

April 6

2 Samuel 2 and 3

2 Samuel 4-6

Hello and welcome to our April 6th accelerator of Project 4:4. I am Lisa Ashton and our readings covered II Samuel 2-4 and I Chronicles 12.

After reading today's chapters I thought one word - DRAMA. I am going to try and recap the main events of the day and help you see how they pointed towards David assuming the throne over ALL of Israel. How did it happen? Let's review this crazy story and find out!

First, let's look at the main characters we are dealing with: David himself, who accepted the invitation of Judah to become its king; Ish-Bosheth, the son of Saul who became king over the rest of Israel after his father's death; Abner, Saul's relative and general who set Ish-Bosheth up in his kingdom; and Joab, a military power on the side of David and a man with a very bad temper.

First thing to mention, with Saul's death there is chaos in Israel. The princes of Judah have already been wooed by the gifts that David sent after he recovered the plunder taken by the Amalekites at Ziklag, and they remember that Samuel has already declared that David is the choice of God for the throne. Since their relationship with him is strong already, they proceed to invite him to become the king of Judah, if not all of Israel. In other quarters, however, the esteem for David is not quite so high. Abner is a relative of Saul and the general of the armies of Israel (or at least of what is left of them after the debacle at Gilboa). David, to him at least, is still the enemy. His recent alliance with the king of the Philistines is all the reason Abner will ever need to cast doubts in the minds of most loyal Israelites about accepting David as the king of Israel. He probably viewed David as a traitor. Abner, who obviously had plans for political power, if not the throne itself, took as much of the army as he could resurrect and began to work for the establishment of Ish-Bosheth as the next king of Israel.

So here we have Ishbosheth as king over all of Israel, Abner is his general, and we have David as king over Judah. Now we read in our text that a civil war broke out between David's men and Abner's men. What started out to be a "hand to hand" competitive skirmish resulted into a battle to the death. Why they just couldn't have challenged each other to a "who can throw their spear the farthest" tournament or "lift the biggest rock" contest is beyond me. I mean I know they didn't have boxing yet or the WWF but come on. I guess as the saying goes these days, "They wanted to go big or go home" Well they went BIG alright and the consequences rippled through the rest of our story today. As expected, we see that David won! Yay! But if that wasn't enough, some of David's men wanted to seal the deal of David's reign over ALL of Israel by killing Abner. The pursuit backfired and one of David's men, Asahel was killed. This war between the house of Saul (Abner's side) and the House of David continued for what the text says, "A long time." In the midst of the war we read an important fact: David's rule became stronger and stronger and Saul's rule became weaker.

Ok, now I want to provide a visual for you to help you see what all is going in between the characters and what happens next. (Explain picture)

The plot thickens...as the war continues we read in II Sam 3:6 that Abner is strengthening his position. So naturally Ishbosheth may feel threatened. Reacting, Ishbosheth accuses Abner of having relations with Saul's concubine. Abner gets mad and as a way to get back at Ish-bosheth, Abner seeks to make an agreement with David. David, says yes only under one condition. He asks to have his wife Michal brought back to him! Can you believe this? It sounds like a soap opera! Perhaps by getting his wife back it could further establish his heir to the throne because she, if you remember, was the daughter of Saul. The request is granted and David is reunited with Michal(at the sad expense of her husband sobbing in the streets) and an agreement is made with Abner.

Abner and the elders of Israel want to make David their king of the northern tribes! But don't forget, we have a problem here, Ish-bosheth is still king over that area. Mutual trust and respect are growing between the two. Now just when you think things are straightening out, Joab, the man whose brother was killed by Abner, earlier in our story today, seeks revenge. Joab ends up killing Abner! News of Abner's death is crushing to David and to Israel. As punishment, David places a curse on Joab that is devastating and will affect Joab and his family for generations.

After the death of Abner, Ish-bosheth loses courage. And our drama for the day concludes with his own men, Benjaminites, turning on and murdering him(stomach stabbing #3 for the day). With Saul's son now dead this further solidifies David heir to the throne. Israel responds and anoints David as king over Israel.

The next 33 years (David reigned for a total of 40 and ½ years- 7 and ½ for Judah and 33 for all of Israel) become the golden age of Israel. That golden age will continue through the reign of David's son Solomon, but Israel will never again see anything like the days of David the great king, until the King that is "greater than David", Jesus, ascends to the throne at the beginning of the millennial kingdom which is yet to come.

Congrats you made it through another crazy day of reading in the life of David. And even in the midst of the crazy we see God's divine purposes for David come to fruition. No person, no military strategy, no political agenda, no scheme of the enemy, could keep God from orchestrating His plan for the "man after his own heart."

This is Lisa Ashton reminding you that whatever "crazy" you may be experiencing today, God is about working ALL things out for the GOOD of those who love him and who have been called according to his purpose. He did it for David and will do it for you. Peace.