

2 Samuel 3 - Thursday, November 20th, 2014

1 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.

- Last week we looked at the typology of the house of Saul being that of the flesh, compared with the house of David being that of the Spirit.
- Here we see that just as there was a long war between both Saul and David, so too is there a long war between the flesh and the Spirit.
- However, we're told the house of Saul (flesh) grew weaker and weaker, whereas the house of David (Spirit) grew stronger and stronger.

2 Sons were born to David in Hebron: His firstborn was Amnon by Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; 3 his second, Chileab, by Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite; the third, Absalom the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmi, king of Geshur; 4 the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital; 5 and the sixth, Ithream, by David's wife Eglah. These were born to David in Hebron.

- What David does here will prove to be one of the biggest mistakes of his life and it will have far reaching ramifications for the rest of his life.
- It seems that in the seven years that David was in Hebron, he took for himself a total of six different wives, from whom are born six sons.
- The problem with this is that David is knowingly and willfully going against the Word and the command of God in Deuteronomy 17:16-17.

Deuteronomy 17:16-17 (16) But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the LORD has said to you, 'You shall not return that way again.' (17) Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself.

- God makes it very clear that there are three things kings are not to do; 1. Multiply horses, 2. Multiply wives, and 3. Multiply silver and gold.
- Why? Because it would have the propensity to lead to pride and turn their hearts away from the Lord, which sadly is exactly what happens.
- We're going to see this happen to David, and if that weren't bad enough, we'll see it happen on a much larger scale with his son Solomon.

1 Kings 10:23 NIV King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth.

1 Kings 4:26 NIV Solomon had four thousand stalls for chariot horses, and twelve thousand horses.

1 Kings 10:28 NIV Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and from Kue—the royal merchants purchased them from Kue.

1 Kings 11:3 NIV He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray.

- The question becomes, why didn't God just judge them for this then instead of seemingly allowing them to multiply wives, horses, and gold.
- In order to understand this, we have to first know while God is very displeased with the sin of polygamy; He lets the sin be its own reward.
- In other words, he allows their sin of multiplying wives bear the bitter fruit of horrific consequences. We need look no further than his sons.

- Three of the six sons that are listed here in 2 Samuel, Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah, bring unspeakable grief to David throughout his life.
- Amnon will end up raping his half sister, and for it he will be murdered by his half-brother, all of who are children born to all David's wives.
- Absalom is the one who murders Amnon and then ends up leading a revolt against his own father David who he seeks to kill and succeed.

- Adonijah also attempts to seize the throne from his own father, then, he even tries to take one of David's concubines and was killed for it.
- There is little mention of the other three sons, Chileab, Shephatiah and Ithream presumably because they were ungodly and died young.
- I suppose you can say that in this case, sin was most certainly David's own reward, and that God was wishing to spare David of this pain.

6 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. 7 And Saul had a concubine, whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah. So Ishbosheth said to Abner, "Why have you gone in to my father's concubine?"

- In order to understand what's going on here we first need to know a little about the symbolism as it would have been known back in that day.
- For a man to have sexual relations with a concubine belonging to another was his way of saying I'm taking control by stepping into this role.
- To say this is about Abner's control over the house of Saul vis-à-vis Ishbosheth as the weak son of Saul would be a gross understatement.

One this one commentator wrote, To take the wife or concubine of the late monarch was to appropriate his property and to make a bid for the throne."

Another commentator filled in some of the blanks writing, "Abner was the real power in the Northern kingdom. Ish-bosheth was only a puppet-king. Abner felt himself to be sufficiently powerful to take to himself one of Saul's concubines (an act of treason, for Saul's harem belonged to Ish-bosheth, Saul's successor)."

8 Then Abner became very angry at the words of Ishbosheth, 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?"

- Notice how that Abner never once answers Ishbosheth's question of why it is that he would go into his father Saul's, concubine and do this.
- The reason I point this out is that it speaks to the sin nature in all of us, that refuses to answer, let alone admit when we know we're wrong.
- Not only does Abner refuse to answer to this, he goes on to remind Ishbosheth that if it weren't for him, he would not be where he is now.

9 May God do so to Abner, and more also, if I do not do for David as the LORD has sworn to him—10 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." 11 And he could not answer Abner another word, because he feared him.

- What Abner does here is nothing shy of evil and this for a number of reasons not the least of which is he says he will set up David's throne.
- What makes this so evil is that it's an admission of the fact that David was the rightful heir to the throne and not Ishbosheth who is set up.
- Abner must somehow think that David would welcome Abner defecting from the house of Saul and make him the commander of his army.

I like how one commentator explained this, "When Abner, an opportunist, saw the Northern kingdom declining in power and the kingdom of David growing in power, he used his quarrel with Ishbosheth as an occasion to transfer his allegiance to David, perhaps with the expectation that David would reward him by making him the captain of his host, replacing Joab. His statement ...condemned him for he admitted that he knew that it was God's will for David to reign over all the twelve tribes and yet he had willfully resisted this will for seven and one-half years in attempting to build up another kingdom within the territory and among the people allotted by God to David. ...Note in verse 11 that Ishbosheth was so weak that he dared not oppose the decision of Abner."

12 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." 13 And David said, "Good, I will make a covenant with you. But one thing I require of you: you shall not see my face unless you first bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come to see my face." 14 So David sent messengers to Ishbosheth, Saul's son, saying, "Give me my wife Michal, whom I betrothed to myself for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines." 15 And Ishbosheth sent and took her from her husband, from Paltiel the son of Laish. 16 Then her husband went along with her to Bahurim, weeping behind her. So Abner said to him, "Go, return!" And he returned.

- Couple of thoughts here as it relates to what David does here the first of which has to do with he request of Abner to bring him Michal back.
- It seems that David really loved her, so much so, that he wanted his wife back who had been taken from him and given to this man Paltiel.
- One would think that David is being cruel to Paltiel who were told is crying behind her, however, he knew that she was David's wife at first.

- The second thought has to do with why David would want her back. More specifically, why would he take Saul's daughter back as his wife?
- Some have suggested this was a political move on David's part in order to strengthen his own interest in the kingdom as much as possible.
- While that may certainly be the case, I am of the belief that he really loved her, and, he desired to sort of undo the wrong done him by Saul.

17 Now Abner had communicated with the elders of Israel, saying, "In time past you were seeking for David to be king over you. 18 Now then, do it! For the LORD has spoken of 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.' " 19 And Abner also spoke in the hearing of Benjamin. 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. 20 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. 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." So David sent Abner away, and he went in peace. 22 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. 23 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." 24 Then Joab came to the king and said, "What have you done? Look, Abner came to you; why is it that you sent him away, and he has already gone? 25 Surely you realize that Abner the son of Ner came to deceive you, to know your going out and your coming in, and to know all that you are doing." 26 And when Joab had gone from David's presence, he sent messengers after Abner, who brought him back from the well of Sirah. But David did not know it. 27 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.

- At first read it may seem as though Abner had this coming to him for killing Joab's brother Asahel however, Abner killed him in self defense.
- However Joab took matters into his own hands and out of revenge and because he perceived Abner to be a threat he wrongfully killed him.
- What's interesting about this is that according to the Law of Moses David, who as we'll see next when he finds out, could put Joab to death.

28 Afterward, when David heard it, he said, "My kingdom and I are guiltless before the LORD forever of the blood of Abner the son of Ner. 29 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." 30 So Joab and Abishai his brother killed Abner, because he had killed their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle. 31 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. 32 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. 33 And the king sang a lament over Abner and said: "Should Abner die as a fool dies? 34 Your hands were not bound Nor your feet put into fetters; As a man falls before wicked men, so you fell." Then all the people wept over him again. 35 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!" 36 Now all the people took note of it, and it pleased them, since whatever the king did pleased all the people. 37 For all the people and all Israel understood that day that it had not been the king's intent to kill Abner the son of Ner. 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? 39 And I am weak today, though anointed king; and these men, the sons of Zeruiah, are too harsh for me. The LORD shall repay the evildoer according to his wickedness."

- So the chapter ends with David, who true to form, honors someone who had considered David to be their enemy, at the time of their death.
- This speaks to David's ability to forgive and move on instead of not holding a grudge and becoming bitter, which he could have easily done.
- This was one of David's strengths as a leader; however, woven into the narrative we can also see one of David's weaknesses as a leader.

- More specifically, it's that of David's weakness in meting out judgment and discipline when it came to Joab now as well as his children later.
- The reason I say that is because David should have had Joab put to death under the Law of Moses for his cold-blooded murder of Abner.
- Instead, he waits until his son, Solomon, is king to have Joab put to death, and in so doing he abdicates his responsibility to do it himself.

1 Kings 2:5-6 "Moreover you know also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, and what he did to the two commanders of the armies of Israel, to Abner the son of Ner and Amasa the son of Jether, whom he killed. And he shed the blood of war in peacetime, and put the blood of war on his belt that was around his waist, and on his sandals that were on his feet. Therefore do according to your wisdom, and do not let his gray hair go down to the grave in peace."