

DAVID ANOINTED OVER JUDAH AND THE BEGINNING OF CONFLICT

Introduction:

1. Following the deaths of Saul and Jonathan, David mourned them with a lamentation or funeral dirge.
2. He expressed genuine emotion over the loss of a friend, but also over the situation now faced in Israel.
3. Yet, he was ready to serve God in whatever way was necessary.

- I. The Anointing of David (2:1-7)
 - A. After some time had passed, David enquired of the Lord if he should go up to Judah.
 1. God had revealed to David that he would be the next king of Israel.
 2. Since that first anointing by Samuel (1 Sam. 16:13), some 15 years have passed.
 - a. David has been waiting patiently for God to keep His promise.
 - b. He has been mistreated and persecuted terribly by Saul.
 - c. He has just experienced the darkest days of his life up to this point.
 3. Yet, David still waited for God to tell him when it was time to act.
 - B. God told David to go up to Hebron and he obeyed, taking his family and his loyal followers with him.
 - C. There, the men of Judah came to David and anointed him King over the tribe of Judah.
 - D. In his first act as Judah's king, David reached out to those who had rescued and buried the body of Saul, offering them kindness and inviting them into an alliance with Judah.
- II. The Anointing of Ishbosheth (2:8-11)
 - A. In the meantime, Ishbosheth – the only living son of Saul – was anointed as King over Israel.
 - B. It must be understood that the real power behind the throne was Abner, captain of Saul's army.
 - C. Abner understood the will of God but sought what was best for himself in terms of power and influence (cf. 3:9-10).
 - D. Ishbosheth would reign over Israel for 2 years while David reigned over Judah for 7 ½ years.
- III. The Conflict between Abner and Joab (2:12-17)
 - A. Abner led a force from Mahanaim to Gibeon, 5 miles northwest of Jerusalem.
 1. The phrase "went out" is a technical expression for going to war.
 2. His plan was to attack Judah and to claim it for Ishbosheth.
 - B. Joab, a captain of David's forces, went out to meet Abner's army.
 - C. Abner suggested that instead of fighting a battle, they should choose soldiers who would compete against each other – implying that the winning side would also win the greater conflict.
 - D. Twelve men from each army met and each one killed his opponent – all 24 men died! {*Helkath-hazzurim means, "The field of sharp swords or rocks."*}

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- E. This led to a battle between the armies, resulting in the defeat of Abner and his forces, who fled from the men of Judah.

- IV. The End of the First Conflict, the Beginning of War (2:18 – 3:1)
 - A. The men of Judah pursued the fleeing Israelites – with Joab and his two brothers in the lead (Abishai and Asahel).
 - B. Asahel, seemingly the youngest brother, was very fast and would not be swayed from chasing down Abner.
 - C. Abner warned him, then impaled him with the dull end of his spear.
 - 1. It seems that Asahel was running so fast that he could not stop in time to avoid Abner's spear.
 - 2. His death would lead to later conflict in Israel.
 - D. The men of Judah continued pursuing until they came to the hill of Ammah.
 - E. There was a standoff with the men of Benjamin as one force on one side and Joab, Abishai, and the men of Judah on the other.
 - F. Abner used diplomacy to seek peace, reminding Joab that they were all Israelite brethren. *{However, he refused to acknowledge that the entire conflict was his doing!}*
 - G. Joab agreed to Abner's plea and called off the pursuit.
 - H. Abner and his men returned home.
 - I. In the battle, 20 men of Judah had been killed while 360 men of Israel had died.
 - J. Though this conflict soon ended, the war had only just begun.
 - K. "Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David."