

David: After God's Heart

God works His purpose and plan out through the righteous and the unrighteous.



TRANSFORMATION
for Adult LifeGroups

2 SAMUEL 3:8-21 - CROWNED

JUNE 10, 2018

TODAY'S TEXT

Text: 2 SAMUEL 3:8-21 (NIV), *Abner was very angry because of what Ish-Bosheth said. So he answered, "Am I a dog's head—on Judah's side? This very day I am loyal to the house of your father Saul and to his family and friends. I haven't handed you over to David. Yet now you accuse me of an offense involving this woman! 9 May God deal with Abner, be it ever so severely, if I do not do for David what the Lord promised him on oath 10 and transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and establish David's throne over Israel and Judah from Dan to Beersheba." 11 Ish-Bosheth did not dare to say another word to Abner, because he was afraid of him. 12 Then Abner sent messengers on his behalf to say to David, "Whose land is it? Make an agreement with me, and I will help you bring all Israel over to you." 13 "Good," said David. "I will make an agreement with you. But I demand one thing of you: Do not come into my presence unless you bring Michal daughter of Saul when you come to see me." 14 Then David sent messengers to Ish-Bosheth son of Saul, demanding, "Give me my wife Michal, whom I betrothed to myself for the price of a hundred Philistine foreskins." 15 So Ish-Bosheth gave orders and had her taken away from her husband Paltiel son of Laish. 16 Her husband, however, went with her, weeping behind her all the way to Bahurim. Then Abner said to him, "Go back home!" So he went back. 17 Abner conferred with the elders of Israel and said, "For some time you have wanted to make David your king. 18 Now do it! For the Lord promised David, 'By my servant David I will rescue my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and from the hand of all their enemies.'" 19 Abner also spoke to the Benjamites in person. Then he went to Hebron to tell David everything that Israel and the whole tribe of Benjamin wanted to do. 20 When Abner, who had twenty men with him, came to David at Hebron, David prepared a feast for him and his men. 21 Then Abner said to David, "Let me go at once and assemble all Israel for my lord the king, so that they may make a covenant with you, and that you may rule over all that your heart desires." So David sent Abner away, and he went in peace.*

FIRST THOUGHTS

In the ancient world and today, political loyalties can shift widely and quickly. As we look at today's story, try to read between the lines to Abner's motivations. Did he have the good of the nation at heart trying to end a civil war? Did he have godly motives in wanting to help David fulfill Samuel's prophecy that he would be king? Was he selfish and saw defecting to David as the only way to save himself? What he just personally mad at Saul's son's disrespect and weakness and so abandoned him?

Yet whatever his motive was, God used him at a pivotal moment in Israel's history to further His plan of uniting Israel under David's kingdom. As we look at the world today, it may seem like God's plans are failing.

- **What things happening in our world discourage you about God's purpose and plan coming about?**
- **What things happening in our world today encourage you that God's purpose and plan are coming about?**

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

The fulfillment of God's purposes may not happen easily or automatically. David's life is an example of this. David had been anointed by Samuel to be king over Israel (1 Sam. 16:1-13). However, many obstacles blocked his ascension to the throne, primarily the antagonism and opposition of Saul, Israel's first king. Nevertheless, God's purpose to crown David as king did not change.

David's anointing was a major moment in his ascension to the throne, but it was followed by an arduous struggle. At roughly the same time, Abner, the commander of Saul's army and his cousin, installed the late king's only living son, Ish-Bosheth [ish-BOH sheth], as the king of all the tribes outside of Judah (2 Sam. 2:8-11). Doing so allowed him to retain his role as chief military officer, which he occupied under Saul.

The stage was set for a conflict between the two armies and it took place at Gibeon, northwest of Jerusalem. As Abner's army retreated, Joab and his two brothers pursued Abner (2:18). This proved to be an unwise course of action resulting in one of the brothers' death. Abner had tried to avoid the casualty of a fellow general's close family member. Nevertheless, Asahel's energetic pursuit led to his own gruesome demise (2:21-23). The remaining two siblings continued the chase until they were blocked by reinforcements from the tribe of Benjamin, Saul's own kinsmen (2:24-32).

This incident would have repercussions in the days to follow. Though loyal to David, Joab possessed a vicious streak, which caused him to seek vengeance at any cost and to disregard any entreaties from others. In the end, he would be judged for this character flaw. This passage opens with the armies of Saul in retreat and an encounter between Saul's oldest surviving son, Ish-bosheth, and Saul's trusted army commander, Abner.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

CHANGING ALLEGIANCE

> Read 2 Samuel 3:1 and 6-11

° Why was Saul's son Ish-bosheth upset with Abner? Why was he afraid of him? What role did this play in causing Abner to switch his loyalty to David? What other factors might have contributed to Abner switching loyalty from Saul's camp to David's camp?

AN OPPORTUNITY TO END THE WAR

> Read 2 Samuel 3:12-16

- ° What would you be thinking if you were David and Abner approached you? What was David's response?
- ° Why did David agree to Abner's proposal? What benefit might Abner's covenant with David have brought to Abner? To David?
- ° Why was Michal (Saul's daughter and David's wife) involved in this transaction?

A CONSOLIDATED KINGDOM

> Read 2 Samuel 3:17-21

- ° How did Abner persuade Saul's remaining supporters to follow David?

A BITTER RIVAL

> Read 2 Samuel 3:22-36

- ° What was Joab's grudge with Abner?
- ° Why did David distance himself from this act of vengeance?
- ° Why does God use the unrighteous to accomplish His purpose and plan?

SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE

As you look at the world today, you may be discouraged by the success of the unrighteous. What hope does today's passage offer to us about God's purpose and plan?

Personal Challenge: When you are tempted to doubt God's plan because of the discouragement of the world, remember the story of David and Abner. A similar truth is expressed in Psalm 73 which is a powerful Psalm to meditate on.

Think about the obstacles you are facing as you attempt to follow God's purpose and plan for your life. They may be huge and daunting. They may seem insurmountable. But God is always at work. His purposes will prevail. Trust in him.

UPCOMING LESSONS

- Read Psalm 73 this week.
- Read 2 Samuel 4 this week.
- What obstacles to David's kingship are removed over the first 4 chapters of 2 Samuel?

Celebrated - 2 Samuel 5:9-12; 6:12-19

Established - 2 Samuel 7:8-21

Valued - 2 Samuel 9:1-13

READ THROUGH THE BIBLE

11th - Song 5-8; Philippians 1 | 12th - 1 Kings 12; 2 Chronicles 10-11; Philippians 2 | 13th - 1 Kings 13-14; 2 Chronicles 12; Philippians 3 | 14th - 1 Kings 15; 2 Chronicles 13-14; Philippians 4 | 15th - 1 Kings 16; 2 Chronicles 15-16; Colossians 1 | 16th - 1 Kings 17-19; Colossians 2 | 17th - 1 Kings 20-21; 2 Chronicles 17; Colossians 3