a David as king and subject of discussion, makes sense for verse 5 to be a question.
 - However, if we continue with the logic as the Masoretic text translators provided, it still begs the question:
 - If David is speaking about himself in these 7 verses, why then does he mention that his own house is not like the house in which he is describing about himself? Confused yet?
- In other words, David can’t be writing about himself within this poem, but rather he is writing about someone else – Messiah.
 - This means that David’s first point in verse 5 is that his household is not deserving of the promise because of his own failure in not ruling righteously.
 - And as I mentioned earlier, we don’t have to go too far in the Book of Samuel, and we see David’s shortcomings and failures.
- This further speaks to the reality that the promise of the Davidic Covenant doesn’t rest in David’s actions or merit, but rather God’s promise alone.

- The same idea for justification by faith through grace holds true as well.
- In that, our salvation in Christ rests not on our actions, deeds, or merit, but solely upon our faith being placed upon Christ alone.
- So, from Old Testament to New Testament, there is no indication of salvation by works, just as David sees that God’s promise of the future Messiah was not based upon David’s righteousness!
 - And to that we should be in great thanks to the Lord!!!
- It is later on in verse 5 that we see that David mentions that his hope is secured, not in himself, but upon God’s great promise!
 - Scripture tells us that all of God’s promises in Him are yes and amen.
 - The Apostle Paul mentions this reality in the New Testament in 2 Corinthians 1:20. Check out the text.

2 Corinthians 1:20 For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us.

- So David wraps up his point at the end of verse 5 by saying, “Will He not indeed make it grow?” Notice, he ends with a question again.
 - As mentioned before, this is a matter of translation, so to resolve that we will look back at the KJV.
 - And it’s there that we read, “For this is all my salvation and all my desire, Although he make it not to grow.”
 - In Hebrew, the word for “not” is the word *lo* which is in the negative and gives the sense of “not yet”.
 - And we see those instances in places such as Genesis 15:16 and Jeremiah 37:4.

Gen.15:16 Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete.”

Jeremiah 37:4 Now Jeremiah was still coming in and going out among the people, for they had not yet put him in the prison.

- ○ You may notice that the word yet in those particular text are italicized which means it is not in the original Hebrew but carries the sense of that meaning.
- So, when we read the last line of 2 Samuel 23:5 with the proper Hebrew phrasing, it reads: “For this is all my salvation, and all my desire, Although he has not yet made it grow.”
 - In other words, I have not seen this promise fulfilled, yet I am hopeful in the fact that God has said it, therefore, He will bring it to fruition.
- This is why it’s not by coincidence that the same Hebrew root word for grow (sprout) is the same as the Messianic title “Branch” in Jeremiah 23:5 for the Messiah.

- Check out Jeremiah 23:5.

Jeremiah 23:5 “Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord,
**“When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch;
 And He will reign as king and act wisely
 And do justice and righteousness in the land.**

- ○ Here we find Jeremiah speaking about a ‘yet future’ moment regarding the Messiah-King who will then rule with Justice and righteousness in the land.
- So, David speaks to the coming of this Messiah, the revelation of this coming King, the way in which He will rule and reign, and the promise that He will come.
 - This Psalm becomes a psalm of great hope and anticipation of the Second Coming of Christ.
 - That in His coming Kingdom, He will rule with great glory and bless those who are in Him.
 - Lastly, David provides the reader with a warning of sorts.
 - This warning speaks to both the power of the Messiah and the judgement that comes to those who are against Him.
 - Check out verses 6-7.

2 Samuel 23:6 “But the worthless, every one of them will be thrust away like thorns, Because they cannot be taken in hand;
2 Samuel 23:7 But the man who touches them Must be armed with iron and the shaft of a spear, And they will be completely burned with fire in their place.”

- The text provides us with a contrasting moment regarding the blessings and joy of this Coming Messiah for those who trust in Him.
 - Yet in the latter half of the poem, we are shown the opposite response to the King.
 - It says that it will be that those who have not trusted in Him, and those who reject the King, will be thrust away like thorns.
 - You may notice the term ‘worthless’ is used here in verse 6.
 - This term should be familiar to us at this point because this is the same word that the writer of 2 Samuel used for Sheba.
 - That word ‘worthless’, *beliy-ya-al* (blee-ya-all), means wickedness or good for nothing.
 - And David says that they will be thrust away or better put, discarded.
 - The imagery here is similar to that of the parable of the wheat and the Tares in Matthew 13.
 - That where the wheat (believers) will be gathered to the barn, the opposite is true for the tares (non-believers).
 - The tares are discarded and burned which is representative of their judgement and separation from God ending in them being consumed by fire in hell.

- So, David is drawing a line in the sand, in a sense.
 - You should choose the righteous King and His ways and not your own.
 - Choosing your own ways and desires ends in death and judgement by fire.
- Furthermore, we see this reality in the Book of Revelation and how in Christ's return, it will begin with great bloodshed and judgement upon the unbelieving world and kingdoms. (Revelation 16-19)
 - And after that, the Kingdom will be ushered in where Jesus will rule with all righteousness and justice.
- So, although this poem speaks to the ways in which David as Yahweh's King brought about justice and righteousness in partial ways, Jesus would bring about true justice and righteousness in all His ways.
- David's last words serve the reader with great anticipation and hope while also providing those who reject the King with stern warning.
 - That where those who value the King and follow the King increase in blessings from the King.
 - On the other hand, those who reject the king and sow division and wickedness towards the king, will heap great judgement.
 - And we see this ending fate in-fact for all of David's enemies – none had a hopeful ending.
 - And this is declared for all who choose to reject the Lord's Messiah.
 - What becomes such a note of mercy throughout all of this is that the Lord provides time for those who are far from Him to come to know Him.
 - That the Lord still extends mercy to His enemies until the very end.
 - And may I say that the salvation of the Lord is here, even today.
 - That there is still opportunity for men and women to escape an eternity from hell and separation from God by placing faith in the Lord Jesus.
 - Eternity is a long time. And what great sadness it will be if you had the opportunity to receive the greatest gift God has given to the world, yet you chose to reject Him.
 - Let's Pray.

Citations:

- Kirkpatrick, A. F. *The Second Book of Samuel, with Maps, Notes and Introduction*. The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1890.
- Rydelnik, Michael. "2 Samuel 23:1-7 David's Last Words." *The Moody Handbook of Messianic Prophecy: Studies and Expositions of the Messiah in the Old Testament*, edited by Edwin Blum, Moody Publishers, Chicago, IL, 2019, pp. 399–408.



VERSE BY VERSE MINISTRY
INTERNATIONAL

TEACHING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

2 Samuel - Lesson 23B

Chapter 23:8-39

P.O. Box 702107
San Antonio, Texas, 78270
210.319.5055

©2023. Verse By Verse Ministry International.
All rights reserved

versebyverseministry.org/lessons/2-samuel-lesson-23b

2 Samuel series originally taught by Stephen Armstrong. Chapter 20 onwards taught by Wesley Livingston

- Tonight, we continue in our teaching of 2 Samuel Chapter 23 where we will pick up in verse 8.
 - Last week, we were able to witness the reality that David was not talking about himself as the ideal King.
 - Rather, David has been given a description or a picture of sorts of his eternal descendant, his promised seed.
 - This description, indicative of a righteous king, provided David a picture of hopeful anticipation for the future of Israel and his house.
 - The reality is, David was quite aware of his frailties; he has seen the disruption between the Northern 10 tribes and the 2 Southern tribes (Judah and Benjamin).
 - However, as best he can, he tries to maintain unity amongst the Northern and Southern tribes.
 - As we saw last week in verse 5, David picks up on the fact that although his house (his reign) has failed in uprightness with God, that God still keeps His promises.
 - And David is confident in the fact that where he has failed that this future King will not fail.
 - This future King will rule mightily, with wisdom and righteousness.
 - Furthermore, this King will, once and for all, do away with wicked men and women, and kingdoms by His own might (hand).
 - This points us to the fact that David anticipated a literal future day in which this Kingdom would reign on the earth.
 - We know that this future reign on the earth with Messiah-King is known as the Millennium Kingdom.
 - This is where Christ, in His Second coming, will usher in His reign on David's throne off the hills of annihilating all of Israel's enemies.
 - And on this throne Jesus will reign for a thousand years.
 - What we will discover tonight in verses 8-39 is how David's list of Mighty men will serve as a template for how faithful believers will be rewarded for their work in the Kingdom.
 - That this life in which we are living serves as a trial run for what rewards we will receive at the Bema Seat of Christ and the way in which we will serve the King in the Coming Kingdom.
 - With that being said, we are going to see the following structure of our time tonight:
 - 1. The First Three (Highest Ranked Men) (vv.8-12)
 - 2. The Unnamed Three (Second Ranked Men) (vv.13-17)
 - 3. The Two Greatly Esteemed (vv.18-23)
 - 4. The Remaining Honored Men (vv.24-39)
 - If I were to put a tag on tonight's text, it would simply be: David's Mighty Men: The

Reward of Great Men.

- With that being said, I invite you to open up a copy of your scriptures and meet me in 2 Samuel 23:8-12.

2 Samuel 23:8 These are the names of the mighty men whom David had: Joshebbasshebeth a Tahchemonite, chief of the captains, he was called Adino the Eznite, because of eight hundred slain by him at one time;

2 Samuel 23:9 and after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David when they defied the Philistines who were gathered there to battle and the men of Israel had withdrawn.

2 Samuel 23:10 He arose and struck the Philistines until his hand was weary and clung to the sword, and the Lord brought about a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to strip the slain.

2 Samuel 23:11 Now after him was Shammah the son of Agee a Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered into a troop where there was a plot of ground full of lentils, and the people fled from the Philistines.

2 Samuel 23:12 But he took his stand in the midst of the plot, defended it and struck the Philistines; and the Lord brought about a great victory.

- As we witnessed last week, the continuation from verses 8-39 are very much a part of David's final words and song to Israel.
 - I mentioned then that these are not David's actual 'final words' but rather his final public statement to the people.
 - And within that context, David finds it necessary to include in his final proclamation the names and deeds of what he lists as his "Mighty Men".
 - David produces this list of men, not in any random order, but rather according to their success and personal efforts at war.
 - There are close to 37 men individually called out either by name or deed for their contributions in some way, shape or form.
 - Plainly said, these men's efforts are noticed and well noted by the King's mentioning of their efforts and faithfulness.
 - Secondly, let us not be so quick to rush past the fact that there is an order in which these men are listed.
 - In other words, these listed names are written according to their roles and responsibilities, on behalf of the King according to their faithful execution.
 - For a Kingdom requires an administration of roles and responsibilities to carry out the needs of that Kingdom.
 - So, it's in this commendation of David that we have an idea as to how even believers in Christ will be judged at the Bema Seat of Christ and given roles and responsibilities in the Coming Kingdom.
 - To put it a different way, how we live and what we do, according to our obedience and faithful service to the Lord in the here and now, determines our future rewards and responsibilities in the Kingdom.
 - And David provides a picture of sorts by which the Kingdom will function.

- David begins his list of mighty men by starting with a man named Josheb-Basshebeth who is a Tahchemonite.
 - He is named the chief of the captains, or “chief of the three” which means that this man was high ranking in David’s army.
 - This would be the man who would report directly to David regarding all military means, strategy, and the like.
 - And the text tells us that he attained to this high-level position because he killed eight-hundred men at once.
 - However, it is argued by some that perhaps this large number was gained over a period of time through those under his command.
 - Whether these killings were accomplished by his own hand or the hands of those troops in which he commanded, it’s clear that this is accomplished under his leadership.
 - And it’s important to note here as David has done previously, that the victory in which Israel has possessed is not in their own strength.
 - Rather their victory is accomplished through the power and strength of Yahweh, Himself.
 - That where David has been trained and skilled by the Lord, those who have willingly and obediently submitted under the leadership of David are beneficiaries of that same strength and victory.
 - So, God uses Josheb-basshebeth as an instrument of victory to secure the defeat of Israel’s enemies.
 - And as we see, when one is fully submitted and obedient to the Lord, the victory is already had.
 - As Dr. Tony Evans has mentioned before: As believers we fight from a position of victory not for a position of victory.
 - In other words, our ability to overcome in the Lord is directly tied to our submission to the Lord.
 - After Josheb, David names Eleazar, the son of Dodo the Ahohite and he too is considered one of the three mighty men.
 - David describes here how Eleazar remained with him in battle against the Philistines.
 - But the part that we mustn’t miss is where Eleazar remained with David even when the men of Israel withdrew.
 - That where the appearance of the Philistines seemed overwhelming, the men of Israel withdrew in fear rather than in defense of their King.
 - Yet, Eleazar remained alongside David in battle.
 - This is such an interesting section of the text because where these trained men should have remained faithful, they shrieked back in cowardice.
 - This response is like what we find amongst some Christian leaders today where when difficulty arises, for some, it breeds immense compromise, doctrinally.
 - It causes the church to miss opportunities to evangelize and proclaim gospel

truth rather than a sugar-coated, doctrinally stripped, gospel.

- That rather than the Church standing firmly on the word of God, when the culture becomes louder on certain matters, we fold instead of lovingly yet sternly engaging.
 - For believers today, our commendation of rewards comes when we stand firm despite the difficulty and trial of what is seen, felt, or even heard.
 - I'm reminded of what James mentioned to a group of Jewish believers encouraging them about the blessing of enduring through trials.
 - This is what he says in James 1:12:

James 1:12 Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

- Notice verse 10, the text mentions that Eleazar continued to fight the Philistines until his hand was weary and clung to the sword.
 - In other words, he refused to give up despite the weariness of his grip.
 - The text then says that “his hand clung to the sword” in the sense that he had muscle cramps that wouldn't relax around the grip.
 - Josephus makes mention that because the Hebrew word for clung can also mean stick, that perhaps because of the immense bloodshed, that's why Eleazar's hand stuck to the sword.
 - Whether there is any truth to Josephus' claim of the hardening of blood on the sword or by mere muscle cramping, we see again that it was the Lord that brought about this great victory and sustained Eleazar.
 - That where everyone else had retreated from harm and danger, the Lord provided the confidence necessary for David and Eleazar to fight till the end.
 - And isn't that the goal for the believer, that we ought to run our race till the very end.
 - Because it's in the end that we reap if we faint not!
 - However, it's not by surprise that we find that at the end of the battle, the men of Israel returned after the battle has been won only to strip the slain.
 - This practice of retrieving the reward from the win was a typical practice for victorious soldiers after battle.
 - In other words, after the fight was over and the hard part is complete, those who ran to seek shelter now are the first to return to collect their reward.
 - It's that picture of others attempting to ride on the coat-tails of others who have put in the work and the heavy lifting.
 - Or the individuals who takes the credit when things go well but are nowhere to be found when the work is required.
 - Paul tells us the following in 1 Corinthians 9:24:

1 Corinthians 9:24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.

- What a sad reality it will be for some who have been saved, to stand before the Lord at the Bema Seat, having shown up week after week to church, did the “Christian thing”, yet never completed their race.
 - Only to see that they will collect no reward in the end.
 - All because they failed to run “their” race!
 - All because they operated out of fear rather than faith yet are expecting to see a return on their Christian life in the end?!
 - As we saw last week, the measure in which you put into this life for the Lord in obedience to Him is the measure in which you will get out! (Psalm 18:25-27)
 - We can’t expect to gain spiritual rewards if we are not putting in the actual work – whatever that work is that the Lord has called you to!
 - I love the qualifier that Paul uses at the end of 1 Corinthians 9:24. He says, “Run in such a way that you may win.”
 - In other words, we should be so heavenly focused that our earthly pursuits should be in direct alignment with the Lord.
 - That we endure and pursue the things that the Lord has called us to as if we don’t have a tomorrow.
 - There should be such urgency and commitment to the works of God that it becomes our focus even if the task is overwhelming or the culture is opposed.
 - Friends, may I encourage us all to run our own race as the Lord has seen fit and that we run it well!
- Well, it’s in verses 11-12 that we are introduced to the third Mighty man, Shammah, the son of Agee who was a Hararite.
 - And in this particular commendation, David mentions the Philistines were gathered together as like an army. Clearly, they were on guard for battle.
 - But notice ‘where’ they are standing. The text says, “they were on a plot full of lentils.”
 - The question becomes, what’s the big deal with “the plot of ground full of lentils?” And why is Shammah so persistent of driving them out?
 - That word “plot” is speaking about a particular plot of land, which would beg another question: Whose land are the Philistines on?
 - Shammah knew who the land belonged to and what the land in total meant for Israel.
 - And as a side note, isn’t that the big discussion even today? Who does the land of Israel belong to?
 - Shammah knew that the land that the Philistines were occupying belonged to Israel.
 - The reason being is because the Lord owned the Land and we see that in many places but two in particular.

- The first place we will look at is Leviticus 25:23 and the second is Deuteronomy 32:43.
- Let's look at the first one together, Leviticus 25:23:

Leviticus 25:23 'The land, moreover, shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are but aliens and sojourners with Me.

- ○ Let's also look at Deuteronomy 32:43.

Deut.32:43 "Rejoice, O nations, with His people;
For He will avenge the blood of His servants,
And will render vengeance on His adversaries,
And will atone for His land and His people."

- This song in which Moses gave in Deuteronomy 32 was similar to David's final words of proclamation found here in 2 Samuel 23.
 - And Moses assures the people that the land in which the Lord promised is indeed Israel's land.
 - In other words, the Deed is in God's name and for His people, Israel.
 - And with that knowledge, Shammah, son of Agee stood in the midst of the plot to defend their land as its rightful tenants and caretakers on behalf of the Lord!
 - So, when we boil this down, Shammah demonstrated great faith in the promise of the Lord according to the Torah.
 - That if God has deemed this land ours then we must defend it with every ounce of our being.
 - And in return what did the Lord do, He honored Shammah's faithfulness according to His own word.
 - This is no different than how the Lord calls us to faithfully serve Him and obey His word in our own lives and ministries and calling.
 - We will now look at the unnamed three who, although were not in the chief ranks, were all the more faithful to the King and his Kingdom as well.
 - Check out verses 13-17.

2 Samuel 23:13 Then three of the thirty chief men went down and came to David in the harvest time to the cave of Adullam, while the troop of the Philistines was camping in the valley of Rephaim.

2 Samuel 23:14 David was then in the stronghold, while the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem.

2 Samuel 23:15 David had a craving and said, "Oh that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate!"

2 Samuel 23:16 So the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines, and drew water from the well of Bethlehem which was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David. Nevertheless he would not drink it,

but poured it out to the Lord;

2 Samuel 23:17 and he said, “Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this. Shall I drink the blood of the men who went in jeopardy of their lives?” Therefore he would not drink it. These things the three mighty men did.

- It’s here where David describes another event of great faithfulness from three of the thirty chief men.
 - The text doesn’t seem to suggest that these three men are the same as the first three listed. If that were the case, perhaps their names would have been used.
 - However, the names of these men are not important, rather their faithful actions toward David, before he is even perhaps crowned king.
 - I make mention of this because the text says that David and these men are in the cave of Adullam.
 - And we should be familiar with David’s time in the cave of Adullam during his escape from King Saul in our Samuel study.
 - And it’s while in the cave of Adullam, with the Philistine troops camped out near the valley of Rephaim, that David expresses a need for water.
 - Perhaps from exhaustion of running and seeking refuge, David has become parched.
 - And whether to himself, softly or out loud as a public request, he asks for water.
 - However, David’s request is quite specific, because the request for water is not from nearby and no water source was in the cave.
 - The request was for water at a well near the gate of Bethlehem.
 - This request, most likely to himself, was a bit of a nostalgic moment for David.
 - Being that David was born in Bethlehem, he is probably reminiscing on the fresh taste of water from that well.
 - Thinking on the days in which were a bit easier for him, raising the sheep and herding for his family, yet now he finds himself in this cave running for his life.
 - So, David, is making a sentimental request, however this is a request as a servant and not as a king.
 - Yet, these three mighty warriors who have dedicated themselves to this up-and-coming King, chosen by God, count the cost.
 - And somehow, these men manage to break through the enemy’s camp unnoticed, travel nearly 12 miles to retrieve water from this well that David longed for, and brought it back to him, another 12 miles, unscathed.
 - Talk about dedication and faithfulness, even to a man that has not yet been crowned as King!
 - And to David’s surprise, these men come back with water in hand, yet he refuses to drink it and instead pours it out as worship to the Lord.
 - Now, some of you probably just jolted at the thought of all that work having gone into getting the water.
 - Perhaps some would have muttered under their breath sarcastically, “Sure,

that's what gratitude looks like, David!"

- However, David's response in this manner tells us how he perceived this great sacrifice.
 - He says in verse 17, "Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this. Shall I drink the blood of men who went in jeopardy of their lives?"
 - In other words, David didn't deem himself worthy enough to even drink this water because of the risk these men took on his behalf.
- This is why David considered the effort put in towards the gathering of the water as drinking "the blood of men".
 - He is equating it to the cost in which these men took that could have potentially gotten them killed!
 - However, it seems as if the cost of this drink mattered not to these men.
 - In fact, they would have probably done it again – simply because David asked.
- These men were remembered by David even after he became King, simply because of the great sacrifice they made for him.
 - And isn't it odd, that the New Testament documents a similar sacrifice in Mark's gospel with another "unnamed" woman who pours extravagant perfume upon Jesus' body? (Mark 14:3-9)
 - These men knew that David was worth the risk – that the future king is worth every sacrifice they could offer.
 - And such should be our perspective regarding the very lives we have in Christ!
 - That in all things, we too should be willing to risk and do all things for the sake of His name and goodness!
- In other words, there is no greater gift we can bestow upon the Lord than our very lives before Him in total surrender and obedience.
 - For a life of faithfulness and obedience to the Lord, is a life that is commended and awarded accordingly.
 - Well, we now come to the Two greatly esteemed men, both Abishai and Benaiah. Check out verses 18-23.

2 Samuel 23:18 Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief of the thirty. And he swung his spear against three hundred and killed them, and had a name as well as the three.

2 Samuel 23:19 He was most honored of the thirty, therefore he became their commander; however, he did not attain to the three.

2 Samuel 23:20 Then Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of Kabzeel, who had done mighty deeds, killed the two sons of Ariel of Moab. He also went down and killed a lion in the middle of a pit on a snowy day.

2 Samuel 23:21 He killed an Egyptian, an impressive man. Now the Egyptian had a spear in his hand, but he went down to him with a club and snatched the spear from the Egyptian's hand and killed him with his own spear.

2 Samuel 23:22 These things Benaiah the son of Jehoiada did, and had a name as well as the three mighty men.

2 Samuel 23:23 He was honored among the thirty, but he did not attain to the three. And David appointed him over his guard.

- We now find David’s commendation of these two men.
 - They are Abishai, who David mentions is the brother of Joab, and Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada.
 - Let’s first start with who David addresses first, which is Abishai, who is David’s nephew.
 - According to the text, Abishai was a man of great military tactic and strength.
 - David documents an experience where Abishai swung his spear against 300 men and killed them all.
 - You may recall other encounters that Abishai had with the enemies of Israel in 1 Samuel 26 all the way to Sheba’s rebellion.
 - It is because of Abishai’s kill number and skill that David appointed him commander of the Three, even though he was not included among them.
 - I mention this because although David doesn’t mention Abishai with the Mighty Three, Abishai still accomplished much in his own right.
 - As a matter of fact, the text says that Abishai “had a name” along with “the three”.
 - In other words, Abishai too had a reputation in his own right. He could hold his own.
 - Notice, that nowhere in the text is David saying this person is better than this person, nor is he comparing the accomplishments of one man to the next.
 - Instead, David is commending these men’s efforts according to their own individual faithfulness to the King and the Kingdom.
 - This is so huge to not miss! That the race you run is the race YOU run for Christ!
 - The Lord is not comparing your works and spiritual gifts to the person next to you.
 - The Lord is measuring your deeds according to how He has uniquely gifted you and according to the opportunities you seize.
 - In other words, the measure of your faithfulness to the Lord, determines the magnitude of your reward!
 - We see this principle of eternal rewards in the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:17-30.
 - That where these men are given talents, it is given according to their own abilities.
 - The question on the table is: “How are you managing the gifts and talents the Lord has given you so that when you stand before Him at the Bema Seat you will have done well with what was given?”
 - God is faithful to reward those in whom faithfully serve Him according to the measure and faithfulness of their service.
 - Friends, I implore us all to serve well where you can!

- We now come across Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of Kabzeel.
 - Benaiah's father is Jehoiada who had a great reputation amongst the people and was well-known.
 - And it becomes clear that the apple doesn't fall far from the tree!
 - Herein lies maybe one beautiful yet small example of familial discipleship.
 - David records that Benaiah was quite an impressive man, and the record holds true because the text states that he went down and killed a lion in the middle of a pit on a snowy day.
 - Watch the description David uses here to describe the skills and strength of this man.
 - Notice, the text finds it necessary to mention even the season in which this lion was killed – it was a snowy day.
 - I've never fought a lion before and don't intend to, but I could imagine that fighting in these slippery, wet, and windy conditions wasn't easy.
 - It's obvious that the environment which Benaiah is in is difficult, to say the least, yet he overcomes the lion with no issues.
 - Similarly, he comes across an Egyptian who is quite impressive – in other words, skilled at his weaponry.
 - Yet even with a club in hand against a skillful spear warrior, Benaiah outmaneuvers this man and kills him with his own weapon.
 - It reminds me of the scenes in the martial arts movies with Jackie Chan where he removes the weapon out of the enemies' hands and destroys them with it.
 - That type of skill and finesse is amazing and indeed Benaiah was just that.
 - In fact because of his skills, faithfulness to the king, and abilities, David promotes him to commander of the guard.
 - What's interesting here in the text is that both Abishai and Benaiah are both promoted regarding role or position.
 - This is an interesting point because there is a parallel here to how believers will be awarded by the King in the Coming Kingdom.
 - That where one's faithfulness and obedience to the King is seen over time in this life (maturity), provides insight into responsibilities one will attain in the Kingdom.
 - In other words, how you serve the King now is indicative of what you do for the King in the Kingdom to come.
 - We see this reality outlined in another parable that Jesus taught in Luke 19:11-27 regarding the Parable of the Minas.
 - This parable Jesus taught dealt with another aspect of Kingdom Reward and that was the servants' responsibilities in the Kingdom and how that is attained.
 - In a similar way that eternal rewards are given is how responsibilities are given in the Kingdom as well.
 - And the way that this occurs is based upon one's maturity and growth in the Lord and faithfulness in testimony.
 - Plainly put, how you live for Jesus now will determine what you will do for Him

in the Kingdom.

- The Lord will award responsibility and authority in the Kingdom proportionally to the quality of the believer's testimony through their spiritual maturity.
 - Jesus says these words in Luke 12:48b:

Luke 12:48b From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.

- In the case of the slave who produced no results with his minas, the Master's judgement is a denial of rewards like that in Matthew 25.
 - Notice however the difference in the parable in Matthew 25 versus Luke 19.
 - The slave in Luke 19 is not sent out in outer darkness. This serves as a clear distinction which is, the believer has eternal security in Christ.
 - In other words, where faith is required for salvation and is rewarded eternal security, a good testimony in the Lord requires maturity and growth in sanctification through the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - This means that the individual must come under the weight of the word of God and faithfully obey to grow in spiritual maturity.
 - And it is in the spiritual maturity that good testimony emerges, which becomes the qualifier for authority and responsibilities in the Kingdom.
 - As Uncle Ben in Spider-Man said, "with great power comes great responsibility". And in this case with whom the Lord entrusts much, so he expects much.
 - May we not waste our lives in Christ because we fail to submit ourselves under the word of the Lord.
 - We see here that both Abishai and Benaiah were both faithfully submitted and loyal to the King.
 - And in return the King promoted them both to positions of authority in his administration.
 - We find the promotion of Benaiah in the accounts of both 1 Kings 1:8 and 1 Kings 2:25 which demonstrate once again his undying loyalty and faithfulness to the king.
 - Well, we now come to our final section of the text verses 24-39. Check out the text.

2 Samuel 23:24 Asahel the brother of Joab was among the thirty; Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem,

2 Samuel 23:25 Shammah the Harodite, Elikah the Harodite,

2 Samuel 23:26 Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite,

2 Samuel 23:27 Abiezer the Anathothite, Mebunnai the Hushathite,

2 Samuel 23:28 Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite,

2 Samuel 23:29 Heleb the son of Baanah the Netophathite, Ittai the son of Ribai of Gibeah of the sons of Benjamin,

2 Samuel 23:30 Benaiah a Pirathonite, Hiddai of the brooks of Gaash,

2 Samuel 23:31 Abi-albon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite,
2 Samuel 23:32 Eliahba the Shaalbonite, the sons of Jashen, Jonathan,
2 Samuel 23:33 Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam the son of Sharar the Ararite,
2 Samuel 23:34 Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maacathite, Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite,
2 Samuel 23:35 Hezro the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite,
2 Samuel 23:36 Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite,
2 Samuel 23:37 Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Beerothite, armor bearers of Joab the son of Zeruiah,
2 Samuel 23:38 Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite,
2 Samuel 23:39 Uriah the Hittite; thirty-seven in all.

- As we conclude David’s list of commendation, we see that each individual had a role and each individual in that role faithfully served the King.
 - These individuals’ merits did not determine their position with David, but rather their faithfulness to David determined their success in the ranks.
 - Whether the individuals died before the rise of David in his consummation as King or not, David honored them accordingly because of their faithfulness.
 - You may have noticed that there is one individual, in particular, that is not included in this list out right, but is mentioned by association.
 - That man is none other than Joab.
 - Joab, indirectly, is mentioned 3 times in this text, either as being Abishai and Asahel’s brother, or the armor bearer of Joab.
 - And one might ask the question: “With all that Joab did, why wasn’t he recorded in David’s commendation record?”
 - Well, there are two words in which we have used during our time tonight, and those words are faithful and obedient.
 - And Joab did not faithfully obey the commands of the King.
 - Simply put, Joab played by his own set of rules.
- My wife and I love to play Monopoly and if you ever play with us, we play by the book and it gets intense.
 - The creator of Monopoly set out these rules so that the game is fair and everyone can achieve according to their abilities.
 - When you play by the rules, you get awarded accordingly.
 - And in the same manner, we find that this applies in a spiritual manner as well.
 - That when a believer is submitted to the Lord through the second tense of salvation (sanctification), that believer’s life will experience great growth.
 - However, when that individual is not submitted under the weight and authority of the word of God, growth becomes stagnated.
 - In other words, when we don’t play according to God’s set standard of rules (aka, obeying His Word) as believers, we shouldn’t expect to be rewarded for it.

- Our faithfulness to His word produces the fruitfulness of our lives, spiritually.
- And as we witnessed with Joab’s life, although he was loyal to the King, his unwillingness to obey caused himself great harm in the end.
- How sad it would be to have come to faith in the Lord, yet never put yourself under the weight of His word, only to stand before Him with nothing to show for it.
 - I believe, the ‘Big C’ Church has done a horrible job with not seeking to help the saints grow in their personal walks with the Lord.
- We have a huge focus on evangelizing and seeing people saved, but many people and churches just stop there as if there isn’t more to experience in our walks with Christ.
 - Salvation simply got us to the starting line of experiencing true life.
 - We must now learn to live and walk obediently in Christ because we have been empowered to do so!
 - I love what Paul tells Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:11-13. Check out the text:

2 Timothy 2:11 It is a trustworthy statement:

For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him;

2 Timothy 2:12 If we endure, we will also reign with Him;

If we deny Him, He also will deny us;

2 Timothy 2:13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

- As Pastor Steven Armstrong mentioned in his teaching of eternal rewards:

“Our inheritance in the Kingdom will be determined by what we do for Christ, while our authority in the Kingdom will be determined by who we become in Christ.”

- All of this friends, is based upon what we do with the life we have been graciously given!
 - I pray that at the end of my life, as I stand before Christ at the Bema Seat that He will be pleased with me and I will be rewarded accordingly.
 - Because, as my wife and I often say, we want to be fully squeezed and exhausted of every opportunity the Lord gave us.
 - Let’s Pray.

Citations:

- Josephus, Flavius, and William Whiston. The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987.
- (The distance to the well near the gate of Bethlehem was more than twelve miles away. So, at best, this was a 24 mile commute in total for one drink of water.) Bergen, Robert D. 1, 2 Samuel. Vol. 7. The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996.



VERSE BY VERSE MINISTRY
INTERNATIONAL

TEACHING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

2 Samuel - Lesson 24

Chapter 24:1-25

P.O. Box 702107
San Antonio, Texas, 78270
210.319.5055

©2023. Verse By Verse Ministry International.
All rights reserved

versebyverseministry.org/lessons/2-samuel-lesson-24

2 Samuel series originally taught by Stephen Armstrong. Chapter 20 onwards taught by Wesley Livingston

- Tonight, we come to our last Chapter in the book of 2 Samuel.
 - We have been able to observe the life of David in all of its complexities, from his rise to the throne to his misdeeds and failures as king.
 - What becomes quite profound about David’s life is that the writer does not seek to hide the shortcomings of David’s life.
 - There is no omissions of David’s life or need to maintain a false façade of David as King of Israel during his 40 year reign.
 - It is God, in His Sovereign providence, that allows us to see how David could be both a man after His own heart, yet still struggle in sin from time to time.
 - And hopefully, this study has been encouraging for you in your own life as well in that our lives experience this up and down reality.
 - And tonight’s study will be no different as the writer, under the leading of the Holy Spirit, uses this chapter as the conclusion to David’s life story and reign.
 - If I were to outline our time together, we will see the following things:
 - 1. David’s Sin (vv.1-9)
 - 2. Judgement Demanded (vv.10-14)
 - 3. Pestilence Sent (vv.15-17)
 - 4. Fellowship Restored (vv.18-25)
 - If I were to put a tag on our text tonight it would simply be: David’s Sin: Sin, Judgement and Restoration
 - With that being said, I invite you to meet me in 2 Samuel 24:1-25. We will begin our reading in verse 1.

2 Samuel 24:1 Now again the anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and it incited David against them to say, “Go, number Israel and Judah.”

- The text begins rather interestingly in the sense that we are thrust into the final chapter with the wording, “Now, again” regarding the anger of the Lord against Israel.
 - The question that one might ask the text is “What happened?”
 - “What has caused the anger of the Lord to burn against Israel again?”
 - As I’ve mentioned in previous teachings in 2 Samuel, whenever we see “the Lord angered with Israel”, it is most often always due to Israel’s sin and in this case it is no different. (Nation or Leadership)
 - And we will see later on tonight what the sin was.
 - Another question becomes, “When was the anger of the Lord kindled against Israel before, contextually speaking?”
 - Well, we need not go further than 2 Samuel 21, where a famine swept through the land during David’s reign due to Saul’s sin of breaking an oath.
 - And because of Saul’s failure of upholding the oath made by Joshua in Joshua

9, both Israel and Saul’s descendants suffered greatly.

- It seems as if the tables have now turned within David’s reign as King and the Nation of Israel is in a ‘bit of a pickle’.
 - Again, the text mentions that “the anger of the Lord burned against Israel”.
 - That word for anger in the Hebrew means “nose”, so the translation in the original is “God’s nose is burning” which is a Hebrew idiom.
 - And knowing that God does not have human emotions, it’s simply describing that injustice has occurred and Justice must be served.
 - We should thank God that the Lord is not petty nor responds impulsively as we human beings do!
- Now again, the text provides us no information regarding how Israel sinned or how they have offended Yahweh.
 - We simply are shown that injustice has happened, and His judgement must now be exhibited to remain consistent with His Holiness. (Divine Nature)
- So, at this point, another question arises which is: “What would be the method by which the Lord would use to get Israel to recognize the reality of them being in sin?”
 - Well, we find the answer to that question in part b of verse 1.
- It is because of Israel’s sin that the text says that the Lord “incited” David against them to do a census. (“Go, number Israel and Judah”)
 - The word “incited” in Hebrew means to mislead or to allure away in a positive or negative sense.
- Now at the onset, the use of this word to describe God moving David to take a census seems out of character with God’s nature of being Holy and Righteous.
 - As a matter of fact, James 1:13 speaks to the fact that God does not tempt or cause one to sin.
 - Rather, He tests us to prove His word and work through us. Check out the text.

James 1:13 Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

- ○ The question becomes, if God is consistent in His nature and character then how is God the “inciter” to cause David’s sin?
- Well, when we read through the parallel passage of 2 Samuel 24 found in 1 Chronicles 21:1, we see two things:
 - 1. We find out who is the instrument used to cause David to sin
 - 2. What is the sin that is committed by David, but a result of the sin of the nation.
 - Turn with me quickly to 1 Chronicles 21:1.

1 Chronicles 21:1 Then Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel.

1 Chronicles 21:2 So David said to Joab and to the princes of the people, “Go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan, and bring me word that I may know their number.”

- So, here we see that the cause of David to number the people is not God, but rather Satan who is inciting David.
 - Now, some can look at these two accounts and say how are these two accounts able to be reconciled if one says God was the cause and the other says Satan.
 - What we see here is that it is the Lord, in His Sovereignty, that is allowing Satan to influence David’s motivation to take a census of the people.
 - In other words, God uses the enemy to bring about divine judgement on the object of his anger (David).
 - And what we find here is a familiar concept of how the Lord allows evil influences in this life to accomplish His purposes and plans for His glory.
 - Often, it is through the frailties of the human condition and our giving into our own sin nature that the Lord reveals our sinful conditions in that we might turn to Him in repentance.
 - Plainly put, these divine detours are meant for us to see the arrogance of our own ways so that we may turn to the Lord.
 - It’s what we find in areas of scripture such as Job and 1 Kings 22 where the Lord uses what seems to be misdirection as a divine device or instrument to reveal truth.
 - And in both instances God allows or permits this means of “inciting” (testing/tempting) to hold the individual responsible for their behavior.
 - And we find in verses 2-4 what the sin of Israel truly was in quite an ironic way. Check out verses 2-4.

2 Samuel 24:2 The king said to Joab the commander of the army who was with him, “Go about now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and register the people, that I may know the number of the people.”

2 Samuel 24:3 But Joab said to the king, “Now may the Lord your God add to the people a hundred times as many as they are, while the eyes of my lord the king still see; but why does my lord the king delight in this thing?”

2 Samuel 24:4 Nevertheless, the king’s word prevailed against Joab and against the commanders of the army. So Joab and the commanders of the army went out from the presence of the king to register the people of Israel.

- It’s in verses 2-4 that we see David’s command to Joab to initiate a census of the people of Israel.
 - However, if you closely examine the parallel passage in 1 Chronicles 21:3-5, we find that the census did not include “all of Israel”.
 - Instead, the census consisted of only the “men of Israel” excluding women and children.

- What this shows us is that it was not a sin to take a census of the people!
- As a matter of fact, this practice was given to Moses by the Lord in Exodus 30:11-16 as well as Numbers 1 and 26.
- So, this means that something preceded this moment which causes this heart check test for David to examine the temperament of his heart!
 - 1 Chronicles 21:3-5 reveals to us what the root of the sin of this census was about. Check out the text:

1 Chronicles 21:3 Joab said, “May the Lord add to His people a hundred times as many as they are! But, my lord the king, are they not all my lord’s servants? Why does my lord seek this thing? Why should he be a cause of guilt to Israel?”

1 Chronicles 21:4 Nevertheless, the king’s word prevailed against Joab. Therefore, Joab departed and went throughout all Israel, and came to Jerusalem.

1 Chronicles 21:5 Joab gave the number of the census of all the people to David. And all Israel were 1,100,000 men who drew the sword; and Judah was 470,000 men who drew the sword.

- So, we find that the root behind God’s anger against Israel was David’s arrogance and pride and as a result the Nation became a casualty.
 - The Nation, at this point in their history was experiencing immense blessing and posterity.
 - And when you find yourself in a place of great blessing and growth, it is human nature to see the blessing and forget who provided it for you!
 - It is often the case that our “mountain top experiences” allow us to see the goodness of God and our valley moments grant us the mercy of God!
 - If you recall with the life of David, he was able to speak mightily of the wonders and provision of God because he had endured much with God.
 - So, what caused this pride to swell within the heart of David was seeing the Nation’s prosperity and blessing within the land.
 - Notice, in 1 Chronicles 21:5, David’s census includes “men who draw the sword”. In other words, this is a military census to show the might of the Nation.
 - The reality was, David looked at the numbers of his army instead of depending upon the God behind the army!
 - And the reality is we oftentimes do the same thing. We get beside ourselves and think our degrees carried us to where we are or our skills, and so on.
 - However, when we boil everything down, it is the Lord who has provided for us and He most certainly did for David!
 - This is what Proverbs 18:10-12 says regarding matters of pride in the human heart.

Proverbs 18:10 The name of the Lord is a strong tower;

The righteous runs into it and is safe.

Proverbs 18:11 A rich man's wealth is his strong city,

And like a high wall in his own imagination.

Proverbs 18:12 Before destruction the heart of man is haughty,

But humility goes before honor.

- So rather than David resting and depending upon the faithful provision of the Lord, he saw what they had “seemingly achieved” and credited it to himself.
 - Interestingly enough, it was Joab who notices something is off with David in his request. (1 Chronicles 21:3)
 - Joab points to the fact that the Lord can provide the need, therefore there was no need to place Israel under this guilt.
 - In other words, our strength lies in the Lord and if you ask Him, He will provide the numbers.
 - How ironic is it that Joab, a hot-headed, violent, and quick-witted man responds with such wisdom.
 - Yet this wisdom from an unwise man wasn't heard because the King's word prevailed. This is God's Sovereignty at work!
 - Check out verses 5-9.

2 Samuel 24:5 They crossed the Jordan and camped in Aroer, on the right side of the city that is in the middle of the valley of Gad and toward Jazer.

2 Samuel 24:6 Then they came to Gilead and to the land of Tahtim-hodshi, and they came to Dan-jaan and around to Sidon,

2 Samuel 24:7 and came to the fortress of Tyre and to all the cities of the Hivites and of the Canaanites, and they went out to the south of Judah, to Beersheba.

2 Samuel 24:8 So when they had gone about through the whole land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.

2 Samuel 24:9 And Joab gave the number of the registration of the people to the king; and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.

- Upon the King's request, Joab and his men traveled in a counterclockwise fashion throughout the land covering all their bases.
 - Here is a map of their travels which totalled close to 285 days and ended around springtime.
 - And being that there are approximately 355 days in a Jewish year, means that only 70 days were left in the year. So, this process was no small feat.
 - Furthermore, regardless of the varying count of the census between 2 Samuel 24 and 1 Chronicles 21, this is not the point.
 - What becomes the focus moving forward is how David responds to the results of the census. Check out verses 10-14.

2 Samuel 24:10 Now David's heart troubled him after he had numbered the people. So David said to the Lord, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O Lord, please take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have acted very foolishly."

2 Samuel 24:11 When David arose in the morning, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying,

2 Samuel 24:12 "Go and speak to David, 'Thus the Lord says, "I am offering you three things; choose for yourself one of them, which I will do to you.'""

2 Samuel 24:13 So Gad came to David and told him, and said to him, "Shall seven years of famine come to you in your land? Or will you flee three months before your foes while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days' pestilence in your land? Now consider and see what answer I shall return to Him who sent me."

2 Samuel 24:14 Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let us now fall into the hand of the Lord for His mercies are great, but do not let me fall into the hand of man."

- It is after having received the numbers from this military census that David becomes troubled in his heart.
 - And he confesses to the Lord that he has sinned "greatly". David's use of the word "greatly" (*me'od*) had never been used by David regarding his sin.
 - In other words, David saw that he had done grievously wrong against the Lord because of his pride and arrogance.
 - It's one thing to sin but it's another thing to sin and not realize what you have done against a Holy God.
 - It seems as if David is quite aware of his sin nature, yet he doesn't allow his sin to keep him out of fellowship with the one he knows keeps Him.
 - From there David immediately turns to the Lord for forgiveness of sins.
 - And what a beautiful thing it is to know that the Lord is waiting to forgive those who turn to Him.
 - This is a perfect demonstration of seeing the heart of David before a Holy God.
 - The point is not for us to try and be like David, but to see how even in David's life he runs to the Lord for all he needs and so should we!
 - That in the Lord there is forgiveness of sins. This is why we see in 1 John 1:9 the following:

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- ◦ Believer, God's forgiveness is fully available in Christ who is ready and faithful to forgive and to cleanse us.
 - But understand that there must be a willingness to be open and transparent before a Holy God. Take off the fig leaves and stand before Him!

- So, upon David's recognition of his sin and confession of his sin, we see that the Lord immediately and graciously responds through David's prophet Gad.
 - It began by saying the Lord was angered against Israel, yet now the text recognizes this was David's sin that caused Israel to be greatly judged.
 - As a quick note we must not miss that as goes the King, so does the nation. This was Joab's point!
 - In other words, the leadership over the people will either lead them into blessing or demise.
 - And in this case, David's pride caused the entire nation to now face judgement.
 - So in God's response, He provides David with three choices regarding the punishment of the Nation for his sin.
 - And the fact that the Lord provides choices to David is a mercy in and of itself, yet it is not without its consequence.
 - Meaning, God's justice must always be satisfied according to His righteousness.
 - As a quick side note, although David is given choices here, this is not prescriptive for you and I today.
 - This example is simply descriptive as to how God dealt with David.
 - So, when you and I sin, we don't get the opportunity to pick our consequences.
 - Rather, we must face the consequences of our choices accordingly.
 - So, the very next morning, David receives a response from the Lord through the prophet Gad and Gad presents David with three choices. The choices were:
 - 1. There would be a 7-year famine in the land (depending on which translation it may read 3 years – copyist error)
 - 2. David would flee three months from his enemies as they pursue him.
 - 3. Three days of pestilence in the land.
 - Regardless of all choices was the reality and impending doom of destruction, death, and great disruption.
 - So, there was no getting out of the consequence of sin against Holy God.
 - The only difference in the choices that were provided was the duration in which these consequential results would last.
 - The first option would last 3 years, the second option, 3 months, and the third option, 3 days.
 - And in David's consideration he relies upon the mercy of God amidst his great distress.
 - For if there was one thing that David knew about God, despite David's misdeeds, it was that God was a God of mercy.
 - And I find this quite informative because it shows us David's shift in disposition.
 - There is this immediate turn around for David in that where he was beside

himself in pride, he comes to the reality of Who his true provider is!

- Furthermore, regarding David’s choice of consequence, later rabbis argued his reasoning to choose the 3 day plague. This is what they deduced.

“If I choose famine the people will say that I chose something which will affect them and not me, for I shall be well supplied with food; if I choose war, they will say that the king is well protected; let me choose pestilence, before which all are equal.”

- ◦ In other words, David knew that no one would be excluded from this judgement, including himself, the one who brought it about.
 - Yet at the same time David knew, the Lord would not cause those who are His to suffer forever, because His grace is sufficient.
 - Micah 7:18 states it best this way:

**Micah 7:18 Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity
And passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession?
He does not retain His anger forever,
Because He delights in unchanging love.**

- It’s like a parent who disciplines their child when they have done wrong. Although the punishment is necessary, and at times painful, it is but for a time.
 - Growing up, I never understood my parents telling me “this whooping hurts me more than it hurts you!”
 - However, as a parent now, I get it! The punishment is great because of my love for you, and it’s because I love you that the duration is only for a moment.
 - David and Israel will now experience the judgement in which he brought upon them and himself. Check out verses 15-17.

2 Samuel 23:15 So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning until the appointed time, and seventy thousand men of the people from Dan to Beersheba died.

2 Samuel 23:16 When the angel stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord relented from the calamity and said to the angel who destroyed the people, “It is enough! Now relax your hand!” And the angel of the Lord was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

2 Samuel 23:17 Then David spoke to the Lord when he saw the angel who was striking down the people, and said, “Behold, it is I who have sinned, and it is I who have done wrong; but these sheep, what have they done? Please let Your hand be against me and against my father’s house.”

- The judgement of the Lord is now fully realized by David as the text mentions that 70,000 men from Dan to Beersheba died.

- That where David's desire to see the numbers of his kingdom increase, due to pride, it resulted in the death of thousands.
 - What a sobering reality this must have been?!
- Herein lies a peak into the effects of sin, that what we think is of private enjoyment ends up being the demise of yourself and impacts those around us.
 - I tell my children all the time, your sin nature doesn't just impact you, but it impacts those around you.
 - Sin at its very core is the exchange of the worship of God for yourself.
- Verse 16 mentions that it was the angel of the Lord who stretched out his hand causing the calamity that was being released throughout the land and headed towards Jerusalem.
 - However, the text makes an interesting pivot because as the hand of the 'angel of the Lord' moves towards Jerusalem, Yahweh tells him, "It is enough".
 - Clearly, the angel of the Lord had all intentions of "destroying" Jerusalem.
 - The word 'destroy' in Hebrew can mean to ruin, to lay waste, or to annihilate.
 - And the cause of this destruction was due to the Lord "relenting" from the calamity headed towards Jerusalem.
 - The word 'relent' is an interesting word. It shows up nearly 108 times in 100 verses in the Old Testament.
 - The origin of the root, *ne'ham*, carries the idea of someone "breathing deeply" as if displaying compassion towards one who has done wrong.
 - Imagine, your child or relative having done something that warrants dire consequence before the judge in a court of law.
 - Yet before the full weight of the consequence is rendered by the judge, he shakes his head and breathes deeply only to consider "changing his mind".
 - The Septuagint renders the word *ne'ham* both as *metanoeo* and *metamelomai* which is where we get the word repent from.
 - Only repent, in this context, is not how human beings repent, but how God changes his mind.
 - Understand, God does not repent as it relates to how human beings repent.
 - Humans repent due to our sin. God does not sin.
 - So, when this term is used of God it is Anthropopathic.
 - Anthropopathic simply means escribing feelings of human beings to one who is not human.
 - So, God is not changing His word or Sovereign Decree, rather He changes how He carries out His judgement according to man's change in conduct.
 - As one Jewish Theologian notes, "A change in man's conduct brings about a change in God's judgement." (The Prophets, p. 194)
 - How do we see this played out scripturally? We see this displayed in God's mercies exhibited towards those who respond positively to His word and promises!
 - Here are a few places to consider: 1 Chronicles 21:15; Jeremiah 18:8; 26:3; Amos 7:3,6; Jonah 3:10.

- So, this relenting of the calamity that would have rightfully taken out Jerusalem is ceased because David repented.
 - And what becomes so beautiful towards the end of verse 17 is not only David’s personal confession of his sin, but him taking on the responsibility instead of Israel.
- David desires to take on the punishment himself and calls Israel “sheep” in the sense that he is responsible for their safety and protection.
 - There is a sense here of his personal ownership of the calamity and desire to take upon himself the due penalty.
 - And what a picture shows of how Christ who didn’t sin yet graciously took upon Himself our guilt and sin as if it were His own.
 - Lastly, there are two things worth noting in verses 16 and 17 and that is, the Angel of the Lord and where He stops His destruction.
- The text mentions that the “angel of the Lord” was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite when He ceased the destruction.
 - And David is allowed to see this Angel striking down the people.
 - It is quite possible that the ‘Angel of the Lord’ mentioned here was in fact the pre-incarnate Christ.
 - Now, let’s note “where” the destruction is withdrawn.
- The text mentions that the mercy of the Lord is exhibited at the threshing floor of Araunah, the Jebusite.
 - Now, a threshing floor was a level outdoor area typically on top of a rock or hilltop where threshing occurred.
- The location of the threshing floor was located north of the northern walls of David’s Jerusalem which means it was not owned by David.
 - Furthermore, it is the location of the Temple Mount which would become the future site of Solomon’s Temple.
 - And if that weren’t coincidental enough, this was also the very location where Abraham was sent to sacrifice his son Isaac – known as Mount Moriah.
- So, where David repents before Yahweh becomes the place where future sacrifices to the Lord would take place.
 - Check out how this reality unfolds in verses 18-25.

2 Samuel 24:18 So Gad came to David that day and said to him, “Go up, erect an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.”

2 Samuel 24:19 David went up according to the word of Gad, just as the Lord had commanded.

2 Samuel 24:20 Araunah looked down and saw the king and his servants crossing over toward him; and Araunah went out and bowed his face to the ground before the king.

2 Samuel 24:21 Then Araunah said, “Why has my lord the king come to his servant?” And David said, “To buy the threshing floor from you, in order to build an altar to the Lord, that the plague may be held back from the

people.”

2 Samuel 24:22 Araunah said to David, “Let my lord the king take and offer up what is good in his sight. Look, the oxen for the burnt offering, the threshing sledges and the yokes of the oxen for the wood.

2 Samuel 24:23 Everything, O king, Araunah gives to the king.” And Araunah said to the king, “May the Lord your God accept you.”

2 Samuel 24:24 However, the king said to Araunah, “No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price, for I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God which cost me nothing.” So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

2 Samuel 24:25 David built there an altar to the Lord and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. Thus the Lord was moved by prayer for the land, and the plague was held back from Israel.

- It’s on this last day of the plague that David receives word from the prophet Gad to build an altar to the Lord where the plague stopped.
 - And without hesitation, in immediate obedience, David went up (meaning ascended to the land – elevation wise) where the threshing floor was located.
 - And it is there that David met Araunah to purchase his property.
 - Araunah was the owner of this land and was a Jebusite which was a non-Israelite native from Jerusalem.
 - Araunah seeing the King and his servants coming toward him, he bends the knee which would signify his honor and respect for the King.
 - And in that moment Araunah asks the King “what brings him his way.”
 - David responds and tells Araunah that he is looking to buy the land from him to build an altar to the Lord to withhold the plague.
 - Immediately, Araunah seeks to provide the King with whatever he needed in order to appease God and to be in right fellowship with God.
 - He provides David with the land, the animals necessary, and even the equipment needed to prepare the altar for sacrifices.
 - So, it’s in verse 23 that we see that Araunah offers everything of value that he possesses to the King without charge.
 - Now, Araunah must have known that David was out of fellowship with the Lord because in verse 23 the writer uses the word *rsh* (*rad-sa*) for “accept”.
 - The word “accept” here means to take pleasure in or accept favorably.
 - The idea here is that of propitiation. That to be right with God requires one to approach Him in an acceptable manner.
 - Clearly, Araunah understood the significance of sacrifices and therefore provided the oxen for the king.
 - The purpose of the burnt offering was to make atonement for sin and was demonstrated as an act of worship and surrender to God.
 - So, the devastation that Israel was facing was due to their King being out of fellowship with the Lord.

- Here's the good news for believers: Our sin does not remove us positionally out of the Lord's hands. (i.e no loss of eternal security)
- Rather, it causes us to be out of fellowship with the Lord.
- And the way to restore broken fellowship is through confessing of our sins.
- Therefore, it is in Christ that the full satisfaction of the Father's wrath has been accomplished through the crushing of His Son, Jesus Christ.
- Well, after hearing Araunah's proposition to the King, David mentions that he will not accept this great sacrifice from Araunah for free.
 - Rather, David tells him that he will buy it for a price.
 - And then David provides such a beautiful response to something of such great cost.
- He says, "I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God, which cost me nothing."
 - In other words, it's not a sacrifice to the Lord if there has been no cost counted!
 - When has a fast to the Lord been considered a great cost if it wasn't something that you held tightly?
 - When has anything of great value been worth attaining to if it wasn't worth working for?
 - And in the same way, how can pursuing Christ in all things not cost you something of great value, whether time, treasure, or the like. (Mark 8:34-38)
 - Matthew 6:21 tells us this regarding the measure of our affections.

Matthew 6:21 for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

- So, David, in turn pays Araunah 50 shekels of silver which is about \$1,067 in US Dollars.
 - And from this great sacrifice, David built the altar to the Lord.
 - He offered up his burnt offerings in order to atone for his sins against Yahweh.
 - And made peace offerings to renew fellowship with God.
- David's recognition of his sin and submitting himself to the Lord positioned both himself and Israel to be in right fellowship with the Lord.
 - And through David's repentant response to the Lord Yahweh responds accordingly.
 - When you consider this encounter, it shows us God's steadfast love and faithfulness to His word and those who trust in Him.
- How kind it was for the Lord to bring Abraham to this place and for Abraham to take God at His word to point to a future sacrifice that would be made there.
 - And from Abraham, God using David to purchase this land in preparation for Israel to grow in their understanding of sacrifice to the Lord.
 - So, although David did not build the Temple, he was used to purchase the land where Solomon would build the Temple.

- And the temple would be a constant reminder for Israel that it is through the shedding of blood that there is forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 9:22).
 - Both Issac and Jerusalem were able to bypass death because it would be through Christ that true Divine Justice would be unleashed for all.
- Friends, it is through the life of David that we are able to witness what the favor of God looks like upon those in whom trust in Him (justified) and obey His word (sanctified).
 - And it is through the Lord’s keeping power that He maintains their standing before His presence.
 - Whether through obedience to His word or Divine discipline, the Lord uses all things to work out His plan through those in whom He loves.
 - For it is God who is the source of blessing, and it is through being made right with Him that those blessings are upheld.
 - However, the moment that we step outside of His covering and care, we leave way for judgment and consequence to commence.
 - But even in His judgement and consequences, He is merciful enough that when we repent, He relents with great mercy and care.
 - May David’s life be a constant reminder to us all who are in Christ.
 - That positionally we are justified in Christ, relationally, we are sanctified in Christ, and experientially, we are matured and glorified in Christ.
 - David’s life becomes an encouraging picture to all of us that our lives are not perfect, yet we serve a God who is able to keep us and maintain us before Himself.
 - Let’s Pray.

Citation:

- *Map used in presentation for Joab’s journey to census the people of Israel comes from Yohanan Aharoni, Ph.D at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Aharoni, Yohanan, Michael Avi-Yonah, Anson F. Rainey, R. Steven Notley, and Ze’ev Safrai, eds. The Carta Bible Atlas. Fifth Edition. Jerusalem, Israel: Carta Jerusalem, 2011.*
- *The reckoning assumes that each “month” was actually 29.5 days in length, the equivalent of one cycle of the moon. Bergen, Robert D. 1, 2 Samuel. Vol. 7. The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996.*
- Tom Constable, [Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003), 2 Sa 24:10. Goldman, p. 345
- Harris, R. Laird, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds. Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament. Chicago: Moody Press, 1999.
- David witnessing the ‘angel of the Lord’ destroying the “sheep of Israel” had to be a sobering reality knowing that David, himself, was the cause of this calamity. This reality becomes a picture of the foreshadowing of how the Lord Jesus, only in His innocence, would look upon the guilt of the people and take upon Himself the rightful judgement and wrath of God.
- Barry, John D., David Bomar, Derek R. Brown, Rachel Klippenstein, Douglas Mangum, Carrie Sinclair Wolcott, Lazarus Wentz, Elliot Ritzema, and Wendy Widder, eds. “Threshing Floor.” The Lexham Bible Dictionary. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016.
- Watson, Richard. “Moriah, Mount.” A Biblical and Theological Dictionary. New York:

Lane & Scott, 1851.

- Elwell, Walter A., and Barry J. Beitzel. “Burnt Offering.” Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988.
- Weights & Measures Converter. Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2014.