

2 SAMUEL 2:8-5:5 Accessions & Assassinations

1

ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Structure of the Book

1. David's Triumphs (1:1-10:19)
2. David's Troubles (11:1-19:43)
3. Appendix (20:1-24:25)

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David's Triumphs (1:1-10:19)

1. Kingdom Reset: A Man After God's Own Heart (1:1-2:7)
2. Accessions & Assassinations (2:8-5:5)
3. Jerusalem Made the Capital of the Kingdom (5:6-6:23)
4. God's Covenant with David (7:1-29)
5. David's Kingdom at Its Height (8:1-10:19)

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Kingdom Reset: A Man After God's Own Heart (1:1-2:7)

1. Amalekite Lies, David Cries, Amalekite Dies (1:1-16)
 2. David's Lament for Saul and His House (1:17-27)
 3. David Becomes King in Hebron (2:1-7)
- *Last week, we saw how when the Amalekite took credit for killing Saul, David, rather than rejoicing and rewarding the man, mourned for the fallen house of Saul, composed a lament, and had the man executed. Then he was anointed by the elders of Judah as king in Hebron. This week, we'll see the same pattern at work!*

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Accessions & Assassinations (2:8-5:5)

- A. Ishbosheth Made King of Israel (2:8-11)
 - B. Abner Kills Asahel (2:12-32)
 - X. Joab Kills Abner (3:1-39)
 - B'. Assassins Kill Ish-bosheth (4:1-12)
 - A'. David Made King of Israel (5:1-5)
- *As we'll see, the middle one, where Joab kills Abner, is the pivotal one because it is there that we see in David's response his wisdom, nobility, and worthiness to be king.*

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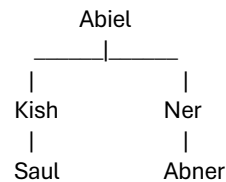
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But **Abner** the son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, took Ish-bosheth the son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim, and he made him king over Gilead and the Ashurites and Jezreel and Ephraim and Benjamin and all Israel.

- *Abner was Saul's cousin, and had been the commander of the army during Saul's reign:*

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Ish-bosheth Made King of Israel (2:8-11)

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Ish-bosheth Made King of Israel (2:8-11)**1 Samuel 14:50-52:**

And the name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam the daughter of Ahima-az. And the name of the commander of his army was Abner the son of Ner, Saul's uncle. Kish was the father of Saul, and Ner the father of Abner was the son of Abiel.

There was hard fighting against the Philistines all the days of Saul. And when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he attached him to himself.

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Ish-bosheth Made King of Israel (2:8-11)

- So then, what motivated Abner to make Ish-bosheth as king of Israel?
- Consider: this wasn't technically a rebellion! God had anointed David, but Ish-bosheth, as a surviving son of Saul, would have had a reasonable claim to the crown after his father's death. Abner had served Saul bravely and loyally, and had seen David as the king's enemy.
- His elevation of Ish-bosheth would have marked his continuing loyalty to the king and his house.

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Ish-bosheth Made King of Israel (2:8-11)

- Moreover, his loyalties were familial and tribal. He was of Saul's family and of Saul's tribe, Benjamin.
- In proclaiming Ish-bosheth king, from Abner's point of view it would have been David who was the rebel, setting up a rival kingship in Judah.
- In any event, the text suggests that Ish-bosheth is king in name only, while the real power at this point resides in his uncle and the commander of the army, Abner.

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Ish-bosheth Made King of Israel (2:8-11)**2 Samuel 2:8-9:**

But Abner ... took Ish-bosheth the son of Saul and brought him over to **Mahanaim**...

- *Mahanaim, a place located east of the River Jordan, on or near the Jabbok River, in the tribal territory of Gad, but on the borderlands between Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh. Mahanaim was set apart as one of the three cities of refuge on the opposite side of the Jordan.*

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Ish-bosheth Made King of Israel (2:8-11)

- Mahanaim was where Jacob, in Genesis 32, encountered “the angels of God” on his way back to the Promised Land from his long exile in Haran, and he exclaimed “This is God's camp!” and called the name of that place Mahanaim, meaning “two camps.”
- Yes, but why was Ish-bosheth based there? Because here was a place far from Judah's easy reach, where the rival kingdom could gather and consolidate its power. (By the way, this would later be the place where David fled from Absalom!)

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

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But Abner the son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, took Ish-bosheth the son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim, and he made him king over **Gilead** and the **Ashurites** and **Jezreel** and **Ephraim** and **Benjamin** and **all Israel**.

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Ish-bosheth Made King of Israel (2:8-11)

Gilead: The rugged hill country east of the Jordan; a synecdoche for all the Transjordanian tribes (Reuben, Gad, and especially E. Manasseh)

Ashurites: The people of Asher; a synecdoche for the northern tribes of Galilee (Asher, Dan, Naphtali, and Issachar)

Jezreel: The flat, fertile region south of Galilee (especially W. Manasseh)

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Ish-bosheth Made King of Israel (2:8-11)

- Ephraim: The strongest of the northern tribes,
a synecdoche for the entire northern kingdom
- Benjamin: The tribe of Saul, Ish-bosheth, and Abner
(and the later Saul of Tarsus!);
the smallest tribe
- All Israel: All the tribal lands except for Judah
(and perhaps Simeon, which by that time
had been or was being incorporated into Judah)

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Ish-bosheth Made King of Israel (2:8-11)**2 Samuel 2:10-11:**

Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, was forty years old
when he began to ***reign over Israel***,
and he ***reigned two years***.

But the house of ***Judah followed David***.
And the time that David was ***king in Hebron***
over the house of Judah was ***seven years and six months***.

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Ish-bosheth Made King of Israel (2:8-11)

- Ish-bosheth was 40 years old when he began to reign in Mahanaim, meaning that Abner by this time must have been at least 60.
- As we'll see in 5:4-5, David was 30 years old when he began to reign in Hebron.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

The Armies March to Battle (2:12-17)**2 Samuel 2:12-17:**

Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, **went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon**. And Joab the son of Zeruiah and the servants of David went out and met them at the pool of Gibeon.

- *We were introduced to Gibeon and the Gibeonites in Joshua 9-10, where we learned that they were Hivites. The Hivites are one of the nations listed in the list of nations in Canaan to be displaced by the invading Israelites, based in central Canaan (Gibeon, Shechem).*

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The Armies March to Battle (2:12-17)

- After the Gibeonites heard what Joshua and the Israelites had done to Jericho and Ai, they deceived the Israelites by pretending they were foreigners and asking to enter into covenant with them. Once the deception was revealed, Joshua let the Gibeonites remain in their city, but they became cutters of wood and drawers of water for all the congregation of Israel.

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The Armies March to Battle (2:12-17)

- Upon hearing that the Gibeonites had thus aligned themselves with Israel, Adoni-zedek, king of Jerusalem, sent to Hoham, king of Hebron, and the kings of Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon – five Amorite kings in all – and marched on Gibeon. The people of Gibeon then appealed to Joshua for help, and Israel came and utterly defeated the Amorites, coming into possession of all their cities – except Jerusalem! That would have to wait...

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

The Armies March to Battle (2:12-17)

- One more thing on Gibeon: Israel's covenant with the Gibeonites will become an issue again later on, in chapter 20.
- The point for now is that Gibeon was the scene of two major Israelite victories: the one recorded in Joshua 10 against the five Amorite kings was the first one, and we are about to read about the second battle of Gibeon

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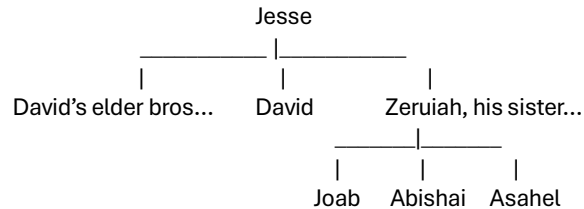
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- *As with Abner, the military commander for the Benjaminite house of Saul, so with Joab, the military commander of David's army: he was a close relative of the King. Specifically, he was David's nephew:*

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The Armies March to Battle (2:12-17)

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The Armies March to Battle (2:12-17)

But wait... Why is Joab referred to as “the son of Zeruiah”? (See also in 2:18, where Joab, Abishai, and Asahel are referred together to as “the three sons of Zeruiah.”)

Why are they named by reference to their mother rather than to their father? After all, it's David son of Jesse (his father) and Saul son of Kish (his father). The answer is because she is of the royal lineage and has the greater prestige. What matters is that they are related by blood to David through their mother, his sister.

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The Armies March to Battle (2:12-17)**2 Samuel 2:12-17:** (cont'd)

Then they arose and passed over by number, ***twelve for Benjamin*** and Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and ***twelve of the servants of David***. And each caught 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 at Gibeon. And the battle was very fierce that day. And ***Abner and the men of Israel were beaten*** before the servants of David.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

The Armies March to Battle (2:12-17)

- This is surely one of the weirder battle scenes ever recorded! Abner suggests that champions from each battle as champions, in place of the assembled troops, and Joab agreed. So twelve young warriors were chosen to fight for Benjamin and twelve for Judah. And each one ended up stabbed the other, so that all fell down together, showing the strength of each side. Therefore, the place became known as Helkath-hazzurim, “the field of swords.”

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The Armies March to Battle (2:12-17)

- After this, the armies launched into battle with one another, and Abner and the men of Israel were beaten before Joab and the servants of David from Judah.

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Abner Pursued by Asahel (2:18-23a)**2 Samuel 2:18-23a:**

And the three sons of Zeruiah were there, Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. Now Asahel was as swift of foot as a wild gazelle. And **Asahel pursued Abner**, and as he went, he turned neither to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner.

Then Abner looked behind him and said, "***Is it you, Asahel?***" And he answered, "It is I." Abner said to him, "***Turn aside*** to your right hand or to your left, and seize one of the young men and take his spoil."

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Abner Pursued by Asahel (2:18-23a)**2 Samuel 2:18-23a:** (cont'd)

But **Asahel would not turn aside** from following him. And Abner said 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?”

But he refused to turn aside.

- *Asahel, swift as a gazelle, pursues Abner relentlessly after the battle, seeking to kill him. Abner warns him and tries to reason with him, but to no avail...*

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Abner Kills Asahel (2:23b)**2 Samuel 2:23b:**

Therefore, **Abner struck him** in the stomach with the butt of his spear, so that the spear came out at his back.

And **he fell there and died** where he was.

And all who came to the place where Asahel had fallen and died, **stood still**.

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Abner Kills Asahel (2:23b)

- Abner, finding himself in a situation of kill or be killed, turns and kills Asahel with a spear. It seems clear that he had not wanted to do this as it would turn his conflict with Joab and Abishai from one that was purely military and political to one that was deeply personal. He knew that in killing Asahel, he would now face the wrath of Joab and Abishai.
- This event will bring ruin to Abner, and ultimately to Ish-bosheth and to the Benjaminite cause and kingdom.

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 - 1'. David Mourns Abner in the Seeing of All Israel (3:31-39)
- B'. Assassins Kill Ish-bosheth (4:1-12)
 - 1. Ish-bosheth's Courage Fails & His Assassins Introduced (4:1-3)
 - X. Mephibosheth Introduced (4:4)
 - 1'. Ish-bosheth's Assassination & His Assassins Executed (4:5-12)
- A'. David Made King of Israel (5:1-5)

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Abner Kills Asahel (2:12-32)

1. The Armies March to Battle (2:12-17)
2. Abner Pursued by Asahel (2:18-23a)
 - X. Abner Kills Asahel (2:23b)
 - 2'. **Abner Pursued by Joab and Abishai (2:24-27)**
- 1'. The Armies March Home (2:28-32)

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Abner Pursued by Joab and Abishai (2:24-27)**2 Samuel 2:24-27:**

But ***Joab and Abishai pursued Abner***. And as the sun was going down they came to the hill of Ammah, which lies before Giah on the way to the wilderness of Gibeon.

And ***the people of Benjamin gathered themselves*** together behind Abner and became one group and ***took their stand on the top of a hill***.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Abner Pursued by Joab and Abishai (2:24-27)

- Chased to the hill of Ammah, the forces of Benjamin now regroup and gather behind Abner to make their stand against the pursuing forces of Judah at the top of the hill.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Abner Pursued by Joab and Abishai (2:24-27)**2 Samuel 2:24-27: (cont'd)**

Then Abner called to Joab, “***Shall the sword devour forever?*** Do you not know that the end will be bitter? ***How long*** will it be before you tell your people to turn from the pursuit of their brothers?”

And Joab said, “As God lives, ***if you had not spoken***, surely ***the men would not have given up*** the pursuit of their brothers until the morning.”

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Abner Pursued by Joab and Abishai (2:24-27)

- Abner reasons with Joab, and Joab, as if coming to his senses, claims to call off the pursuit on the basis of Abner’s appeal.
- We should note, however, that it probably also had to do with the fact that the Benjaminites were no longer fleeing in disarray and easy prey for a pursuing army seeking to destroy it, but had regrouped. Indeed, they had regrouped on a hill and so held a superior position on the high ground, easier to defend and harder to attack. So Joab called a halt to the pursuit.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

- A. Ishbosheth Made King of Israel (2:8-11)
- B. **Abner Kills Asahel (2:12-32)**
 - 1. The Armies March to Battle (2:12-17)
 - 2. Abner Pursued by Asahel (2:18-23a)
 - X. Abner Kills Asahel (2:23b)
 - 2'. Abner Pursued by Joab and Abishai (2:24-27)
 - 1'. **The Armies March Home (2:28-32)**
- X. Joab Kills Abner, Part 1 (3:1-16)
 - 1. David's Wives and Sons in Hebron (3:1-5)
 - 2. Ish-bosheth Turns on Abner (3:6-11)
 - 2. Abner Turns on Ish-bosheth (3:12)
 - 1. David Demands the Return of Michal (3:13-16)
- X. Joab Kills Abner, Part 2 (3:17-39)
 - 1. Abner Covenants with David for All Israel (3:17-21)
 - 2. Joab Angry with David (3:22-25)
 - X. Joab Kills Abner (3:26-27)
 - 2'. David Angry with Joab (3:28-30)
 - 1'. David Mourns Abner in the Seeing of All Israel (3:31-39)
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 - 1. Ish-bosheth's Courage Fails & His Assassins Introduced (4:1-3)
 - X. Mephibosheth Introduced (4:4)
 - 1'. Ish-bosheth's Assassination & His Assassins Executed (4:5-12)
- A'. David Made King of Israel (5:1-5)

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Abner Kills Asahel (2:12-32)

1. The Armies March to Battle (2:12-17)
2. Abner Pursued by Asahel (2:18-23a)
 - X. Abner Kills Asahel (2:23b)
- 2'. Abner Pursued by Joab and Abishai (2:24-27)
- 1'. The Armies March Home (2:28-32)

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

The Armies March Home (2:28-32)**2 Samuel 2:28-32:**

So Joab blew the trumpet, and ***all the men stopped and pursued Israel no more***, nor did they fight anymore.

And ***Abner*** and his men went all that night through the Arabah. They ***crossed the Jordan***, and marching the whole morning, they ***came to Mahanaim***.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

The Armies March Home (2:28-32)**2 Samuel 2:28-32:** (cont'd)

Joab returned from the pursuit of Abner. And when he had gathered all the people together, ***there were missing from David's servants nineteen men besides Asahel. But*** the servants of David had struck down ***of Benjamin 360*** of Abner's men.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

The Armies March Home (2:28-32)

- So the forces stopped from fighting and went their different ways. Abner went back through the Arabah, that is, the hot, dry valley on either side of the Jordan and the Dead Sea, then crossed the Jordan and returned to Mahanaim; Joab returning to Judah.
- When the tallies were done, it was revealed that Benjamin had lost 360 men while Judah had only lost 20 – though one of those 20 was of the royal family.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

The Armies March Home (2:28-32)**2 Samuel 2:28-32:** (cont'd)

And they took up **Asahel** and **buried him in the tomb of his father**, which was **at Bethlehem**. And **Joab** and his men **marched** all night, and the day broke upon them at **Hebron**.

- *Asahel was buried in the tomb of his unnamed father, the husband of Zeruihah, at Bethlehem. And Joab and his men marched all night, to Hebron and to David.*
- *Joab may have halted the pursuit, but this was not finished. His wrath and fury against Abner was personal...*

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

- A. Ishbosheth Made King of Israel (2:8-11)
- B. Abner Kills Asahel (2:12-32)
 - 1. The Armies March to Battle (2:12-17)
 - 2. Abner Pursued by Asahel (2:18-23a)
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 - 1'. The Armies March Home (2:28-32)
- X. **Joab Kills Abner, Part 1 (3:1-16)**
 - 1. David's Wives and Sons in Hebron (3:1-5)
 - 2. Ish-bosheth Turns on Abner (3:6-11)
 - 2. Abner Turns on Ish-bosheth (3:12)
 - 1. David Demands the Return of Michal (3:13-16)
- X. **Joab Kills Abner, Part 2 (3:17-39)**
 - 1. Abner Covenants with David for All Israel (3:17-21)
 - 2. Joab Angry with David (3:22-25)
 - X. Joab Kills Abner (3:26-27)
 - 2'. David Angry with Joab (3:28-30)
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 - 1. Ish-bosheth's Courage Fails & His Assassins Introduced (4:1-3)
 - X. Mephibosheth Introduced (4:4)
 - 1'. Ish-bosheth's Assassination & His Assassins Executed (4:5-12)
- A'. David Made King of Israel (5:1-5)

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Accessions & Assassinations (2:8-5:5)

- A. Ishbosheth Made King of Israel (2:8-11)
- B. Abner Kills Asahel (2:12-32)
 - X. **Joab Kills Abner (3:1-39)**
- B'. Assassins Kill Ish-bosheth (4:1-12)
- A'. David Made King of Israel (5:1-5)

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

- A. Ishbosheth Made King of Israel (2:8-11)
- B. Abner Kills Asahel (2:12-32)
 - 1. The Armies March to Battle (2:12-17)
 - 2. Abner Pursued by Asahel (2:18-23a)
 - X. Abner Kills Asahel (2:23b)
 - 2'. Abner Pursued by Joab and Abishai (2:24-27)
 - 1'. The Armies March Home (2:28-32)
- X. **Joab Kills Abner, Part 1 (3:1-16)**
 - 1. **David's Wives and Sons in Hebron (3:1-5)**
 - 2. Ish-bosheth Turns on Abner (3:6-11)
 - 2. Abner Turns on Ish-bosheth (3:12)
 - 1. David Demands the Return of Michal (3:13-16)
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 - 1. Abner Covenants with David for All Israel (3:17-21)
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 - X. Mephibosheth Introduced (4:4)
 - 1'. Ish-bosheth's Assassination & His Assassins Executed (4:5-12)
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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Joab Kills Abner, Part 1 (3:1-16)

1. **David's Wives and Sons in Hebron (3:1-5)**
 2. Ish-bosheth Turns on Abner (3:6-11)
 2. Abner Turns on Ish-bosheth (3:12)
1. David Demands the Return of Michal (3:13-16)

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David's Wives and Sons in Hebron (3:1-5)**2 Samuel 3:1-5:**

There was a **long war** between the **house of Saul** and the **house of David**.

And **David grew stronger** and stronger, while the **house of Saul became weaker** and weaker.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David's Wives and Sons in Hebron (3:1-5)

- Ish-bosheth, was a weak king dangerously dependent on Abner for what authority he was able to exercise. David, on the other hand, was renowned for his valor in war and for the strength and righteousness of his behavior.
- It was becoming more and more apparent that David had the upper hand here. It was David who had the military prowess and the character – let alone God's anointing through Samuel – to be Israel's true king.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David's Wives and Sons in Hebron (3:1-5)**2 Samuel 3:1-5: (cont'd)****And sons were born to David at Hebron:**

his firstborn was **Amnon**, of Ahinoam of Jezreel; and his second, **Chileab**, of Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel; and the third, **Absalom** the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; and the fourth, **Adonijah** the son of Haggith; and the fifth, **Shephatiah** the son of Abital; and the sixth, **Ithrean**, of Eglah, David's wife.

These were born to David in Hebron.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David's Wives and Sons in Hebron (3:1-5)

- During these years in Hebron, David added to the number of his wives. Recall from last week that there had been two when he first became king in Hebron, Ahinoam and Abigail.
- Saul's daughter, Michal, had been David's first wife, but Saul had taken her back and given her in marriage to another, a man named Paltiel. (More on that in a few minutes!) But meanwhile, David has added four more wives – six wives and six sons, as follows:

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David's Wives and Sons in Hebron (3:1-5)

1. Amnon, the firstborn; son of Ahinoam of Jezreel
2. Chileab, son of Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel (referred to as Daniel in 1 Chron. 3:1)
3. Absalom, son of Maacah, d. of Talmai king of Geshur
4. Adonijah, son of Haggith
5. Shephatiah, son of Abital
6. Ithream, son of Eglah

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David's Wives and Sons in Hebron (3:1-5)

- Of these six sons, Amnon and Absalom will loom large in later chapters of 2 Samuel, and Adonijah will have a role in 1 Kings.
- The most intriguing name here is Chileab, if only because he is the son of Abigail, a woman whose character and dignity the author of 1 Samuel spent a great deal of time showing to us. It is natural for us to wonder what came next. Surely, the child of this union would be important! But this is the only mention of Chileab in the entire Bible. Why? What became of him?

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David's Wives and Sons in Hebron (3:1-5)

- First, it's interesting to consider the name itself, Chileab, which means "like his father." Rashi – the Medieval rabbi we met last week, who argued that the Book of Jashar was actually Genesis by a different name – has a theory about this. He argues that since Chileab's mother, Abigail, had been married to that fool, Nabal, prior to her being married to David, critics in the kingdom may have been inclined to suggest that Chileab wasn't really David's son. So Rashi suggests that God, to silence these gossips, caused the baby look identical to David! Thus his name, "exactly like his father!"

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David's Wives and Sons in Hebron (3:1-5)

- Rashi and the Jewish tradition argue that Chileab is not mentioned in the dynastic struggles that would ensue among David's sons because he was a deeply pious, peaceful man who chose a life of quiet study. Much as this story would appeal to a studious rabbi, I find it to be a bit of a stretch to imagine that David's second born son would be allowed to "sit it out," as it were.
- That said, I do find it appealing to imagine that David's creative, poetic, musical, devotional side may have found particular expression in this son.

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David's Wives and Sons in Hebron (3:1-5)

- By far the most likely explanation for the lack of other references to him is that he died at a young age. Otherwise, it seems hard to imagine that he would have had no role whatsoever in the intense power struggles among the other brothers.
- That said, though the prospect of the early death of noble Abigail's son seems tragic, it may be that Chileab's removal from the vicious dynastic struggles that lay ahead was a blessing:

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David's Wives and Sons in Hebron (3:1-5)**Isaiah 57:1-2a:**

The righteous man perishes, and no one lays it to heart;
devout men are taken away, while no one understands.
For the righteous man is taken away from calamity;
he enters into peace.

2 Kings 22:20:

"Therefore, behold, I will gather you [Josiah] to your fathers
[seemingly tragically, before your time], and you shall be
gathered to your grave in peace, and your eyes shall not see
all the disaster that I will bring upon this place."

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

- A. Ishbosheth Made King of Israel (2:8-11)
- B. Abner Kills Asahel (2:12-32)
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- A'. David Made King of Israel (5:1-5)

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Joab Kills Abner, Part 1 (3:1-16)

1. David's Wives and Sons in Hebron (3:1-5)
2. **Ish-bosheth Turns on Abner (3:6-11)**
2. Abner Turns on Ish-bosheth (3:12)
1. David Demands the Return of Michal (3:13-16)

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Ish-bosheth Turns on Abner (3:6-11)**2 Samuel 3:6-11:**

While there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, **Abner** was ***making himself strong*** in the house of Saul.

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?***"

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Ish-bosheth Turns on Abner (3:6-11)

- Even though the war wasn't going well for the Benjaminite house of Saul, within that house Abner was making himself stronger and stronger relative to everyone else, including Ish-bosheth the king.
- We see that Ish-bosheth charges Abner with going into to Saul's concubine, Rizpah. This is a serious charge, one that could well be taken for treason. So we ask, was the charge true? We don't know for sure. We aren't explicitly told one way or the other. But we can present the evidence for each side and think about it.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Ish-bosheth Turns on Abner (3:6-11)

- On the one hand, we could make the case that Ish-bosheth feared Abner's growing power, so he fabricated (or imagined) the charge against Abner, with the intent to deal with the threat while he could. And then we would read Abner's indignant fury as evidence of his being wrongfully and falsely accused. It is true that he'd been loyal to Saul and to Saul's house all this time.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Ish-bosheth Turns on Abner (3:6-11)

- On the other hand, I find it more likely to imagine that Abner really did it, and that he did it as a power play against the weak Ish-bosheth, probably with the goal of replacing him as king with himself and his own stronger and presumably more dynamic and capable leadership.
- As we'll see when David's son, Absalom, goes in to David's concubines, it is a clear sign for all to see that the one daring to do this is humiliating the king and taking to himself the rights of the king. To do this, in effect, was a public declaration that there's a new king

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Ish-bosheth Turns on Abner (3:6-11)

- One thing is sure, though, whichever reading we take: Ish-bosheth should have been prepared to back up such a serious charge against his military commander with force of his own. But instead, Abner was allowed to seize the momentum from this moment forward...

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Ish-bosheth Turns on Abner (3:6-11)**2 Samuel 3:6-11:** (cont'd)

Then Abner was very angry over the words of Ish-bosheth and said, "Am I a dog's head of Judah? ***To this day I keep showing steadfast love to the house of Saul*** your father, to his brothers, and to his friends, and have not given you into the hand of David. ***And yet you charge me today with a fault concerning a woman.*** God do so to Abner and more also, if I do not accomplish for David what the LORD has sworn to him, to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and ***set up the throne of David over Israel*** and over Judah, from Dan to Beersheba."

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Ish-bosheth Turns on Abner (3:6-11)

- Abner puts on a good performance of offended honor and indignant fury. All this time, he says, "I have not given you into the hand of David. And yet you charge me today with a fault concerning a woman." Did you catch that threat? I should be thanked for not turning you over to David all this time! It's a thoroughly insulting declaration of Ish-bosheth's weakness. Sort of like, "I made you and I can break you!"

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Ish-bosheth Turns on Abner (3:6-11)

- And now, having been charged by Ish-bosheth with what amounts to treason, Abner throws his lot in for David, and vows “to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan to Beersheba.”
- As for Ish-bosheth...

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Ish-bosheth Turns on Abner (3:6-11)**2 Samuel 3:6-11:** (cont'd)

And ***Ish-bosheth*** could not answer Abner another word, because he ***feared him***.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

- A. Ishbosheth Made King of Israel (2:8-11)
- B. Abner Kills Asahel (2:12-32)
 - 1. The Armies March to Battle (2:12-17)
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 - 2. Joab Angry with David (3:22-25)
 - X. Joab Kills Abner (3:26-27)
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- A'. David Made King of Israel (5:1-5)

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Joab Kills Abner, Part 1 (3:1-16)

- David's Wives and Sons in Hebron (3:1-5)
- Ish-bosheth Turns on Abner (3:6-11)
- Abner Turns on Ish-bosheth (3:12)**
- David Demands the Return of Michal (3:13-16)

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Abner Turns on Ish-bosheth (3:12)**2 Samuel 3:12:**

And **Abner sent messengers to David** on his behalf, saying, "To whom does the land belong? ***Make your covenant with me***, and behold, my hand shall be with you to ***bring over all Israel to you.***"

- *Abner invites David to enter into covenant with him, i.e., to enter into an alliance with him, and offers his hand, i.e., his strength, influence, and faithful service, to bring all Israel to him. Abner had switched sides.*

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

- A. Ishbosheth Made King of Israel (2:8-11)
- B. Abner Kills Asahel (2:12-32)
 - 1. The Armies March to Battle (2:12-17)
 - 2. Abner Pursued by Asahel (2:18-23a)
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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Joab Kills Abner, Part 1 (3:1-16)

1. David's Wives and Sons in Hebron (3:1-5)
2. Ish-bosheth Turns on Abner (3:6-11)
2. Abner Turns on Ish-bosheth (3:12)
1. David Demands the Return of Michal (3:13-16)

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David Demands the Return of Michal (3:13-16)**2 Samuel 3:13-16:**

And he said, "Good; ***I will make a covenant with you. But one thing I require*** of you; that is, you shall not see my face unless you first ***bring Michal, Saul's daughter***, when you come to see my face."

- *David likes the offer, but requires a sign of Abner's good faith: the return of his first wife, Michal, Saul's daughter, whom Saul had taken back and whose hand in marriage he'd given to another, named Paltiel.*

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David Demands the Return of Michal (3:13-16)**2 Samuel 3:13-16:** (cont'd)

Then David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, saying, "***Give me my wife Michal, for whom I paid the bridal price*** of a hundred foreskins of the Philistines."

And ***Ish-bosheth*** sent and ***took her from her husband*** Paltiel the son of Laish. But her husband went with her, weeping after her all the way to Bahurim. Then Abner said to him, "Go, return." And he returned.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David Demands the Return of Michal (3:13-16)

- David sends messengers demanding Michal be given back to him, arguing that her being taken from him was a kind of theft, as he had paid the bridal price of a hundred foreskins of the Philistines. (For that account, see 1 Samuel 18.)
- Ish-bosheth yields to David's demand and sends Michal back, with Paltiel weeping after her all along the way, until Abner tells him to go away.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

- A. Ishbosheth Made King of Israel (2:8-11)
- B. Abner Kills Asahel (2:12-32)
 - 1. The Armies March to Battle (2:12-17)
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- A'. David Made King of Israel (5:1-5)

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Accessions & Assassinations (2:8-5:5)

- A. Ishbosheth Made King of Israel (2:8-11)
- B. Abner Kills Asahel (2:12-32)
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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Abner Covenants with David for All Israel (3:17-21)**2 Samuel 3:17-21:**

And **Abner conferred with the elders of Israel**, saying, "For some time past ***you have been seeking David as king over you***. Now then ***bring it about***, for the LORD has promised 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.'"

Abner also spoke to Benjamin.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Abner Covenants with David for All Israel (3:17-21)

- Abner's first of three meetings is with the elders of Israel, to whom he argues that they should switch their loyalty to David. It was David, after all – not the lackluster Ish-bosheth – who had fought so valiantly against the Philistines and whom God declared to be the anointed one of Israel. "Do you want to be delivered?" Abner says in effect, "Then turn to David! Despite my best efforts in the service of this Ish-bosheth, nothing in the form of deliverance will come from such a weak and ineffectual ruler."

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Abner Covenants with David for All Israel (3:17-21)

- Abner's second of three meetings is with the elders of his tribe of Benjamin, to whom presumably he made a similar pitch for them to shift their loyalty to and pin their hopes on David.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Abner Covenants with David for All Israel (3:17-21)**2 Samuel 3:17-21: (cont'd)**

Then **Abner went to tell David at Hebron** all that Israel and the whole house of Benjamin thought good to do. When Abner came with twenty men to David at Hebron, David made a feast for Abner and the men who were with him.

And Abner said to David, "***I will arise and go and will gather all Israel to my lord the king, that they may make a covenant with you, and that you may reign over all that your heart desires.***"

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Abner Covenants with David for All Israel (3:17-21)**2 Samuel 3:17-21: (cont'd)**

So David sent Abner away, and ***he went in peace.***

- Abner's third of three meetings was with David, in Hebron, where he has come with twenty of his men to tell David of these developments. At a feast which David has prepared for them, Abner declares that he would now go forth and gather Israel to David. And the key takeaway here is that last line: "So David sent Abner away, and he went in peace."

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Joab Angry with David (3:22-25)**2 Samuel 3:22-25:**

Just then the servants of David arrived with **Joab** from **a raid**, bringing much spoil with them. But Abner was not with David at Hebron, for he had sent him away, and he had gone in peace.

When Joab and all the army that was with him came, it was told Joab, "**Abner** the son of Ner **came to the king**, and he has let him go, and **he has gone in peace.**"

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Joab Angry with David (3:22-25)**2 Samuel 3:22-25:** (cont'd)

Then Joab went to the king and said, "**What have you done?** Behold, Abner came to you. Why is it that you have sent him away, so that he is gone? **You know that Abner** the son of Ner **came to deceive you** and to know your going out and your coming in, and to know all that you are doing."

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Joab Angry with David (3:22-25)

- Joab and company return from a raid loaded with spoils – a revealing picture of iron age culture, by the way. How was wealth gained then? Was it like the old ad with John Houseman, "Smith Barney. They make money the old-fashioned way. They earn it." I don't think so! Raiding others – stealing – was an accepted way of wealth acquisition.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Joab Angry with David (3:22-25)

- Anyway, Joab comes in and expresses horror upon learning that Abner had come in to David's very presence, and then been given freedom to leave in peace.
- He frames it as a lack of discernment on David's part: "Don't you know that he was coming to spy on you, to find out your position and your weaknesses?" But as we're about to see, his desire for personal vengeance was also a factor, if not the main one.

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Joab Kills Abner, Part 2 (3:17-39)

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Joab Kills Abner (3:26-27)**2 Samuel 3:26-27:**

When **Joab** came out from David's presence, he **sent messengers after Abner**, and they **brought him back** from the cistern of Sirah. **But David did not know about it.**

And **when Abner returned** to Hebron, **Joab** took him aside into the midst of the gate to speak with him privately, and there he **struck him in the stomach, so that he died, for the blood of Asahel** his brother.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Joab Kills Abner (3:26-27)

- The fact that Joab did this without David's knowledge is critically important.
- Joab sent messengers who caught up with Abner at the cistern of Sirah and brought him back to Hebron. At the gate, Joab takes Abner aside under the pretext of needing to speak with him privately, then kills him, exacting vengeance "for the blood of Asahel his brother."

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David Angry with Joab (3:28-30)**2 Samuel 3:28-30:**

Afterward, when David heard of it, he said,
"I and my kingdom are forever guiltless before the LORD for the blood of Abner the son of Ner. ***May it fall upon the head of Joab*** and upon all his father's house, and may the house of Joab never be without one who ***has a discharge*** or who ***is leprous*** or who ***holds a spindle*** or who ***falls by the sword*** or who ***lacks bread!***"

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David Angry with Joab (3:28-30)**2 Samuel 3:28-30:** (cont'd)

So **Joab** and Abishai his brother **killed Abner, because** he had put their brother **Asahel** to death in the battle at Gibeon.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David Angry with Joab (3:28-30)

- As with last week's passage, we see David once again mourning the death of a fallen adversary. A more Machiavellian prince might have delighted in Abner's fall and rewarded the one who had removed this potential once and future enemy. But just as David had not rewarded but punished the one who claimed to kill Saul, and then proceeded to mourn and lament for the fallen king, so too here: David doesn't reward the murder of his erstwhile foe, Abner, but separates himself from any guilt for or connection with it, and pronounces a curse on Joab for having done it!

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David Angry with Joab (3:28-30)

- Why does he do this?
- First, because David had just entered into a covenant with Abner and had just given his word as king that he could leave in peace. Joab's action threatened to make David's name and his word a stench among those who would deal with him. Joab's action had given both adversaries and friends reason to suspect David's trustworthiness, which had enormous impacts in terms of policy.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David Angry with Joab (3:28-30)

- Moreover, Abner had just offered to deliver the entire kingdom of Israel to David without a fight, and now Abner's action had put that at risk. And he had done so without David's permission, in violation of David's word that Abner could leave in peace.
- And finally, Abner had subordinated these high matters of the state interest to his personal, petty vendetta.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David Angry with Joab (3:28-30)

- In sum, David definitely had reason to be angry at Joab for what he'd done. And he set about making it abundantly clear to any and all that he had nothing whatsoever to do with Abner's death.
- Just as David had mourned Saul, so now he mourns, publicly, the death of Abner:

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David Mourns Abner in the Seeing of All Israel (3:31-39)**2 Samuel 3:31-39:**

Then **David said to Joab** and to all the people who were with him, "**Tear your clothes** and **put on sackcloth** and **mourn before Abner.**" And King David followed the bier.

They buried Abner at Hebron. And **the king lifted up his voice and wept** at the grave of Abner, and all the people wept.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David Mourns Abner in the Seeing of All Israel (3:31-39)**2 Samuel 3:31-39:** (cont'd)

And ***the king lamented*** for Abner, saying,
 “Should Abner die as a fool dies?
 Your hands were not bound;
 your feet were not fettered;
 as one falls before the wicked you have fallen.”
 And ***all the people wept again*** over him.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David Mourns Abner in the Seeing of All Israel (3:31-39)**2 Samuel 3:31-39:** (cont'd)

Then ***all the people came to persuade David to eat bread*** while it was yet day. But David swore, saying, “God do so to me and more also, if I taste bread or anything else till the sun goes down!”
 And ***all the people took notice of it, and it pleased them***, as everything that the king did pleased all the people.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David Mourns Abner in the Seeing of All Israel (3:31-39)**2 Samuel 3:31-39:** (cont'd)

So ***all the people and all Israel understood that day that it had not been the king's will*** to put to death Abner the son of Ner.

And the king said to his servants, “Do you not know that ***a prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel?*** And I was gentle today, though anointed king. These men, the sons of Zeruiah, are more severe than I. ***The LORD repay the evildoer according to his wickedness!***”

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David Mourns Abner in the Seeing of All Israel (3:31-39)

- Some of the more cynical among us might be tempted to begin wondering if David perhaps “doth protest too much”? I mean, mourning to such degree as to not be eating bread...? It's a fair question to ask: “Is all this public lamenting for Abner truly heartfelt on David's part? Or is it political theater?”
- My answer is, YES!

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David Mourns Abner in the Seeing of All Israel (3:31-39)

- David certainly intended to send the clearest possible message, to all who saw it, that he had no involvement in Abner's death. Not only did he mourn Abner's loss as that of a prince and a great man in Israel, but he also pronounced a curse on the one who killed him – even when the one cursed was Joab, his own military commander!
- And we read that the message was received. The people were pleased, and “all Israel understood that day that it had not been the king's will to put Abner to

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David Mourns Abner in the Seeing of All Israel (3:31-39)

- So David was certainly politically savvy. He made it very clear that he was no assassin or power-grabbing thug. Rather, he played the part of the righteous king perfectly, portraying himself, quite astutely, as the valiant warrior for Israel and the faithful servant of Saul, who despite Saul's paranoia and persecutorial behavior, would not lift his hand against Saul because he was the LORD's anointed. David was thus shown to be not only brave, but unerringly loyal and righteous.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David Mourns Abner in the Seeing of All Israel (3:31-39)

- And when the word of Saul's death came, David did not rejoice but mourned and lamented the fall of Israel's first king and his house. And so too with the death of Abner: David is noble and righteous in his bearing, mourning the death of Abner as a great man in Israel.
- But just because David is politically astute doesn't mean that he doesn't conform to the image he projects. In other words, unlike many kings and potentates, whose vile behavior is concealed by spin,

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David Mourns Abner in the Seeing of All Israel (3:31-39)

- The fact is that this curated picture of David doesn't come out of thin air. It is based on his *actual* behavior over an extended time. He really was a valiant warrior and a faithful servant; he really did refuse to raise his hand against the LORD's anointed; he really did mourn Saul's and Jonathan's passing; his integrity really did earn Abner's respect and fealty, and there's no reason to assume that David's mourning for Abner wasn't just politically smart, but emotionally honest.

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David Mourns Abner in the Seeing of All Israel (3:31-39)

- In short, David is rather impressive in all this, showing us why he is rightfully called “a man after the LORD’s own heart.” How extraordinary a thing it is when the king himself is submitted to the will of God! How different this is than Saul, or so many of the predatory and self-serving leaders of the nations.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David Mourns Abner in the Seeing of All Israel (3:31-39)

- As for Abner, he too is an interesting character. It’s part of what I love about 2 Samuel, in that it’s not simply black and white – the good guys on the one side vs. the bad guys on the other side.
- As we saw with Saul’s son, Jonathan, so too in a different way here: sometimes decent people are wrapped up by circumstances in loyalty to the wrong side, and they end up paying the price, but we can acknowledge their character strengths even so.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David Mourns Abner in the Seeing of All Israel (3:31-39)

- Unfortunately, we have one more political assassination to get through before the end of this section.
- We turn now to the end of Ish-bosheth’s life and reign:

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 - 2. Abner Turns on Ish-bosheth (3:12-12)
 - 1. David Demands the Return of Michal (3:13-16)
- X. Joab Kills Abner, Part 2 (3:17-39)
 - 1. Abner Covenants with David for All Israel (3:17-21)
 - 2. Joab Angry with David (3:22-25)
 - X. Joab Kills Abner (3:26-27)
 - 2'. David Angry with Joab (3:28-30)
 - 1'. David Mourns Abner in the Seeing of All Israel (3:31-39)
- B'. **Assassins Kill Ish-bosheth (4:1-12)**
 - 1. Ish-bosheth's Courage Fails & His Assassins Introduced (4:1-3)
 - X. Mephibosheth Introduced (4:4)
 - 1'. Ish-bosheth's Assassination & His Assassins Executed (4:5-12)
- A'. David Made King of Israel (5:1-5)

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Assassins Kill Ish-bosheth (4:1-12)

- 1. Ish-bosheth's Courage Fails,
& His Assassins Introduced (4:1-3)
 - X. Mephibosheth Introduced (4:4)
- 1'. Ish-bosheth's Assassination,
& His Assassins Executed (4:5-12)

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

**Ish-bosheth's Courage Fails,
& His Assassins Introduced (4:1-3)****2 Samuel 4:1-3:**

When *Ish-bosheth*, Saul's son, heard that Abner had died at Hebron, his ***courage failed***, and ***all Israel was dismayed***.

Now Saul's son had ***two men*** who were ***captains of raiding bands***; the name of the one was Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab, sons of Rimmon a man of Benjamin from Beeroth (for Beeroth also is counted part of Benjamin; the Beerothites fled to Gittaim and have been sojourners there to this day).

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

**Ish-bosheth's Courage Fails,
& His Assassins Introduced (4:1-3)**

- Ish-bosheth, who had been placed on the throne by Abner and whose tenuous hold on power was only sustained by Abner's competence as a military leader, who had then managed to publicly alienate and offend Abner, leading to his defection and then, indirectly, to his murder at the hands of Joab, was now left without that strong hand. "His courage failed, and all Israel was dismayed." This is not good.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

**Ish-bosheth's Courage Fails,
& His Assassins Introduced (4:1-3)**

- And now we are told the names of two captains of raiding bands – two brothers, Baanah and Rechab, sons of Rimmon from Beeroth. We already have a strong sense of why they're being introduced; here are Ish-bosheth's assassins.
- But before continuing that strand of the story, the author takes us to an interesting aside, introducing – pretty much out of the blue – a new person in the story, Mephibosheth.

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- A. Ishbosheth Made King of Israel (2:8-11)
- B. Abner Kills Asahel (2:12-32)
 - 1. The Armies March to Battle (2:12-17)
 - 2. Abner Pursued by Asahel (2:18-23a)
 - X. Abner Kills Asahel (2:23b)
 - 2'. Abner Pursued by Joab and Abishai (2:24-27)
 - 1'. The Armies March Home (2:28-32)
- X. Joab Kills Abner, Part 1 (3:1-16)
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 - 2. Abner Turns on Ish-bosheth (3:12)
 - 1. David Demands the Return of Michal (3:13-16)
- X. Joab Kills Abner, Part 2 (3:17-39)
 - 1. Abner Covenants with David for All Israel (3:17-21)
 - 2. Joab Angry with David (3:22-25)
 - X. Joab Kills Abner (3:26-27)
 - 2'. David Angry with Joab (3:28-30)
 - 1'. David Mourns Abner in the Seeing of All Israel (3:31-39)
- B'. Assassins Kill Ish-bosheth (4:1-12)
 - 1. Ish-bosheth's Courage Fails & His Assassins Introduced (4:1-3)
 - X. Mephibosheth Introduced (4:4)
 - 1'. Ish-bosheth's Assassination & His Assassins Executed (4:5-12)
- A'. David Made King of Israel (5:1-5)

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Assassins Kill Ish-bosheth (4:1-12)

- 1. Ish-bosheth's Courage Fails,
& His Assassins Introduced (4:1-3)
 - X. Mephibosheth Introduced (4:4)
- 1'. Ish-bosheth's Assassination,
& His Assassins Executed (4:5-12)

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Mephibosheth Introduced (4:4)**2 Samuel 4:4:**

Jonathan, the son of Saul, **had a son** who was **crippled in his feet**. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled, and as she fled in her haste, he fell and became lame. And **his name was Mephibosheth**.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Mephibosheth Introduced (4:4)

- Now for the first time we learn that Saul's son and David's friend, Jonathan, had a son who was crippled in his feet. And we learn of his tragic story: how he was dropped by his nurse at the age of five when he was taken up by her, fleeing in panic on the news of Saul's and Jonathan's deaths. On account of this awful incident, the boy became lame, and was thus unfit for kingship, as a king was required to be able to ride or walk into battle. The boy's name was Mephibosheth.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Mephibosheth Introduced (4:4)

- Why did the author of 2 Samuel include this story of Mephibosheth here, interrupting the flow of what happened to Ish-bosheth? Clearly, it's because, before taking us to the tragic end of Ish-bosheth's life – and with that the tragic end of the house of Saul – the author introduces this note of “a future and a hope” for the house of Saul. As we'll see later, David will show kindness to Mephibosheth, and through this one person, the line of Saul would continue in Israel. Lovely!
- Alas, now the story returns to its original trajectory:

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

- A. Ishbosheth Made King of Israel (2:8-11)
- B. Abner Kills Asahel (2:12-32)
 - 1. The Armies March to Battle (2:12-17)
 - 2. Abner Pursued by Asahel (2:18-23a)
 - X. Abner Kills Asahel (2:23b)
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 - 2. Abner Turns on Ish-bosheth (3:12)
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 - 1. Abner Covenants with David for All Israel (3:17-21)
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 - 2'. David Angry with Joab (3:28-30)
 - 1'. David Mourns Abner in the Seeing of All Israel (3:31-39)
- B'. Assassins Kill Ish-bosheth (4:1-12)
 - 1. Ish-bosheth's Courage Fails & His Assassins Introduced (4:1-3)
 - X. Mephibosheth Introduced (4:4)
 - 1'. Ish-bosheth's Assassination & His Assassins Executed (4:5-12)
- A'. David Made King of Israel (5:1-5)

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Assassins Kill Ish-bosheth (4:1-12)

1. Ish-bosheth's Courage Fails,
& His Assassins Introduced (4:1-3)
- X. Mephibosheth Introduced (4:4)
- 1'. **Ish-bosheth's Assassination,
& His Assassins Executed (4:5-12)**

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

**Ish-bosheth's Assassination,
& the Assassins Executed (4:5-12)****2 Samuel 4:5-12:**

Now the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, set out, and about the heat of the day they came to the house of Ish-bosheth as he was taking his noonday rest. And ***they came into the midst of the house as if to get wheat***, and they ***stabbed him in the stomach***. Then Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped. When they came into the house, as he lay on his bed in his bedroom, they struck him and put him to death and ***beheaded him***.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

**Ish-bosheth's Assassination,
& the Assassins Executed (4:5-12)****2 Samuel 4:5-12: (cont'd)**

They took his head and went by the way of the Arabah all night, and ***brought the head of Ish-bosheth to David at Hebron***.

And they said to the king, "***Here is the head of Ish-bosheth***, the son of Saul, ***your enemy***, who sought your life. The LORD has avenged my lord the king this day on Saul and on his offspring."

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

**Ish-bosheth's Assassination,
& the Assassins Executed (4:5-12)**

- Another assassination. Rechab and Baanah kill Ish-bosheth during his noonday rest, stabbing him in the stomach. They had entered under the pretext of getting wheat (a thing so mundane and so ordinary as to raise no red flags – just two trusted commanders filling their sacks with provisions from the storehouse).

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

**Ish-bosheth's Assassination,
& the Assassins Executed (4:5-12)**

- After killing the king, they beheaded him, and taking the head with them, they went by way of the Arabah all night (recall that the Arabah is the dry, lowland areas near to the Jordan), and brought the head of Ish-bosheth to David at Hebron.
- They presented it to him with the assumption that David would be grateful to them for this service, in bringing the head of his enemy, and that he would presumably reward him.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

**Ish-bosheth's Assassination,
& the Assassins Executed (4:5-12)****2 Samuel 4:5-12:** (cont'd)

But David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, "As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my life out of every adversity, when one told me, 'Behold, Saul is dead,' and thought he was bringing good news, I seized him and killed him at Ziklag, which was the reward I gave him for his news. **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 at your hand and destroy you from the earth?"

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

**Ish-bosheth's Assassination,
& the Assassins Executed (4:5-12)****2 Samuel 4:5-12:** (cont'd)

And **David commanded** his young men, and **they killed them** and cut off their hands and feet and hanged them beside the pool at Hebron.

But **they took the head of Ish-bosheth and buried it in the tomb of Abner at Hebron.**

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

**Ish-bosheth's Assassination,
& the Assassins Executed (4:5-12)**

- Is the man after the LORD's own heart flattered and overjoyed by the work of these assassins? Of course not! This is now the third time in a row where David is outraged by the murder of those who had been his enemies. In fact, David explicitly refers to the earlier incident to explain his response to them now. As bad as that was, "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 at your hand and destroy you from the earth?"

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

- A. Ishbosheth Made King of Israel (2:8-11)
- B. Abner Kills Asahel (2:12-32)
 - 1. The Armies March to Battle (2:12-17)
 - 2. Abner Pursued by Asahel (2:18-23a)
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 - X. Mephibosheth Introduced (4:4)
 - 1'. Ish-bosheth's Assassination & His Assassins Executed (4:5-12)
- A'. **David Made King of Israel (5:1-5)**

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Accessions & Assassinations (2:8-5:5)

- A. Ishbosheth Made King of Israel (2:8-11)
- B. Abner Kills Asahel (2:12-32)
 - X. Joab Kills Abner (3:1-39)
- B'. Assassins Kill Ish-bosheth (4:1-12)
- A'. **David Made King of Israel (5:1-5)**

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David Made King of Israel (5:1-5)**2 Samuel 5:1-5:**

Then ***all the tribes of Israel came to David*** at Hebron and said, "***Behold, we are your bone and flesh.*** In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was you who led out and brought in Israel. And the LORD said to you, '***You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over Israel.***'"

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David Made King of Israel (5:1-5)**2 Samuel 5:1-5:**

So ***all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron***, and ***King David made a covenant with them*** at Hebron before the LORD, and ***they anointed David king over Israel.***

David was ***thirty years old*** when he began to reign, and ***he reigned forty years.***

At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years.

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David Made King of Israel (5:1-5)

- In light of all this, the tribes come to David at Hebron and submit to him as king. They acknowledge that the LORD has indeed told David that “you shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over Israel.” He makes a covenant with them, and they anoint him (now his third anointing!) king of all Israel.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David Made King of Israel (5:1-5)

- David had been king in Hebron for 7½ years and then ruled all Israel for another 33. 40 years total. 40 years is a biblical generation, the amount of time that was spent in the wilderness, a sort of a fullness of time before a new era begins.
- And by some simple addition, we see that David, who began to reign at 30 years old (the perfect age for such an accession, the age of both maturity and vigor, and the age when priests could begin serving), then reigned for 40 years, meaning that he died at 70 years old.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

David Made King of Israel (5:1-5)

- While 70 years certainly seems young to us, for kings and for people at that time it was not necessarily so. After all, David had lived a fairly strenuous life early on, living in caves and in constant danger.
- It is perhaps interesting to note that President Washington, formerly General Washington, who had lived so strenuously for many years alongside his men, was only 67 years old when he died.

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David Made King of Israel (5:1-5)**Psalms 90:10:**

The years of our life are seventy,
or even by reason of strength eighty;
yet their span is but toil and trouble;
they are soon gone, and we fly away.

- *In fact, I refer to 70 years as “a royal generation,” because of the following verse:*

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David Made King of Israel (5:1-5)**Isaiah 23:15a:**

In that day Tyre will be forgotten for seventy years,
like the days of one king.

- *If 70 years is the lifespan of a king, that gives an interesting and important new perspective on the significance of Israel being in exile for 70 years. It's not simply that they would be in exile for every year that they should have kept the Sabbath year in the Promised Land:*

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David Made King of Israel (5:1-5)**2 Chronicles 36:20-21:**

He took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia, 21 to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.

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David Made King of Israel (5:1-5)

- It was this (70 Sabbath years = 490 years, which roughly equates to the period of the monarchy), but it may also refer to a "royal generation," meaning that Israel would be in exile for an entire length of the life of one king, ensuring that the succession was broken. King Jehoiachin's son, Shealtiel, never ruled as king and died in exile, and it was only his son, Jehoiachin's grandson, Zerubbabel, who returned to the land, but even then not as king but as governor, under the overlordship of the king of Persia, Cyrus.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Summary

- We just assessed David's character earlier, concluding that he was politically savvy, communicating nobility through carefully curated displays that served to highlight his faithfulness, loyalty, and wisdom, making it clear that he was no power-hungry thug but the worthy and rightful king. His public actions showed him in every detail to be truly the LORD's anointed.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Summary

- But he also conformed to these things in fact! David wasn't just spinning a cynical narrative about himself that had no bearing in reality.
- To the contrary, he really did behave in these honorable ways: he really was loyal to Saul despite Saul's unjust persecution of him; he really did refuse to raise his hand against Saul as the LORD's anointed; he really did choose the high road by mourning and lamenting the fall of Saul's house, and by doing the same for Abner; he really was a man of valor with a heart for the LORD.

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ACCESSIONS & ASSASSINATIONS

Summary

- In David, we are given a picture of an absolutely remarkable human being with a most impressive character – truly a shadow and type of the Christ, the Anointed One, to come.
- David's got it all!

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Summary

- A heart on fire for the LORD, as revealed through his Psalms that give expression to his dynamic prayer life and vital communion with God.
- His life as a leader submitted to the will of God, as shown by his repeatedly seeking his will.
- His skill and gentleness for playing music that was therapeutic for Saul's soul.
- His martial bravery and valor that brought down Goliath single-handedly and that led his men repeatedly to victory against Israel's enemies.

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Summary

- And as we've seen in these first chapters of 2 Samuel, the political savvy, astuteness, and discernment to exemplify the role of a righteous, noble king in the eyes of the people – and not only that, to embody these things in the reality of his own behavior.
- In all these ways, David shows us what a real king looks like, a king submitted to the authority of God and seeking his will and way, and in these things we see glimmers of the greatness of our Lord Jesus Christ!

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Summary

- Of all these remarkable character traits of David, perhaps the most remarkable, in my view, is that he steadfastly refused to accomplish God's purposes through sinful means.
- The principles of *realpolitik* and of Machiavellian ethics as employed by most leaders would argue for doing whatever it takes to achieve desired ends, then for trying to spin it as having been necessary and/or noble. But David really did refuse to achieve his ends by sinful means. And that is no small thing in a leader.

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Summary

- He did not embrace the ethics of assassination (whether against the person's body or character) to assume or advance his own power, but rather depended on the LORD to bring things to the desired end.
- He conformed to the power of ethics rather than the ethics of power, in accord with the Law's definition of how a king of God's people should.

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Summary

- In all this, he conforms to the pattern of, and anticipates, serves as a type or shadow, of our Lord Jesus Christ himself, who is our true and good shepherd:

Psalms 23:1-2:

The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.

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Summary**Ps. 77:19-20:**

Your way was through the sea,
your path through the great waters;
yet your footprints were unseen.
You led your people like a flock
by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

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Summary**John 10:11-15:**

"I am the good shepherd.

"The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.
He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep."

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Summary**John 10:11-15: (cont'd)**

"I am the good shepherd.

"I know my own and my own know me,
just as the Father knows me and I know the Father;
and I lay down my life for the sheep."

Amen.

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