

# The Beginning of a Dynasty...The End of a Dynasty

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[ 0 : 00 ] 2 Samuel, and if you would find chapter 3, actually, when you find it, chapter 3, I want you to kind of sit back and listen.

You can be looking at your Bibles and reading along with me, but when I say sit back and enjoy, I'm going to read two chapters, all right? I'm going to read through two chapters and make our way through those two chapters tonight.

And so let me begin. Chapter 3, 2 Samuel, starting with verse 1, of course. Now there was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David, but David grew stronger and stronger. And the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker. Sons were born to David in Hebron. His firstborn was Amnon by Ahinoam the Jezreelite.

His second, Kiliab, no C-H sound in the Hebrew, it's Kiliab, by Abigail, the widow of Nabal, the Carmelite.

[ 1 : 25 ] And you remember the story of Nabal way back when we worked through that part of 1 Samuel. Absalom, the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmi, king of Geshur.

The fourth, Abinijah, the son of Haggith, the fifth, Shephethiah, the son of Abital.

And the sixth, Ithraim, by David's wife, Eglah. These were born to David in Hebron.

Boy, I'm glad I got through those verses. Now it was so, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, that Abner was strengthening his hold on the house of Saul.

That's a very key statement there. We'll get to that. And Saul had a concubine whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah.

[ 2 : 33 ] So Ish-bosheth said to Abner, why have you gone into my father's concubine? Then Abner became very angry at the words of Ish-bosheth and said, am I a dog's head that belongs to Judah?

Today I show loyalty to the house of Saul, your father, to his brothers and to his friends, and have not delivered you into the hand of David.

And you charge me today with a fault concerning this woman? May God do so to Abner, and more also, if I do not do for David as 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.

And he could not answer Abner, that is, Ish-bosheth could not, could not answer him another word because he feared him. Then Abner sent messengers on his behalf to David, saying, Whose is the land?

Saying also, Make your covenant with me, and indeed my hand shall be with you to bring all Israel to you. And David said, Good, I will make a covenant with you.

[ 3 : 53 ] But one thing I require of you, you shall not see my face unless you first bring Michael, Saul's daughter, when you come to see my face.

So David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, saying, Give me my wife Michael, whom I betrothed to myself for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines.

And Ish-bosheth sent and took her from her husband, from Paltiel, the son of Laish. Then her husband went along with her to Behurim, weeping behind her.

So Abner said to him, Go, return. And he returned. Now Abner had communicated with the elders of Israel, saying, In time past you were seeking for David to be king over you.

Now then, do it. For the Lord has spoken to David, saying, By the hand of my servant David, I will save my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and the hand of all their enemies.

[ 5 : 02 ] And Abner also spoke in the hearing of Benjamin, that would be his tribe, the tribe of Saul. Then Abner also went to speak in the hearing of David in Hebron, all that seemed good to Israel and the whole house of Benjamin.

So 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. Then Abner said to David, I will arise and go and 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.

So David sent Abner away, and he went in peace. At that moment 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.

When Joab and all the troops that were with him had come, they told Joab, saying, Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he sent him away, and he has gone in peace.

Then Joab came to the king and said, What have you done? I don't think that's really the right way to talk to your king, but that's what he said. Look, Abner came to you.

[ 6 : 19 ] Why is it that you sent him away, and he has already gone? Surely you realize that Abner, the son of Ner, came to deceive you, to know you're going out and you're coming in, and to know all that you are doing.

And when Joab had gone from David's presence, he sent messengers after Abner, who brought him back from the well of Syrah, but David did not know it.

Now when Abner had returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him privately, and there stabbed him in the stomach, so that he died for the blood of Asahel, his brother. Afterward, when David heard of it, he said, My kingdom and I are guiltless before the Lord forever of the blood of Abner, the son of Ner. Let it rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house, and let there never fail to be in the house of Joab one who has a discharge, or is a leper, who leans on a staff, or falls by the sword, or who lacks bread.

So Joab and Abishai, his brother, killed Abner, because he had killed their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle. And remember that from the last chapter.

[ 7 : 43 ] Then David said to Joab, and to all the people who were with him, Tear your clothes, gird yourselves with sackcloth, and mourn for Abner. And King David followed the coffin, so they buried Abner in Hebron, and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner, and all the people wept.

And the king sang a lament over Abner, and said, Should Abner die as a fool dies? Your hands were not bound, nor feet put into fetters, as a man falls before wicked men, so you fell.

Then all the people went over, wept over him again, and when all the people came to persuade David to eat food while it was still day, David took an oath, saying, God, do so to me, and more also if I taste bread or anything else till the sun goes down.

Now all the people took note of it, and it pleased them, since whatever the king did pleased all the people. For all the people in all Israel understood that day that it had not been the king's intent to kill Abner, the son of Ner.

Then 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 am weak today, though anointed king.

[ 9 : 08 ] And these men, the sons of Zeruah, are too harsh for me. The Lord shall repay the evildoer according to his wickedness.

When Saul's son heard that Abner had died in Hebron, he lost heart, and all Israel was troubled.

Now Saul's son had two men who were captains of troops.

The name of one was Ba'ana, and the name of the other, Rekab. And the sons of Ramon and the Beirathite of the children of Benjamin for Beharoth.

Beirath also was part of Benjamin because the Beirathites fled to Gitaim and have been sojourners there until this day.

Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son who was lame in his feet. He was five years old when the news came about Saul and Jonathan, came from Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled.

[ 10 : 19 ] And it happened, as she made haste to flee, that he fell and became lame. His name was Mephibosheth. Then the sons of Ramon, the Beirathite, Rekab, and Ba'ana set out and came at about the heat of the day to the house of Ish-bosheth, who was lying on his bed at noon.

And they came there all the way into the house as though to get wheat, and they stabbed him in the stomach. Then Rekab and Ba'ana, his brother, escaped.

For when they came into the house, he was lying on his bed in his bedroom. Then they struck him and killed him, beheaded him, and took his head, and were all night escaping through the plain.

And they brought the head of Ish-bosheth to David at Hebron and said to the king, Here is the head of Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul, your enemy, who sought your life.

And the Lord has avenged my lord, the king, this day of Saul and his descendants. But David answered, Rekab and Ba'ana, his brother, the sons of Ramon, the Beherethite, and said to them, As the Lord lives, who has redeemed my life from all adversity, when someone told me, saying, Look, Saul is dead, thinking to have brought good news, I arrested him and had him executed in Ziklag and one who thought I would give him a reward for his news.

[11:57] How much more when wicked men have killed a righteous person in his own house on his bed? Therefore, shall I not now require the blood at your hand and remove you from the earth?

So David commanded his young men and they executed them, cut off their hands and feet and hanged them by the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth and buried it in the tomb of Abner in Hebron.

Okay. Interesting story, right? Right? Interesting story. And at the same time, some kind of strange things, unexpected things happen, things that really you would think would not happen, some reactions, some decisions made and on and on we could go and that's what we'll look at here tonight.

Now, I've entitled this message or my lesson tonight The End of a Dynasty. Actually, I really should expand that to the beginning of a dynasty and the end of a dynasty.

It kind of in that order because that's how the story is told here. And the dynasty of which I speak in the first place is the dynasty of Saul.

[13:23] A scholar called the Saulide dynasty, the house of Saul. And so, you know, you're following the story and you heard as I read it and you were reading along in your Bibles and we were first introduced to Ish-basheth the last time and Ish-basheth, the last son of Saul, right?

The very last one because his other sons were killed in battle with him. On the battlefield, Jonathan and two other sons whose names I cannot remember at this point. Jonathan's the only one that we really remember and Ish-basheth and so he's the son of Saul but he is now king.

Not king of all of Israel. I guess you could say he's king of everything except Judah, tribe of Judah because who is king of Judah? Well, David is.

The people of Judah anointed him as king, made him their king and so here's Ish-basheth. He is king and really we understand, you know, from the narration that he's kind of propped up to be king, propped up by Abner, Saul's cousin and Saul's general.

So he props him up to be king of Israel, again, all but the tribe of Judah and so he is going to be in chapter 4, brutally murdered, right?

[14:50] Murdered on his bed by two of his trusted captains and so that will mark, what? The end of the Saulite dynasty.

That will bring it to an end except, of course, you know, Mephibosheth who is not one of Saul's sons but is a son of Jonathan and the narrator here mentions this, just kind of a little introduction to him and so that we'll remember who he is when we get back to his story and we'll wait to do that.

All right, so this will mark then the absolute end not only to the dynasty of Saul but therefore the last impediment for David, impediment to the throne, throne not just of Judah but all of Israel and so when we get to chapter 5, very shortly, very quickly, David is going to be anointed king over all Israel.

Now I want to say to you that what happens in these two chapters really help us understand some things that had to happen in order for David to become king and not just simply claim his right but to actually be anointed king or coronated king by all of the people of Israel.

So some things happen here, some deliberately, some things kind of happen and David takes advantage of them in a very ingenious way but these are things that God has allowed to happen and has in some cases orchestrated so that David's path to the throne will be free and clear.

[16:43] All right, so the two chapters we could say are really kind of encapsulated by two events, two things. Chapter 3 details, right at the beginning of chapter 3 details the beginning of David's dynasty.

That's why we have this, you know, all these really hard to pronounce names and names of his six wives and some of his children and so forth and that's kind of a statement about the beginning of his dynasty, the Davidic dynasty and that's detailed for us there in verses 2 through 5 and I'm not going to read those again, okay?

You know, I didn't go to seminary to learn how to pronounce some of these hard Hebrew names but I did go to seminary and discover that even the greatest Hebrew scholars don't exactly know how they're pronounced so don't worry about it.

Just do the best you can. But chapter 4 then, as we saw, details for us the end of Saul's dynasty, all right?

And again, with the exception of Mephibosheth whose story we'll get to later. And so the substance in between, the substance of these two chapters really detail how both came about.

[18:04] The beginning of one dynasty, the end of the other and so these events took place to dethrone the Saulite dynasty and to enthrone the Davidic dynasty.

And really, in verse 1 of chapter 3 we have a summary, kind of a summary statement of what's going to take place. When you boil it all down, this is what's going to take place in the next couple of chapters.

It begins by saying they had this long conflict there between the house of Saul and the house of David but, and then this statement, but David grew stronger and stronger and the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker and that's a summary statement.

of what's going to happen. What I just read there in those two chapters. Alright, so looking at these two chapters, better get to it. The outline, really, if you try to kind of outline the movement of the story, the narration, the outline really kind of forms around the actions of the principal characters in these two chapters characters and there are four, four principal characters.

There's Abner, Joab, David, and Ish-bosheth and in that order. Alright, so let's take the first one, Abner and here's what I want you to see.

[19:32] Abner's dubious reversal. That's point number one if you're taking notes. Abner's dubious, very dubious, reversal.

Reversal. Now, I don't need to go back and read all the passage again. I'll read bits and pieces of it as we go along here but Abner suddenly switches his loyalty, doesn't he?

From Ish-bosheth to David and it's amazing, you know, this reversal. And so, let's try to understand this.

Have you ever known people who are power hungry? Ever known people like that or heard of people like that? Hungry for power, hungry for position, hungry for influence and so everything they do and decisions they make and every move they make always calculated to fit into that goal that goal to bring them power to satisfy the craving for power and influence and that's Abner.

That's Abner. And so, here you have the remaining son of Saul. The remaining one in that dynasty and it's Ish-bosheth.

[21:01] Ish-bosheth is now king. King over Israel. Okay, well, sort of king. But he's weak.

I mean, you can't read the narration, not only in these two chapters, but the preceding chapter. You can't read about Ish-bosheth and know and not know that he's very weak, very impotent king.

And he's cowardly too. I pointed this out last time. Of course, you know, this is really kind of get this by implication, but, you know, if he were not a cowardly man, I think he would have been out there with his father Saul and his other brothers out there on the battlefield against the Philistines.

I mean, he's not a kid. He's 40 years old. He wasn't out there. A little bit later in the text, you remember, I read that it was noontime, he was still in bed. That tells you a great deal.

And maybe you know, some of our older ones who have older kids and now they're grown, we might remember a day when they could have stayed in bed until noon and maybe they did. We never allowed that at our house, but I think if we had, they would have.

[22:11] I've got a couple of brothers, I remember them, they could sleep all the way until noon and past. I never could do that. It was always kind of an early riser, but anyway, let me get back to the story.

And so, here's this guy, this is Ishbosheth, he's just really a failure and weak, weak of character and lazy, apparently, and cowardly and so forth.

And I don't think that he just left to Ishbosheth, I don't think he would have dared take the throne based upon what the Bible indicates about his character, about his person, his makeup, the way he's wired.

I don't think by himself he would have chosen it at all, had it not been for Abner. We gather that, I think, from what was said back in chapter 2, verse 8, if you remember, and if you have your Bibles open, you can look at it, in verse 8 of chapter 2, but Abner, the son of Ner, commander of Saul's

army, took Ishbosheth, the son of Saul.

This is after Saul died, died on the battlefield, and his sons, are all dead, except for Ishbosheth, and so it says Abner took him, I mean, really the very language suggests that he has to grab him and by force take hold of this guy, you know, in effect say you're going to be king.

[ 23 : 35 ] In fact, the verse goes on to say, and he made him king. Not God, not even Ishbosheth, but Abner did it, made him king, and Ishbosheth was, you know, again, not some child that needed an adult guardian to make all of his decisions.

I've mentioned it already, and it says so right there in that passage in chapter 2, that he was 40 years old when he began to reign over Israel. This is an adult, and he has to be made, forced to be king after his father.

So you get the picture. The real power behind Ishbosheth's, that's hard to say, real power behind his throne was who?

Abner, without a doubt. And I really think the picture is clear to see. Abner apparently believed Ishbosheth was the kind of weak person that could be manipulated.

He could be coaxed, he could be controlled. I mean, this would be the first time this thing has happened in kingdoms of the world, you know, where a king is really no more than some kind of puppet, and somebody else is working the strings, and that was the case here.

[ 25 : 00 ] And so Abner actually would himself be the de facto ruler. over Israel.

And that would one day, in Abner's ambitions, would include Judah as well. He just had to get David out of the way. So they're working hard to do that, you know, to defeat their armies.

And so this is what the Bible, I think, basically tells us about Abner there in verse six. Now it was so, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, what does it say?

That Abner was strengthening his hold on the house of Saul. So we got the picture, don't we?

Abner's holding the strings. Ish-bosheth was the puppet.

Now, I guess that would have been fine if things had continued in that way, but as is the case with nearly all narcissistic people, they always overplay their hand.

[ 26 : 06 ] hand. And that's what Abner did. Overplayed his hand. He got delusions of grandeur just a little bit too early. And so he thought that he could begin to take kingly prerogatives.

That's the best way to describe it, and I'm not going to describe it in detail. We've got kids in here. But what did he do? He laid with one of Saul's concubines.

Saul had many of them, and why not? Abner's probably thinking. I mean, why not? I mean, I have a right to. I mean, why not take for myself what is strictly, and it was strictly reserved, for royalty?

I mean, in his thinking, he was royalty king. So why not, you know, take this liberty? Well, what happened? Well, Ish by Sheth found out about it, didn't he?

And he called Abner on the carpet, so to speak. And verse seven says, this is what Ish-bosheth said, he said, why have you done this?

[ 27 : 12 ] Why have you gone into my father's concubine? What right do you have to do that? Who do you think you are? And for once, I guess we could say that Ish-bosheth found a little backbone, you know.

So he called Abner on this thing. Now, Abner never does admit it, and some even suggest that it really didn't happen, that Ish-bosheth was just kind of like his father, he was a very suspicious kind of person, and maybe that's the case, but Abner never really out and out denies it either.

You can kind of read between the lines here. But how does Abner react? Well, verse eight, then Abner became very angry at the words of Ish-bosheth.

so not just angry, but very angry. Very angry. Which, you know, I think is an indicator sometimes of guilt.

I mean, usually the louder the response to an accusation, the more clamorous a person gets, and agitated and wrathful a person gets when they are accused, the surer sometimes is the guilt.

[ 28 : 26 ] Now, that's not always the case, but I think it's probably perhaps an indicator that Abner was guilty of this. And look at Abner's response. He said, am I a dog's head that belongs to Judah?

That's exactly what I would have said. Am I a dog's head? What in the world does that mean? You know, a dog's head? Well, you kind of have to understand the culture.

And dogs were down at the very bottom in terms of value. In fact, they had no value at all.

And a dog head even less. That's just kind of a way of describing, you know, or saying, are you saying I'm despicable, despised, disgusting?

Am I a dog's head that belongs to Judah? It makes it even worse. All right? Basically saying you've accused me of being the lowest of animals, the very lowest.

[ 29 : 33 ] And you're calling me a traitor to Israel. And I find it interesting because what does Abner immediately do? Goes to Judah. Goes over to David's side.

See, you know, his anger is not because he's been falsely accused, but he has been caught. He's been caught.

And so, this is what he said. What else did Abner say? Well, he said basically, Ish-bosheth, you are on the throne because of me.

That's the next thing he wants to remind Ish-bosheth of. You wouldn't be king without me. I mean, how dare you? Have you forgotten about that? I mean, I'm the one that made you king.

Where were you before I came around? And you have the audacity to charge me, not that I didn't do it, but you have the audacity to charge me with it, this fault concerning, of all things, this woman, you know, this nobody.

[ 30 : 46 ] You have the audacity. I'm out of here. Abner said, I'm going over to David. He's God's promised one anyway. That's an interesting admission, isn't it?

So what's he, what has he been doing fighting against David, if you really believe that? And yet, and then verse 11, it says, and he, that's Ish-bosheth, could not answer Abner another word because he feared him, so he lost his backbone pretty quickly.

He could, he could have had Abner put in jail, could have had him put to death. I mean, by the law, what Abner did was a capital, capital crime.

Could have had him put to death, and, and Abner knew that. And I think he, Ish-bosheth, possibly Ish-bosheth, if he later found backbone, he might have had Abner put to death, and Abner knew that.

Now, the question is, did Abner have a change of heart about David? Do you think that's reasonable, that he did?

[ 31 : 53 ] That Abner would suddenly believe that David was truly God's anointed king of Israel, even though that's pretty much what he said? Do you think that that's what it is?

You know, perhaps, I mean, give something to him. And yet, I would say, based upon his behavior, the things we've seen from Abner, even before Saul died, I think it's more likely that Abner came to the realization that if I can't be king of Israel through Ish-bosheth, then I'll just settle for being general of Israel under King David.

And of course, Joab will have a thing or two to say about that, and does more than just say something about it. Now, before we move on to Joab, his part in the story, let's just notice how this fits in with David's rise to the throne of all of Israel.

In the first place, Ish-bosheth doesn't have a chance now that Abner is gone. He was propped up by Abner. And really, I think you can make the case from other things that are recorded in the story that Israel, the tribes of Israel minus Judah, were actually following Abner, trusting Abner and not Ish-bosheth.

So now Abner's gone, Ish-bosheth doesn't have a chance. And with Ish-bosheth being David's only impediment to the throne of all of Israel, you know, Ish-bosheth would need to be diminished greatly in strength.

[ 33 : 37 ] And he's going to be diminished more than just in strength. In the second place, as we just kind of see how the story unfolds here, in the second place, David's requirement, and we read this in the story, I'm not going to go back and read it again, but David's requirement that Abner, if he's going to make a covenant with him, that he bring Michael, that Saul's daughter.

You remember that's David's wife, that he bring her. And that's a shrewd move on David's part. It really is.

Now, I know we feel sorry for her husband, but she was rightfully David's wife before she remarried this other. There was no divorce mentioned in the Bible. And the fact that Abner said, no, you can just go on home, and the fact that he did go home, that tells you a great deal about his love for his wife.

Okay. Well, we don't need to get in to all of that, but the point is, why would David ask for Micah? I mean, he already has quite a few wives. Why does he need her back?

And she was somewhat of a problem to him. And so why? Well, because it's just smart. You know, smart move on David's part because that connects him to the house of Saul.

[ 34 : 55 ] And therefore, those who were loyal to Saul and his household, specifically the tribe of Benjamin. So, that's also smart.

In the third place, Abner will be instrumental in bringing all Israel to David's side to support David. In fact, verse 12 says, make you covenant with me, he said.

Indeed, my hand shall be with you to bring all Israel to you. And he could deliver on that. And you could argue that he did deliver on that.

You know, he had just enough time to accomplish that before he too was put to death or killed, murdered. But this is what Abner wanted to do, make a covenant. I'll bring Israel to your side.

He also said to David in verse 21, then Abner said to David, I will arise and go and 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.

[ 35 : 58 ] Okay? So it looks like, you know, with Abner's defection, regardless of his motivation, his kind of power-hungry motivation, I really think that was true of Abner.

It looks like everything is coming together for David, right? I mean, Abner's now on his side and he has great influence with all the people of Israel and boy, smooth sailing now to the throne.

But hold on, something happens that might upset the apple cart, or you would think it would, and so we move to Joab.

Joab's despicable revenge. Remember Joab? Remember what Abner did to Joab's brother Asahel? Remember that? Remember that story? You know, they're kind of in the heat of battle and Abner really doesn't want to destroy Asahel. And so Abner kind of retreats, but Asahel is determined, remember, and he runs after Abner and Abner says, turn to the right, turn to the left, you don't even have any armor on, I mean, you don't even have anything to fight me with, this is not a fair fight, you know, turn and get some weaponry if you're determined and Abner just, he doesn't even break stride, he just keeps going.

[ 37 : 26 ] And remember what Abner did, had his spear kind of stuck in the ground, really as a sign that I don't want to fight you, I don't want to kill you.

But he keeps coming so he just pushes that, the butt end of that sword toward Asahel and Asahel keeps coming and hits him in the chest, goes all the way through him and kills him.

All right, so you remember that story, you remember Asahel as the brother of Joab, brother of Joab and Bishai. And apparently I think Abner had forgotten all about that.

I mean, after all, you have to understand that in Abner's mind, he didn't want to kill him and didn't purposefully try to kill him, it was just kind of a, well, you know, just on the border of a freakish accident.

And so maybe in Abner's mind, he's just not really thinking about Joab wanting to have revenge on him. And so Abner's kind of forgotten about that, but Joab has not forgotten about it.

[ 38 : 29 ] And he was determined to avenge his brother. It mattered not that this was in the heat of the battle and it mattered not to him that Abner had no real intention of killing his brother.

father. And so while all this is taking place between David and Abner, this kind of warm kind of relationship and a covenant is made and guarantees are agreed upon and work had already commenced in promoting David to be the next king and Abner's engaged in that.

In fact, he's been sent off to work on that. And while all of this taking place according to the biblical record, Joab had been out on a raid, a raid on Israel's enemies and had conquered them and came back victoriously and carrying with him loads of spoil from the enemies.

And so when he gets into town, what's the first thing he hears? David has had a meeting with Abner and that he has sent Abner away in peace. Peace?

Are you kidding me? I mean, he just can't even imagine this. You know, what's this? The murderer of my son. I mean, my brother is now in league with my king.

[ 39 : 49 ] I mean, how could he imagine that? And Joab was partly right about it. He was in league with David, but he really was not his murderer, the murderer of his brother.

And yet, Joab is saying, what's this? This general, this general, former general under Saul, this general who may be here only to take advantage of my king.

me. And what's this? Here's this general who's kind of positioning his way, worming his way into David's heart, maybe to take my place.

I mean, you think all these things are going around in his mind. And he's thinking, I'll never forgive him for what he did to my brother. And I can't trust him.

Which is what Joab is claiming there in verse 24, isn't he? He's speaking to David. What have you done? Look, Abner came to you. Why is it that you sent him away?

[ 41 : 00 ] And he's already gone. He's gone. You let him go. Surely, he says to David, surely you realize that Abner, the son of Ner, came to deceive you. To know you're going out and you're coming in.

To know all that you're doing. He's a spy here. Can't you see that? He must die. He must die. And he did die. Right? Verse 27 says, when Abner had returned to Hebron, because Joab sent messengers to him to come back, and he did come back, and when he returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him privately, it's interesting that Abner would agree to that, right?

I mean, would you have agreed to that? If you had, in your mind, accidentally, you tried every way possible to keep from killing Joab's brother, but you had killed him, if you'd done that, do you think you'd want to meet with Joab privately?

I don't think so, but he did, and there, Joab stabbed him in the stomach so that he died for the blood of Asahel, his brother.

All right, now, all that said, I mean, this is part of the story, this is another movement in the story, it may look not like this is creating a huge problem for David. I mean, why would it be a huge problem for David?

[ 42 : 29 ] because Abner is so highly respected by all the people of Israel, the very ones that David needs to support him, and, you know, having David's general, or David's general, murdering Abner, man, that's terrible politics.

I mean, they're not going to be for David now, surely, and so David has a huge PR problem, doesn't he? And so that leads us to the third character, David himself, and his decisive response.

What David does next reveals both his integrity, because what he does is honest, it's from his heart, it's not a show, it's not put on, so it shows his integrity, but also his genius, so the two can come together here, and let's just name them, there are several of them here, you can follow along in the passage, just one right after the other.

First of all, what does David do? He issues a statement of innocence, innocence in the matter, which is true, right? True, verse 28, my kingdom and I are guiltless before the Lord forever of the blood of Abner, the son of Nerf, so he issues this official statement from the king in behalf of his kingdom, Judah.

He said, we are completely innocent of this blood, and again, he's telling the truth. The Bible clearly says that David knew nothing of Joab's plan. Second, David publicly curses Joab and Abishai, because apparently, according to verse 30, Abishai was in on this, somehow was a part of this.

[ 44 : 20 ] So he publicly curses them. He cursed them, by the way, it's kind of strange when we look at that in verse 30, these curses, you know, having an issue and leprosy and falling by the sword and lame and talking about the generations to come in Joab's family, and it sounds very strange, but it is according to the Levitical law, Leviticus chapter 26, these curses years.

Third, David demanded that the murderers of Abner participate with all the people in a national mourning over his death. These are things that, steps that David decisively takes in response to what Joab did to Abner, which is a huge problem for him, and so these are steps that David is taking, issues a statement of innocence.

He curses publicly those who perpetrated this terrible deed. He demands that the murderers of Abner, that would be Joab and Abishai, he demands that they participate with all the people in this national mourning over his death.

Now think about that. Joab hated Abner, hated him to the point of, you know, murder.

And now he's going to be forced to put on sackcloth and all that's required for public mourning over the death, death of a man he hated and that he murdered.

[ 46 : 07 ] Fourth, these are things David is doing. David, number four, David walked in the procession, the kind of funeral procession. He walked immediately behind the coffin.

I mean, this is a show of honor for Abner who has been killed. Number five, David publicly wept, loudly, wept at the graveside of Abner leading all the people to weep.

I mean, his weeping and mourning was so real and so compelling that all the people were weeping. This is really very interesting. Number six, David wrote a song, a song for the funeral, for the occasion.

He wrote a song and sang it himself at the funeral of Abner. A song that, we have a little snippet of it here in the passage, verse 33, it's a song that first of all highlights the heinous crime of this murder and also at the same time vilifies the perpetrators, the killers of Abner.

That would be Joab and Abishai. And we have some of the text of the song, verse 33, and the king sang a lament over Abner and said, should Abner die as a fool dies?

[ 47 : 39 ] Your hands were not bound or your feet put into fetters as a man falls before the wicked men, before wicked men, so you fell. It's a scathing, scathing rebuke and condemnation of Joab and Abishai.

Seventh, I mean, it just piles on, these things that David is doing. Seventh, David fasted. On top of all that, he fasted all day in mourning for Abner.

And he said in verse 25, God do so to me, is what happened to Abner, let God do it to me, and more so, more also, if I taste bread or anything else till the sun goes down.

All right, so all these things, seven things here, and we'll add an eighth here in just a minute, but what is the result at this point? Well, verse 37, for all the people and all Israel, that's important to note, all Israel, not just Judah now, but all Israel, understood that day that it had not been the king's intent to kill Abner the son of Ner.

And that leads really to an eighth thing David did, kind of icing on the cake, so to speak. David honored the value of Abner to his kingdom.

[ 49 : 09 ] He said in verse 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? And he said, I am weak today.

I'm weak because of the loss of Abner. I'm a weaker man, weaker king, though anointed king. I mean, that's kind of the height of honor for Abner.

And that leads us then to one final character, one that marks the absolute end of the dynasty of Saul, and that's Ish-bosheth.

And Ish-bosheth's deadly removal. The key phrase, and this is on into chapter 4, the key phrase in this chapter is found really at the end of verse 4, or chapter 4 and verse 1, and it's this, and all Israel was troubled.

They were troubled. What were they troubled about? They've got this impotent king. I mean, with all that has happened after Abner is killed, well, first really you have to go back to Abner and what he said to many of the people, the people he had the opportunity to speak to before he was murdered, what he said to them about David.

[ 50 : 41 ] And then all that transpired after Abner was killed and all that David said and did in honor to Abner. In light of that, the people are looking, we've got this king Ish-bosheth, you know, he sleeps half the day.

He's a coward, he's weak. And with Abner out of the way, this is more visible now than ever before and we're stuck with this guy and here's David over there.

The people were troubled. And so you can imagine that it was the talk. Spread around all the people. What are we going to do? Well, a couple of enterprising generals or captains decide they're going to take things into their own hands, take care of this Ish-bosheth, which is get him out of the way.

And you might ask, is this God's will? Is this what God wanted? No. And it's obvious from how David responded to their deed a little bit later in the chapter.

But they decide they're going to take care of this impotent king. And so verse 5 says, Then the sons of Ramon the Beirathite, Rechab and Baana, wherever, set out and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ish-bosheth, who was lying on his bed at noon.

[ 52 : 06 ] Again, speaks volumes of this 40-year-old guy. And what did they do? What did they do? Well, they came in, presumably to get some food.

They came all the way into the bedroom, and they stabbed him, stabbed him in the stomach. And he died. And then these two guys, they escape.

Verse 7, it almost sounds like a repeat of it, but it's really giving us more details. Not only did they stab him, kill him, but they beheaded him, took his head off. Why would they do that? They needed proof, proof that he's dead.

Because they're going to take the proof to David, right? Which is what they did. Which was a big mistake. Big mistake for those guys.

They should have thought a little bit more carefully about this. And because they apparently had not learned a single thing about David. Because when they presented the head to David, they said, essentially, David, we're your friends.

[ 53 : 13 ] We've done you a huge service. You know, we've taken care of your enemy. You don't have to worry about that guy who wanted your life. I mean, we've taken care of that guy.

I mean, you ought to thank us that you're going to continue to live because we've done this wonderful thing for you. And what does David basically say?

He said, I don't need you to protect me. God does that. God takes care of me. That's what he said in verse 9, the Lord lives, who has redeemed my life from all adversity.

Perhaps, you know, he kind of says to them, perhaps you've not heard this story. And I think they surely had heard this. It would be difficult for them not to have heard about this.

This would have made news. But David is saying, maybe you've not heard this. Now, on one occasion, not long ago, someone like you came to me claiming that they had taken care of Saul, killed him on the battlefield, essentially wanted a reward.

[ 54 : 30 ] He thought I would reward him, and I did. I did reward him, same way I'm going to reward you. And how did he reward these two guys?

Had them killed. Had them killed. Had their hands cut off, feet cut off, and hung them. Hung them out there for everybody to see over a pool in Hebron, some place that everybody knew.

Pretty amazing. thing. And he also said, your sin is worse than that guy that came and reported that he had taken care of my enemy Saul. Your case is even worse than that.

Because you've killed a righteous person. Ishbosheth, innocent guy, I mean, he's weak and all those other things, but pretty innocent.

You killed him, and you killed him in his own house, on his bed. Not out on the battlefield. You're a bunch of cowards.

[ 55 : 36 ] What a terrible sin you've committed. And so David had these men executed. And then, kind of one final, I guess, show to all of Israel.

Show of David's integrity. His honor. He took the head of Ishbosheth and had it buried.

I guess that's all that we could get, all that was left. Had it buried in the tomb of Abner. Honored him. His enemy.

I mean, David had done this kind of thing all throughout his career, all throughout the story of his life. A man of honor, a man of integrity, a man worthy to be king.

Now, he's going to be king because God had chosen him and anointed him. But, along with that, he is worthy to be king.

[ 56 : 42 ] And all of Israel will respect him. And when we get to chapter 5, we barely get into the chapter when all Israel anoints him as their king. Thank you.