

CONCERNING THE WAY

October 28, 2008

LESSON 36: ISRAEL: 2 SAMUEL



Now 2 Samuel chapter 1. 1 and 2 Samuel are together in the Jewish Bible; they are separated in your English Bibles; they are part of one book. There's no break between them.

2 Samuel 1:1 *After the death of Saul, when David had returned from defeating the Amalekites, he stayed at Ziklag for two days. (2) On the third day a man arrived from the camp of Saul with his clothes torn and dirt on his head. When he approached David, the man threw himself to the ground. (3) David asked him, "Where are you coming from?" He replied, "I have escaped from the camp of Israel." (4) David inquired, "How were things going? Tell me!" He replied, "The people fled from the battle and many of them fell dead. Even Saul and his son Jonathan are dead!" (5) David said to the young man who was telling him this, "How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?" (6) The young man who was telling him this said, "I just happened to be on Mount Gilboa and came across Saul leaning on his spear for support. The chariots and leaders of the horsemen were in hot pursuit of him.*

This man, if you've read classical literature, is the classic bearer of good news. In the ancient world the man who would bring the new king the news that his enemy was dead, and he was now king. Then the messenger would be made a high official in that king's administration. He would be rewarded. So this youth, if you understand the culture of it, has certain things on his mind other than just telling the good news of this thing.

2 Samuel 1:7-9 *When he turned around and saw me, he called out to me. I answered, 'Here I am!' (8) He asked me, 'Who are you?' I told him, 'I'm an Amalekite.' (9) He said to me, 'Stand over me and finish me off! I'm very dizzy, even though I'm still alive.' (10) So I stood over him and put him to death, since I knew that he couldn't live in such a condition. Then I took the crown which was on his head and the bracelet which was on his arm. I have brought them here to my lord."*

This is a strange thing, what is an Amalekite doing inside the Hebrew army, especially when David is fighting the Amalekites to the south? We know this is a lie because 1 Samuel 31 reports how Saul really died. He thought David would be happy about this because under Ancient Near Eastern custom the bearer of good news was honored. What happens next is radically different from normal political procedure in this kind of a thing.

2 Samuel 1:11-12 *David then grabbed his own clothes and tore them, as did all the men who were with him. (12) They lamented and wept and fasted until evening because Saul, his son Jonathan, the LORD's people, and the house of Israel had fallen by the sword.*

Try to picture this young man's face, because here he is in anticipation that David is going to give him something, and all of a sudden everybody goes into hysterics. The kid looks around, what's going on, I didn't expect this, what are you guys, crazy or something, I'm telling you good news, your enemy is dead, and this is the reaction he gets.

2 Samuel 1:13-15 *David said to the young man who told this to him, "Where are you from?" He replied, "I am an Amalekite, the son of a resident foreigner." (14) David replied to him, "How is it that you were not afraid to reach out your hand to destroy the LORD's anointed?" (15) Then David called one of the soldiers and said, "Come here and strike him down!" So he struck him down, and he died. (16) David said to him, "Your blood be on your own head! Your own mouth has testified against you, saying 'I have put the LORD's anointed to death.'"*

You can just imagine the horrible shock on this kid's face, he'd brought David the crown, he'd brought David the

king's bracelet. He hands it to him and David strikes him down. What kind of a reaction is this? Well, we have to understand what's going on here, what the Holy Spirit has in this for us. It's because Saul has been disciplined by God, and you never rejoice over someone's chastening; like oh I'm glad he got what was coming to him. That's not the attitude of David, and here he writes one of the most famous heroic laments in all the world's literature.

2 Samuel 1:17-18 Then David chanted this lament over Saul and his son Jonathan. (18) (He gave instructions that the people of Judah should be taught "The Bow." Indeed, it is written down in the Book of Yashar.)

The book of Jasher (Yashar) was a military training manual for the young men of Israel. It had two parts, a musical part and one on the martial arts. The men would be trained in combat, and they would also be trained in music. The ancient people believed that music was a system of molding your mental attitude, of giving energy and concentration to your soul, and they used music as a device, a tool of war, even a weapon. The book of Jasher seems to be lost to history, there is a book of Jasher that seems to have been written much later in history, it's very doubtful whether that's really the original one.

A "lament" is a technical word, "qinah" in the Hebrew, and it was a funeral dirge, it had a three two beat to it, we can tell that from the way the book of Lamentations is written, three beats, and then two, and the whole book of Lamentations goes like that, it never changes. Three two, three two, a very slow dirge. Orthodox Jews in Israel still use these laments on certain occasions, for example after some hostilities have occurred. They sing or chant the book of Lamentations on the radio stations all over Israel.

2 Samuel 1:19-21 The beauty of Israel lies slain on your high places! How the mighty have fallen! (20) Don't report it in Gath, don't spread the news in the streets of Ashkelon, or the daughters of the Philistines will rejoice, the daughters of the uncircumcised will celebrate! (21) O mountains of Gilboa, may there be no dew or rain on you, nor fields of grain offerings! For it was there that the shield of warriors was defiled; the shield of Saul lies neglected without oil.

In other words, stop the victory celebrations of the enemy, let them not have their victory. This is what David is concerned about; now does that start to ring a bell why he's lamenting? He's lamenting, not because of Saul's righteousness, but because God's enemies have had the upper hand in this. So when you see discipline brought upon a brother, the forces of Satan have had a victory. When you see a believer suffering, Satan there is winning, and no believer can rejoice at that. You can't do that and be loyal to the God of the universe.

Verse 21 is a curse on the ground, because it's an agrarian economy, and David is saying let the shield of Saul sit there and rot, let it be a monument to this day of horror.

2 Samuel 1:22-24 From the blood of the slain, from the fat of warriors, the bow of Jonathan was not turned away. The sword of Saul never returned empty. (23) Saul and Jonathan were greatly loved during their lives, and not even in their deaths were they separated. They were swifter than eagles, stronger than lions. (24) O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet as well as jewelry, who put gold jewelry on your clothes.

Here we have the eulogy that he makes, not because Saul is a righteous man, but because he the Lord's anointed. Not because of his scintillating personality, but because of the position he held in God's plan. It's a eulogy to their bravery. You could argue well Saul didn't show much bravery; nevertheless, David honored him in his position. Saul was brave when he wanted to be.

2 Samuel 1:25-27 How the warriors have fallen in the midst of battle! Jonathan lies slain on your high places! (26) I grieve over you, my brother Jonathan! You were very dear to me. Your love was more special to me than the love of women. (27) How the warriors have fallen! The weapons of war are destroyed!

And then here he has a special note of praise for Jonathan, which speaks of the deep love and respect that David

had for Jonathan. So this is a lament, David doesn't say well, the Lord's will be done, we'll move on. There was a legitimate emotion of sadness here. They're weeping because of what has happened.

"The weapons of war" is a metonymy for Saul and Jonathan; it's not talking about the sword, it's talking about the men who led in war. Now we want to bring this down to a Christian application. So again, why does David weep at his moment of victory? Because he sees sin; remember that grace always works in a polluted atmosphere. You can't be flippant about grace. When God delivers us it's always because somebody suffers. When you're saved it's because Jesus Christ suffered. **Grace delivered David, but many of his brother Israelites died, including his best friend, Jonathan, to make David king.** When we stand before the throne of grace, you're standing, really, on the back of the Lord Jesus Christ. Look in 1 Corinthians for how this applies to the discipline of the believer.

1 Corinthians 5:5 turn this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

Discipline is always under God's ultimate sovereign control, but the immediate instrument of pressure is Satan. And so here is a believer who needs to be disciplined, and Paul says I want to turn this man over to Satan. That's a horrible, horrible thing, but what he's saying is that this is a believer who's so far out of line, the only way God can be merciful to him is let Satan have a field day with him. I think this is what happened to Saul. He was turned over to Satan. So remember that before you rejoice in someone else's trouble.

Chapter 2

From the second chapter on through to chapter 12 you have God blessing David. It's a very interesting story. Chapter 2 is a lesson for believers in why you should trust the Lord to handle those things which He has promised. And why it's very, very foolish to take matters into your own hands and try human solutions to bring about God's plans, because in chapter 2 we have David facing one of the greatest threats to his entire reign, right from the start. No sooner does David have the crown placed upon his head than he has a concerted satanic attempt to undo him from inside Israel. He is faced with a civil war, with a deep rebellion. And once again David, the master of the faith technique, sits back and rests in the Lord. David is sitting back and watching Abner try to attack him. And David does not attack Abner, he sits and waits. In chapter 2 a war starts by an "accident."

You can go back in the 20th century and think of the assassination that led to World War I. We can think back to many, many other instances that are "accidents" that have happened in history. Historians can't explain why these "accidents" just happen. This chapter is going to give a divine viewpoint of two accidents. And this is going to teach us how to view historical "accidents" on a wide scale, and the "accidents" that happen to you as a believer.

2 Samuel 2:1 Afterward David inquired of the LORD, "Should I go up to one of the cities of Judah?" The LORD told him, "Go up." David asked, "Where should I go?" The LORD replied, "To Hebron."

Notice David is inquiring of the Lord; that's the first sign that David has moved back into fellowship. Every time David's out of fellowship he refuses to seek divine guidance. And when he's not inquiring of the Lord he usually winds up in a mess. Remember David has the high priest with him. The question was in two parts: shall I go up into any of the cities? The Urim and Thummim gave a yes/no answer. It wasn't like going to a prophet and saying hey, tell me which city to go to. It didn't work that way; when you went to the priest it was a yes/no answer, so you had to ask questions. The answer to the second question must have been by the process of elimination. David said shall I go to this city? No. Shall I go to this city? No. Shall I go to Hebron? Yes. Hebron controls the whole southern area. It is high in elevation, militarily it's a good city, and it's also good by way of communication and rule. So there are a lot of reasons for this. But God chose the city.

2 Samuel 2:2-3 So David went up, along with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelite and Abigail, formerly the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. (3) David also brought along the men who were with him, each with his family. They settled in the cities of Hebron.

This is a permanent move; they are coming back to the land of Israel from Philistia. David out of the land is not under God's blessing; David in the land is in the blessing. And so David comes back to the land and will be blessed.

2 Samuel 2:4 The men of Judah came and there they anointed David as king over the people of Judah. David was told, "The people of Jabesh Gilead are the ones who buried Saul."

Now he's not anointed king over all Israel here, he's king over Judah. Then we have a new subject start in the middle of verse 4, this is to be separated in the Hebrew. David must have asked where Saul was buried.

Remember that David is a type of Christ and here he's is going to act just like the Lord Jesus Christ. David is going to allow the people of Jabesh Gilead the choice of coming into his kingdom. He doesn't conquer them, he asks them to become part of his kingdom. He demonstrates God's grace in his life and he expects them to respond to that grace.

2 Samuel 2:5-7 So David sent messengers to the people of Jabesh Gilead and told them, "May you be blessed by the LORD because you have shown this kindness to your lord Saul by burying him. (6) Now may the LORD show you true kindness! I also will reward you, because you have done this deed. (7) Now be courageous and prove to be valiant warriors, for your lord Saul is dead. The people of Judah have anointed me as king over them."

The word "messengers" is the same word used as angels, and this will give you the picture of angels in the Bible. The messengers are always sent out by kings or generals; angels are always sent out by The King, The Lord of Hosts. Verses 5-7 show a very wise piece of diplomacy. David recognizes that here we have a remnant in an area that is very critical to his own kingdom, and he compliments them.

Here's the situation he faces; he controls Judah, that's all. The Philistines have come down the valley of Jezreel and severed the nation. The northern tribes are now severed from the south. To the north he's got questionable alliances because the tribe here is Benjamin and that's Saul's home tribe. To the north you also have Ephraim, and then across you have Transjordan, Gilead and so on. So you've got a lot of tribes out there, but you've got one city called Jabesh-gilead that is in the heartland of the trouble spot. David wants to establish a stronghold of influence in the northern area. And then he can work from there and bring the rest of the area into dominion.

Remember, the tribes are not united, they haven't been united for 500 years, since Joshua went in and conquered. During the period of the Judges you had no order, no discipline. Under Saul they got together only when there was a fight. Talk about a nation being divided, the U. S. hasn't come close to the mess that David's got here. But David is a politician that is totally dedicated to the Lord and is called by God for the office, and that makes all the difference.

In verse 6 David's saying God is going to bless you and it's going to be through me. Now that sounds audacious but it just happens to be the truth. God has called David to be king and here he is asserting his authority over the people at Jabesh-Gilead. I am the messiah, the king, you come under my authority. Now verses 1-7 of this chapter are basically an introduction to the disaster to follow. But they set you up for the mentality in the north. In the north you have a very shattered population, shocked by this Philistines penetration; you have chaos, political disorder, you have the people seeking a ruler, seeking peace and safety from all of this.

2 Samuel 2:8-9 Now Abner son of Ner, the general in command of Saul's army, had taken Saul's son Ish-bosheth and had brought him to Mahanaim. (9) He appointed him king over Gilead, the Geshurites, Jezreel, Ephraim, Benjamin, and all Israel.

And now we have Satan's counterattack. Abner is Saul's cousin, so this is a family thing. Saul has a son, we'll call him "Ish." Now Abner is older than Ish, Abner has been through many battles, he's a battle-hardened veteran. Somehow Abner escaped from the battle at Gilboa and survived to fight another day. And now he becomes the coach of Ish.

When Abner called Ish to be the king of the north, that is rebellion against God's Word. Why? Because Saul already knew who the next king of Israel was. Do you remember the last few times David met Saul before Saul died? What did Saul say to David. He said you're going to be the king, David, and when you get to be king save my family. Abner knew very well, he had to have heard Saul saying these things. Abner has had the Word of God presented to him. Abner is defying God's Word.

2 Samuel 2:10-11 *Ish-bosheth son of Saul was forty years old when he began to rule over Israel. He ruled two years. However, the people of Judah followed David. (11) David was king in Hebron over the people of Judah for seven and a half years.*

This is a commentary on the time element. This is the first time in the king's reigns that we have time mentioned; and you'll see it over and over with the succeeding kings of Israel. Now we can deduce something here and learn a little bit about history. If David reigned seven and a half years, and Ish-bosheth was killed just before David took over all the tribes, you work backwards two years and that leaves five and a half years for verses 1-11 of this chapter. For five and a half years David was making political overtures to these tribes to bring them to himself. Five and a half years and not one tribe went with him, that we know of in the text. David invited them to come in, saying stop trying to fight the Philistines on your own, come under my authority and I will fight them for you. So God is going to, in grace, work another miracle. God is going to cause an accident to happen, and as a result of this there's going to be a war, and then the tribes will be consolidated under David. **See what God has to do to bring men to Himself; has to cause accidents, wars, suffering and everything else to hit us over the head to make us turn to Him.** And here's an illustration.

2 Samuel 2:12-17 *Then Abner son of Ner and the servants of Ish-bosheth son of Saul went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon. (13) Joab son of Zeruiah and the servants of David also went out and confronted them at the pool of Gibeon. One group stationed themselves on one side of the pool, and the other group on the other side of the pool. (14) Abner said to Joab, "Let the soldiers get up and fight before us." Joab said, "So be it!" (15) So they got up and crossed over by number: twelve belonging to Benjamin and to Ish-bosheth son of Saul, and twelve from the servants of David. (16) As they grappled with one another, each one stabbed his opponent with his sword and they fell dead together. So that place is called the Field of Flints; it is in Gibeon. (17) Now the battle was very severe that day; Abner and the men of Israel were overcome by David's soldiers.*

Abner's trying to begin conquering Judah here. They're not playing here. This word means to hold a tournament. We don't know all the details, but there was some sort of tournament, like martial arts of some sort, in which they would fight weapon-less, it was a mock battle type of thing; and the word means it was non lethal, because this word is always used when no one is hurt. So what's going to happen is an accident, one of those things that happens.

Every one of the twelve men in the tournament killed his opponent. It's simultaneous, they must have been very fast, very quick, each one grabbed the other and stabbed him. And all twelve of them fell dead. And verse 17 is the result. Again, it was an accident, it was not the intention of the tournament to kill, it was just a contest. And so it resulted in a blood bath and this was the first battle.

2 Samuel 2:18-22 *The three sons of Zeruiah were there — Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. (Now Asahel was as quick on his feet as one of the gazelles in the field.) (19) Asahel chased Abner, without turning to the right or to the left as he followed Abner. (20) Then Abner turned and asked, "Is that you, Asahel?" He replied, "Yes it is!" (21) Abner said to him, "Turn aside to your right or to your left. Capture one of the soldiers and take his equipment for yourself!" But Asahel was not willing to turn aside from following him. (22) So Abner spoke again to Asahel, "Turn aside from following me! I do not want to strike you to the ground. How then could I show my face in the presence of Joab your brother?"*

Abner is trying to get him to stop, even offering him a bribe. But Asahel would not turn aside because he wanted to get at him, you see it's all vengeance here, the tempers are hot from this tournament and they're just out to kill. This is just a gang fight right here. Now Abner obviously is the superior man; Asahel is a good runner but he's not a good fighter. Abner is a combat veteran so obviously the kid doesn't have a chance and Abner knows it, he's trying to get this kid to just relax and calm down, but he won't. This is one of these "accidents" that's going to happen.

2 Samuel 2:23 *But Asahel refused to turn aside. So Abner struck him in the abdomen with the back end of his spear. The spear came out his back; Asahel collapsed on the spot and died there right before Abner. Everyone who now comes to the place where Asahel fell dead pauses in respect.*

This was unintentional. It's the back end of the spear, what he intended to do is to just poke him in the stomach. It

wasn't an attempt to kill him. But there's a little feature about a Hebrew spear that apparently Abner in his haste forgot about. The spears weren't blunt on the other end, they had a sharpened wood point because they were used to stick them in the ground. They'd always stick the spears in the ground with the spear up to keep the spear part sharp; you'd never take the sharp point of the spear and put it in the ground to hold it up, that would dull it. So when he went to hit the guy in the stomach he apparently slowed down. He's moving the thing toward him and it just impaled him on the thing. It went under his rib cage and right on through and out the back. And this was the second accident of the day, Abner did not want to kill this kid. And of all people to kill, who is it but Joab's brother.

Now you've got blood vengeance between Joab and Abner; and vengeance between the northern area and the southern, vengeance now between the house of David and the house of Saul, because Abner's part of Saul's house; Joab is part of David's house. Now you've got a full-fledged war on your hands, all because of two accidents.

2 Samuel 2:24-26 So Joab and Abishai chased Abner. At sunset they came to the hill of Ammah near Giah on the way to the wilderness of Gibeon. (25) The Benjaminites formed their ranks behind Abner and were like a single army, standing at the top of a certain hill. (26) Then Abner called out to Joab, "Must the sword devour forever? Don't you realize that this will turn bitter in the end? When will you tell the people to turn aside from pursuing their brothers?"

You see the reluctance of Abner to engage in this kind of a battle. He doesn't want war, he is an old man now, he's lived through years and years of war, and he wants it to stop, but it's his own fault the war started. It wasn't really an accident, that was God that started this thing. Those accidents were decreed by God as punishment to irritate the situation to get David onto the throne. So Abner's trying to calm everybody down.

2 Samuel 2:27-32 Joab replied, "As surely as God lives, if you had not said this, it would have been morning before the people would have abandoned pursuit of their brothers!" (28) Then Joab blew the ram's horn and all the people stopped in their tracks. They stopped chasing Israel and ceased fighting. (29) Abner and his men went through the Arabah all that night. They crossed the Jordan River and went through the whole region of Bitron and came to Mahanaim. (30) Now Joab returned from chasing Abner and assembled all the people. Nineteen of David's soldiers were missing, in addition to Asahel. (31) But David's soldiers had slaughtered the Benjaminites and Abner's men — in all, 360 men had died! (32) They took Asahel's body and buried him in his father's tomb at Bethlehem. Joab and his men then traveled all that night and reached Hebron by dawn.

Joab is saying look Abner, who is the one that called for the tournament? You're the cause of this war. So an "accident" started a war, and as a result people are going to centralize around David; by the end of chapter 4 he will have all twelve tribes under his control. Why? Because he relaxed and let the Lord handle the problem.

Chapter 3

This all may seem to be very dull history until you realize that there are principles that apply to your Christian life and build your trust in God's promises. God decrees what shall come to pass. Nothing occurs in history apart from God's decree. However, the Bible also says that God does not program history like an IBM machine. We don't know how He does this, but in some way **God sovereignly decrees what will happen in history, and yet what happens in history is a result of responsible choice.** We don't know how that works, but we just know that the Bible is clear on both.

In Samuel we have seen God's sovereign decree to bring David to the throne through a series of all sorts of acts. We've seen David's anointing in the house of Jesse; he almost missed it there because he was out with the sheep, almost got overlooked, almost but not quite. Then we have the many military battles that David engaged in; he could have been the victim of an arrow like Saul was, a spear might have struck him in the chaos of battle but God decreed David would rule and so no fatal injury occurred. Saul attempted seven times to assassinate David; and through accidents and miscalculations David was saved. God decreed David would get to the throne.

Now in chapters 3-4 we come to a series of accidents and violence in the course of David's ascension to this throne, things that look from the human standpoint that the situation is totally out of hand. But God is in back of it all.

2 Samuel 3:1 *However, the war was prolonged between the house of Saul and the house of David. David was becoming steadily stronger, while the house of Saul was becoming increasingly weaker.*

This war began five and a half years after Saul died. The war starts when Abner tries to attain control under Saul's son. It occurs because Abner is in rebellion against God's plan for the nation.

2 Samuel 3:2-5 *Now sons were born to David in Hebron. His firstborn was Amnon, born to Ahinoam the Jezreelite. (3) His second son was Kileab, born to Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite. His third son was Absalom, the son of Maacah daughter of King Talmai of Geshur. (4) His fourth son was Adonijah, the son of Haggith. His fifth son was Shephatiah, the son of Abitail. (5) His sixth son was Ithream, born to David's wife Eglah. These sons were all born to David in Hebron.*

Here you have an official record that apparently is put in by the narrator, to bring us up to date on David. You read it and you wonder what has this got to do with the battles? The whole point of this passage in Samuel is to show David is gaining power. In the Ancient Near East the king's power was expressed through his harem, believe it or not. The word "harem" was a word which originally meant off limits, and it started because he had all his girlfriends parked there and it was off limits to everybody except the king. So the king had a harem and the harem was an expression of his right to the throne. Guys, don't think since David was a polygamist, that you can be one. You're not a king, so you're disqualified. This is only for kings and only under the Old Testament dispensations.

So this lists six wives and his six firstborn sons. He had more than that, and daughters, but those are the wives that are listed at this point, to indicate that David is accumulating a harem and therefore the royal seed to the throne.

2 Samuel 3:6 *As the war continued between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner was becoming more influential in the house of Saul.*

Remember Abner is related to Saul and he is now trying to take over from Saul's son, Ish-bosheth. You'll lose the point of the story if you don't catch it right here and that is every character you're going to see here is in the house of Saul; all the stuff that goes on has to do with the house of Saul. That's very, very important to the story because God is going to get rid of the house of Saul and He's going to do it without David having to lift a finger.

2 Samuel 3:7 *Now Saul had a concubine named Rizpah daughter of Aiah. Ish-bosheth said to Abner, "Why did you have sexual relations with my father's concubine?"*

Now what's happening here and what is the problem? To analyze the passage we have to know a little bit of history. Why is this considered a big insult, because obviously it's not the wife of Ish-bosheth, why should he be bothered if Abner wants to shack up with one of Saul's concubines? Well, we're going to see that this is a claim to a throne.

Turn to 2 Samuel 16:20-23, you'll see where this strange practice comes out again, strange by our standards in the west so we have to understand the Biblical world. A lot more went on here than just a night with a concubine. Now this is later on in the life of David, and Absalom is trying to take over his father's throne.

2 Samuel 16:20-21 *Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, "Give us your advice. What should we do?" (21) Ahithophel replied to Absalom, "Have sex with your father's concubines whom he left to care for the palace. All Israel will hear that you have made yourself repulsive to your father. Then your followers will be motivated to support you."*

So you can see that one way you claim the throne is by going in and claiming the concubines as yours. Now again it sounds strange by our standards but you have to understand this was the custom. We see this even further, in 1 Kings 2:13, it occurs again. This is a boy that wants to go into the concubines of Solomon, and he apparently has a girlfriend in there or something and he wants her. So he goes through the queen, who at this point is Bathsheba.

1 Kings 2:13-24 *Haggith's son Adonijah visited Bathsheba, Solomon's mother. She asked, "Do you*

come in peace?" He answered, "Yes." (14) He added, "I have something to say to you." She replied, "Speak." (15) He said, "You know that the kingdom was mine and all Israel considered me king. But then the kingdom was given to my brother, for the LORD decided it should be his. (16) Now I'd like to ask you for just one thing. Please don't refuse me." She said, "Go ahead and ask." (17) He said, "Please ask King Solomon if he would give me Abishag the Shunammite as a wife, for he won't refuse you." (18) Bathsheba replied, "That's fine, I'll speak to the king on your behalf." (19) So Bathsheba visited King Solomon to speak to him on Adonijah's behalf. The king got up to greet her, bowed to her, and then sat on his throne. He ordered a throne to be brought for the king's mother, and she sat at his right hand. (20) She said, "I would like to ask you for just one small favor. Please don't refuse me." He said, "Go ahead and ask, my mother, for I would not refuse you." (21) She said, "Allow Abishag the Shunammite to be given to your brother Adonijah as a wife." (22) King Solomon answered his mother, "Why just request Abishag the Shunammite for him? Since he is my older brother, you should also request the kingdom for him, for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab son of Zeruiah!" (23) King Solomon then swore an oath by the LORD, "May God judge me severely, if Adonijah does not pay for this request with his life! (24) Now, as certainly as the LORD lives (he who made me secure, allowed me to sit on my father David's throne, and established a dynasty for me as he promised), Adonijah will be executed today!"

Now see, asking for a woman's hand in marriage isn't the question; what was behind this was asking a royal privilege, or a claim. That's why he got executed. So again, you can see how connected the harem is to the rule of the king.

Now back to 2 Samuel 3; this is the significance of Ish-bosheth's attack on Abner. However in this case, because Abner is cousin to Saul and he apparently wasn't actually claiming the throne because as far as he was concerned he was going to get it anyway; to him he just wanted a girlfriend for the night is the way the text reads here.

2 Samuel 3:8-11 *These words of Ish-bosheth really angered Abner and he said, "Am I the head of a dog that belongs to Judah? This very day I am demonstrating loyalty to the house of Saul your father and to his relatives and his friends! I have not betrayed you into the hand of David. Yet you have accused me of sinning with this woman today! (9) God will severely judge Abner if I do not do for David exactly what the LORD has promised him, (10) namely, to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and to establish the throne of David over Israel and over Judah all the way from Dan to Beer Sheba!" (11) Ish-bosheth was unable to answer Abner with even a single word because he was afraid of him.*

Abner is saying is you'd better watch yourself, kid, because I have the power to deliver this whole kingdom to David. So if you play tough with me, you're just going to lose the whole kingdom, period. I'm the one that gave you the kingdom and I'm the one that can take it away. And this tells us that God's promise to David was well known by the house of Saul and even Abner knew it.

And just like today, most people know something about Genesis, but how many people believe it? Most people know the New Testament teaches Jesus Christ is going to literally and physically return, but how many people believe it? This is just the same kind of attitude. The Word of God is known but not believed.

2 Samuel 3:12 *Then Abner sent messengers to David saying, "To whom does the land belong? Make an agreement with me, and I will do whatever I can to cause all Israel to turn to you."*

Now we have the defection of Abner; here's the intrigue that occurred at this point. Abner represents human viewpoint; David represents divine viewpoint and both these men are butting heads at the bargaining table. Abner starts off his message, "whose is the land?" Well it's the Lord's land, isn't it? Of course it is, but who does Abner mean? Himself. Abner says the land is mine and maybe we can make a deal, maybe I can give you my land. He says I can't stand this brat, Ish-bosheth, now I'd like to be the commander in chief under David. I'll just bring the whole northern kingdom down and we'll unite and have one big happy family. Now David sees the name of the game, and

he makes a very clever reply that goes back to the same principle of the harem again.

2 Samuel 3:13 *So David said, "Good! I will make an agreement with you. I ask only one thing from you. You will not see my face unless you bring Saul's daughter Michal when you come to visit me."*

Why does David make that request? He's saying oh, the land is yours Abner? Oh really, who is the husband of Saul's daughter? That's what the diplomatic answer to Abner is. Abner says the land is mine; David say oh no it isn't, because my wife is Saul's daughter, now you just bring that girl right down to me when you come.

2 Samuel 3:14-16 *David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth son of Saul with this demand: "Give me my wife Michal whom I acquired for a hundred Philistine foreskins." (15) So Ish-bosheth took her from her husband Paltiel son of Laish. (16) Her husband went along behind her, weeping all the way to Bahurim. Finally Abner said to him, "Go back!" So he returned home.*

So finally David wound up with Michal. This acquisition of Michal is a divine claim upon the throne. It's David's way of asserting...we don't understand why all this went on, all we can say is that the claim to the throne is somehow linked to the women that are around that throne.

2 Samuel 3:17-18 *Abner advised the elders of Israel, "Previously you were wanting David to be your king. (18) Act now! For the LORD has said to David, 'By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel from the Philistines and from all their enemies.' "*

Now the deal has been consummated and the next step would have been a very peaceful acquisition of all the tribes, Abner has completed his portion of the deal. Now Michal is added on with the six other women, it's getting kind of crowded but everything is seemingly worked out. Now here is where you're going to see an accident occur again, because over it all, overarching the whole story is God, who is sovereign.

2 Samuel 3:19-21 *Then Abner spoke privately with the Benjaminites. Abner also went to Hebron to inform David privately of all that Israel and the entire house of Benjamin had agreed to. (20) When Abner, accompanied by twenty men, came to David in Hebron, David prepared a banquet for Abner and the men who were with him. (21) Abner said to David, "Let me leave so that I may go and gather all Israel to my lord the king so that they may make an agreement with you. Then you will rule over all that you desire." So David sent Abner away, and he left in peace.*

This is another illustration of David's excellent diplomacy. David is only 29 years old when all this was going on so you can imagine the wisdom that he has acquired as a young man, not only has he become a military hero, but he has also become the king of the south, he has also had a massive amount of training in Scripture under the prophets and now he is a master diplomat. And he is going to go along with this first plot with Abner. He's not excited about it because you know from verse 13 he clearly said that he doesn't recognize it's Abner's gift to give in the first place, but if Abner wants to bring all the tribes down, David is not going to fight him, so he goes along with it. And he made him a feast, it was a diplomatic party. Don't tell anybody, but they weren't drinking Ginger Ale.

2 Samuel 3:22-23 *Now David's soldiers and Joab were coming back from a raid, bringing a great deal of plunder with them. Abner was no longer with David in Hebron, for David had sent him away and he had left in peace. (23) When Joab and all the army that was with him arrived, Joab was told: "Abner the son of Ner came to the king; he sent him away, and he left in peace!"*

Now Joab blows his lid. As David's commander, he walks in and chews out David. And here's an example where the military is out of line. David knew what he was doing. Joab, as a man in the military, was still fighting the battle from the field perspective, and he tried to dictate his field perspective to the overall strategic perspective of David.

2 Samuel 3:24-27 *So Joab went to the king and said, "What have you done? Abner has come to you! Why would you send him away? Now he's gone on his way! (25) You know Abner the son of Ner!"*

Surely he came here to spy on you and to determine when you leave and when you return and to discover everything that you are doing!" (26) Then Joab left David and sent messengers after Abner. They brought him back from the well of Sirah. (But David was not aware of it.) (27) When Abner returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside at the gate as if to speak privately with him. Joab then stabbed him in the abdomen and killed him, avenging the shed blood of his brother Asahel.

Well, that just blows Abner's plot away, doesn't it? The plot of Abner was to deliver the kingdom to David. I want you to get an idea of the chaos here. The political arena is always going to be filled with chaos; there have always been plots and there will always be plots. Look at this, it's one accident after another, nobody is in control. That's the whole point of this passage; David's not in control, he's going to admit it. David can't control it; Abner can't, you just saw how Abner controlled the situation, and now we're going to find Joab can't control the situation. There are no human agents in control of history, period! No one group of men can ever control history; it denies the Word of God.

2 Samuel 3:28 When David later heard about this, he said, "I and my kingdom are forever innocent before the LORD of the shed blood of Abner son of Ner!"

Joab gums up the whole thing,, now the unity of the kingdom is again threatened. The goal for David was to get on the throne without murdering anyone in Saul's family; we've seen that. He's had opportunities to kill Saul and Abner before, remember? When he takes the crown he wants his hands to be clean of the blood of the previous dynasty. But this is politics by grace and if he attains the throne it's going to be by God's grace, not by human gimmicks. This event grieved David for the rest of his life, you can read that in 1 Kings 2:5,32.

2 Samuel 3:29-34 May his blood whirl over the head of Joab and the entire house of his father! May the males of Joab's house never cease to have someone with a running sore or a skin disease or one who works at the spindle or one who falls by the sword or one who lacks food!" (30) So Joab and his brother Abishai killed Abner, because he had killed their brother Asahel in Gibeon during the battle. (31) David instructed Joab and all the people who were with him, "Tear your clothes! Put on sackcloth! Lament before Abner!" Now King David followed behind the funeral bier. (32) So they buried Abner in Hebron. The king cried loudly over Abner's grave and all the people wept too. (33) The king chanted the following lament for Abner: "Should Abner have died like a fool? (34) Your hands were not bound, and your feet were not put into irons. You fell the way one falls before criminals." All the people wept over him again.

Now that is a song actually, we don't have the whole thing, it's one of David's laments. We've seen one lament in the first chapter of this, here's David's musical ability coming out at a critical point in his career.

2 Samuel 3:35-39 Then all the people came and encouraged David to eat food while it was still day. But David took an oath saying, "God will punish me severely if I taste bread or anything whatsoever before the sun sets!" (36) All the people noticed this and it pleased them. In fact, everything the king did pleased all the people. (37) All the people and all Israel realized on that day that the killing of Abner son of Ner was not done at the king's instigation. (38) Then the king said to his servants, "Do you not realize that a great leader has fallen this day in Israel? (39) Today I am weak, even though I am anointed as king. These men, the sons of Zeruiah, are too much for me to bear! May the LORD punish appropriately the one who has done this evil thing!"

Verse 36 is the reason that David made the lament. David is not being insincere, but he must demonstrate that the blood of Joab is not on his hands, and he's got to conduct a public ceremony to make and dramatize this clearly.

Verse 39 makes a point about the Lord Jesus Christ. Zeruiah was David's sister, Joab was the son of David's sister. David is saying these guys are too vengeful, they're too vindictive for me. What that verse is teaching is that the greatest human king that ever reigned in history confessed that he could not control his own administration. The only kind of king who could totally control his administration would have to be sovereign, and that's the point; the perfect

king, the Messiah, will control everything in His administration. That's why Messiah is God and man together.

Chapter 4

2 Samuel 4:1 When Ish-bosheth the son of Saul heard that Abner had died in Hebron, he was very disheartened, and all Israel was afraid.

This is the story of the assassination of Ish-bosheth, see, it was one mess after another, this was the third plot.

2 Samuel 4:2-4 Now Saul's son had two men who were in charge of raiding units; one was named Baanah and the other Recab. They were sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, who was a Benjaminite. (Beeroth is regarded as belonging to Benjamin, (3) for the Beerothites fled to Gittaim and have remained there as resident foreigners until the present time.) (4) Now Saul's son Jonathan had a son who was crippled in both feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan arrived from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up and fled, but in her haste to get away, he fell and was injured. Mephibosheth was his name.

Let's take a roll call of Saul's family. Saul, Jonathan, and two other sons are dead. Jonathan's son, Saul's grandson, Mephibosheth is an invalid. Abner is dead. The future of Saul's house is not looking good. There's one son left, Ish-bosheth and now he is going to die. Saul's house has practically been eliminated, apart from David raising a finger.

2 Samuel 4:5-7 Now the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite — Recab and Baanah — went at the hottest part of the day to the home of Ish-bosheth, as he was enjoying his midday rest. (6) They entered the house under the pretense of getting wheat and mortally wounded him in the stomach. Then Recab and his brother Baanah escaped. (7) They had entered the house while Ish-bosheth was resting on his bed in his bedroom. They mortally wounded him and then cut off his head. Taking his head, they traveled on the way of the Arabah all that night.

So here's another assassination. Why did they do this? The next verses tell us.

2 Samuel 4:8-12 They brought the head of Ish-bosheth to David in Hebron, saying to the king, "Look! The head of Ish-bosheth son of Saul, your enemy who sought your life! The LORD has granted vengeance to my lord the king this day against Saul and his descendants!" (9) David replied to Recab and his brother Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, "As surely as the LORD lives, who has delivered my life from all adversity, (10) when someone told me that Saul was dead — even though he thought he was bringing good news — I seized him and killed him in Ziklag. That was the good news I gave to him! (11) Surely when wicked men have killed an innocent man as he slept in his own house, should I not now require his blood from your hands and remove you from the earth?" (12) So David issued orders to the soldiers and they put them to death. Then they cut off their hands and feet and hung them near the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth and buried it in the tomb of Abner in Hebron.

David said I don't need guys like you around, I won't build my administration on creeps and political amateurs with their human viewpoint gimmicks. The principle you get out of this is God's sovereignty. In all this upheaval and tumult you have a perfect illustration of Romans 8:28. I suggest to you if you feel that everything is breaking apart around you in chaos, think of David in this situation. When you read the newspaper and see the mess, think of David; David confessed I too am weak, I, the anointed of Yahweh, I can't control it either. God is in perfect control, however.

Chapter 5

In chapter 5 we have one further plank in this platform for his kingdom. He has all the tribes now and by the end of the chapter he will control a very key section of real estate. The center of Israel is quite mountainous and one of the key points has always been and always will be for all eternity, Jerusalem. Jerusalem was even important much

earlier, it was called Salem, and a man by the name of Melchizedek ruled there, in the days before the Jews. Melchizedek reigned as a king-priest of Salem. Later, for some reason it was renamed and it was occupied, when Moses invaded, by a people called the Jebusites. Under Joshua the Jebusites were contained but never removed and the stronghold of Jerusalem remained. For many, many years, the Jews had various centers of strength; they had one at Hebron, at Bethlehem, at Ramah, and near Shechem but they never could centralize their power in Jerusalem. It was very critical they do so because whoever controlled Jerusalem controlled a road that ran east-west from Geba to Gezer. This road was very important for military reasons. Chapter 5 is the story of how David captured Jerusalem.

2 Samuel 5:1-3 All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron saying, "Look, we are your very flesh and blood! (2) In the past, when Saul was our king, you were the real leader in Israel. The LORD said to you, 'You will shepherd my people Israel; you will rule over Israel.' " (3) When all the leaders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, King David made an agreement with them in Hebron before the LORD. They designated David as king over Israel.

This is how the results of chapters 2-4 played out. The people say that David was the functioning leader under Saul, and they say that God said you will rule over Israel. Now we have to go to extra-Biblical sources for a little help in understanding what's happening here, because this chapter is going to end in a very amazing way and you can't appreciate how it's going to end until you realize that the author is presenting it to you in very capsule form. Listen to what happened, this is Josephus, an ancient historian, his account of this is based on both the Bible and report of the events that were current in his day:

When these things were brought to this conclusion, all the principal men of the Hebrew people came to David to Hebron, with the heads of thousands, and other rulers, and delivered themselves up to him, putting him in mind of the good-will they had borne to him in Saul's lifetime, and the respect they then had not ceased to pay him when he was captain of a thousand, as also that he was chosen of God by Samuel the prophet, he and his sons; and declaring besides, how God had given him power to save the land of the Hebrews, and to overcome the Philistines. Whereupon he received kindly this their alacrity on his account; and exhorted them to continue in it, for that they should have no reason to repent of being thus disposed to him. So when he had feasted them, and treated them kindly, he sent them out to bring all the people to him; upon which came to him about six thousand and eight hundred armed men of the tribe of Judah, who bare shields and spears for their weapons.... There came also seven thousand and one hundred out of the tribe of Simeon. Out of the tribe of Levi came four thousand and seven hundred, having Jehoiada for their leader. After these came Zadok the high priest, with twenty-two captains of his kindred. Out of the tribe of Benjamin the armed men were four thousand; but the rest of the tribe continued, still expecting that some one of the house of Saul should reign over them. Those of the tribe of Ephraim were twenty thousand and eight hundred, and these mighty men of valor, and eminent for their strength. Out of the half tribe of +Manasseh came eighteen thousand, of the most potent men. Out of the tribe of Issachar came two hundred, who foreknew what was to come hereafter, but of armed men twenty thousand. Of the tribe of Zebulun fifty thousand chosen men. This was the only tribe that came universally in to David, and all these had the same weapons with the tribe of Gad. Out of the tribe of Naphtali the eminent men and rulers were one thousand, whose weapons were shields and spears, and the tribe itself followed after, being thirty-seven thousand. Out of the tribe of Dan there were of chosen men twenty-seven thousand and six hundred. Out of the tribe of Asher were forty thousand. Out of the two tribes that were beyond Jordan, and the rest of the tribe of Manasseh, such as used shields, and spears, and head-pieces, and swords, were a hundred and twenty thousand. The rest of the tribes also made use of swords. This multitude came together to Hebron to David, with a great quantity of corn, and wine, and all other sorts of food, and established David in his kingdom with one consent. And when the people had rejoiced for three days in Hebron, David and all the people removed and came to Jerusalem."

Why is this important? It shows you David still doesn't have total control, he has majority control, he has the control that counts. There are a lot of holdouts, people who still are looking for some person in Saul's household. So David makes the treaty, and then we have a listing in this chapter of the things that God gave him.

2 Samuel 5:4-5 David was thirty years old when he began to reign and he reigned for forty years. (5)

In Hebron he reigned over Judah for seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned for thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.

This is a summary of his reign, and is a testimony to historic continuity and God's faithfulness. Now in verses 6-10 we have the first great significant undertaking of David as king over the united tribes, and that is the capture of Fort Zion, if you want to call it that, because that's exactly what the Hebrew word means, "fort" or "stronghold." At this time Mount Zion is a stronghold of the Jebusites. And the silly Jebusites think they have an impregnable fortress.

2 Samuel 5:6 Then the king and his men advanced to Jerusalem against the Jebusites who lived in the land. The Jebusites said to David, "You cannot invade this place! Even the blind and the lame will turn you back, saying, 'David cannot invade this place!'"

This is sarcasm, remember the Jebusites are considered to be part of the Canaanites. The idea was, they took all the lame people of the city and the blind, we're not sure whether that was a literal blindness or whether this was a priestly cult that the Jebusites practiced where they actually punched the eyes out of various people in their religious cults; this has occurred in various cultures so it could be true. But they had these people all upon the wall looking down at David, and they just let them sit there on the wall, come on up David, try it, there's no way you can get in.

2 Samuel 5:7-8 But David captured the fortress of Zion (that is, the city of David). (8) David said on that day, "Whoever attacks the Jebusites must approach the 'lame' and the 'blind' who are David's enemies by going through the water tunnel." For this reason it is said, "The blind and the lame cannot enter the palace."

So we assume the way he did it is he discovered a little spring and his soldiers wormed their way, in a very secret maneuver up inside the walls of the fortress, but somehow he got there. Let's look at 1 Chronicles 11:6.

Now a word of explanation about Chronicles. The books of Samuel and Kings were written before and during the exile. They were kind of a post mortem analysis of why Israel collapsed and it gives an insight into how the nation thought, what happened spiritually, and why it was destroyed. But after the exile in 518 BC, and the Jewish people came back, the priests got together and wrote 1 and 2 Chronicles. 1 and 2 Chronicles summarize their history and there are many passages in Chronicles that were taken from Samuel and Kings. The manuscripts behind Samuel and Kings are far older than Chronicles.

1 Chronicles 11:6 David said, "Whoever attacks the Jebusites first will become commanding general!" So Joab son of Zeruiah attacked first and became commander.

This is how Joab got to be commander in chief. Now back to 2 Samuel, in verse 9,

2 Samuel 5:9-10 So David lived in the fortress and called it the City of David. David built all around it, from the terrace inwards. (10) David's power grew steadily, for the LORD God who commands armies was with him.

Now that's historically where Jerusalem gets its name, David conquered it.

2 Samuel 5:11-12 King Hiram of Tyre sent messengers to David, along with cedar logs, carpenters, and stonemasons. They built a palace for David. (12) David realized that the LORD had established him as king over Israel and that he had elevated his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel.

Besides gaining the tribes through a covenant, besides gaining the city, now he gains a palace. David is going to use resources from a pagan nation to construct his palace. He decided to get the best people to do it. They built it according to David's dictation, but nevertheless the materials came from a pagan nation.

How did David realize this? He has the promises given to him by Samuel the prophet. These had been given to him many years before. The Psalms show his struggles during his persecution phase and David had nothing except the promises to rely upon.

2 Samuel 5:13-16 *David married more concubines and wives from Jerusalem after he arrived from Hebron. Even more sons and daughters were born to David. (14) These are the names of children born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, (15) Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, (16) Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.*

Now we see David's polygamy again, we always have to go through this because in that day and age the size of the harem was a sign of blessing. Now you can imagine what it must have been like living with all these women; guys, you shouldn't envy David.

2 Samuel 5:17 *When the Philistines heard that David had been designated king over Israel, they all went up to search for David. When David heard about it, he went down to the fortress.*

Here we have two very interesting accounts of attacks by the Philistines upon the nation and the neat way that God in His sovereignty worked to protect David and provide him with a victory. The Philistines weren't too concerned about David as long as he was just ruling over Judah, and the nation was split between north and south. But now he's king over all the tribes, and they've got a serious problem. They have all their forces lying along a very narrow coast, and the Hebrews control all the highlands.

And so, although the Scripture doesn't tell us this, we know again from extra-Biblical sources that the Philistines sent help all along the coast and gathered together a mighty confederacy. Josephus tells us about it. He says: "let him know that all Syria and Phoenicia, with many other nations besides them, and those warlike nations also, came to their assistance, and had a share in this war." Something very interesting is going to happen here and you've got to appreciate the work of God by appreciating the mess they're in. This is almost like 1967 when the Jews were surrounded by ten to one odds; they were completely outnumbered here, it was a massive army.

2 Samuel 5:18-19 *Now the Philistines had arrived and spread out in the valley of Rephaim. (19) So David asked the LORD, "Should I march up against the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?" The LORD said to David, "March up, for I will indeed hand the Philistines over to you."*

It's a massive army that's assembled here in the valley of the giants. It's a tremendous threat. Every time David did not work with divine guidance, every time in a military or political situation he did not go to the Lord first to find out, he got clobbered. We saw that over and over in 1 Samuel, and David has learned. Now the learning pays off.

2 Samuel 5:20 *So David marched against Baal Perazim and defeated them there. Then he said, "The LORD has burst out against my enemies like water bursts out." So he called the name of that place Baal Perazim.*

We have to take that verse apart and find out what happened. The word peraz is a word that is used for a bursting forth of water; it was used for the woman as she gave birth to a child, the breaking of the waters. It was also used for springs that would suddenly burst forth under pressure out of the ground. And then it came to refer to a particular kind of reaction of God. Exodus 19:22, Psalm 60:1, Psalm 106:29

What does it mean when it says, "The LORD has burst out upon my enemies," was it by fire, military defeat or disease? What is common to all these three and is common to a bursting forth of water is suddenness, so it's talking about a sudden unexpected bursting forth of God's anger. This was one sudden disaster. To show you how sudden, and how disastrous the victory was for the Philistines, turn to Isaiah 28:21, it went down in history as one of the two greatest defeats the Philistines had ever experienced. And that is saying a lot, because one of the most warlike nations that Israel ever had to fight was the Philistines.

Isaiah 28:21 *For the LORD will rise up, as he did at Mount Perazim, he will rouse himself, as he did in the Valley of Gibeon, to accomplish his work, his peculiar work, to perform his task, his strange task.*

Isaiah recalls those days. What happened in the valley of Gibeon? In Joshua 10, as Joshua pursued the Canaanites, God stopped the earth from rotating, or He turned the axis as some theories go, and the sun stayed up, at least relative to the earth. Isaiah says, God will do to you as he did back then. In other words, there would be a sudden shocking, miraculous defeat.

2 Samuel 5:21 *The Philistines abandoned their idols there, and David and his men picked them up.*

1 Chronicles 11, the parallel passage says that he burned them. Now why is that little detail left in there, when all these interesting things could have been said. We'd love to know was it fire from heaven, did God melt their faces off? Instead of satisfying our curiosity the Holy Spirit just adds what appears to be an anticlimactic note. The burning of the idols is David's revenge and the Lord's for 1 Samuel 4 and the battle of Aphek. At the battle of Aphek the Philistines captured the ark of the covenant. But something even more amazing occurs before this chapter ends.

2 Samuel 5:22-25 *The Philistines again came up and spread out in the valley of Rephaim. (23) So David asked the LORD what he should do. This time the LORD said to him, "Don't march straight up. Instead, circle around behind them and come against them opposite the trees. (24) When you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the trees, act decisively. For at that moment the LORD is going before you to strike down the army of the Philistines." (25) David did just as the LORD commanded him, and he struck down the Philistines from Gibeon all the way to Gezer.*

Again they start the war, and it was such a shock the first time, apparently the Philistines couldn't believe David could pull it off again. What is the sound of the marching? Apparently it was an angelic phenomenon. Extra-Biblical material reports that the trees, on a day when the wind was calm, began to move and sway, as though an army was marching across the tops of the trees, and God says hold until you hear that.

Now what was really happening? We have read something like this before in 2 Kings 6:16-17, what is happening in the mulberry trees in David's day is a vast horde of elect angels that are going to destroy the Philistine army, and apparently it takes time to mobilize the army. This is kind of interesting to think that angels take time to get together, but we know from Daniel that they do; they operate on time although it's a different kind of time than we operate on. And apparently what God said, David, I have an angelic army on the way to help you; just stand by until they assemble. And when they assemble, I'm going to tell the angelic army to move their feet a little bit, to move the trees, and when you see the trees moving, that's your signal. That means that the angelic army is in position.

So when you read those verses, just use those some time in your Christian life when you're tempted to go out and clobber some problem, to just be patient, maybe it's not the Lord's timing. Now you're probably not going to it see the mulberry trees move, but the principle is the same. God has angelic forces at work to protect the body of Jesus Christ on earth today. These are active and protecting you. They do their jobs to protect you in various ways; someday you'll get a chance to write a biography of your life from the other side and see all the things they did, all the goofy things you did and how they got you out of this and that.

So with this David's control over the central highlands is complete. Now there's only one thing lacking, he needs a legal base for his kingdom; he's got the throne right but now God is going to give him two extra things: an ark and a covenant, and with this the kingdom core will be finished.