

“Lessons from the Life of David” – Pastor Jim Ruddy

Study # 17 – 2 Samuel 2:1-11

“David, King of Judah; Ishbosheth, King of Israel”

I. THE LEGITIMATE ANOINTING OF DAVID 1-7

A. THE RELOCATION TO HEBRON v1-3

- With Saul's death, David's fugitive years come to a close, and he may now safely reenter the land of Judah.
- Unlike Saul, who sought direction from a witch (1 Sam. 28:3-25), David enquires of the LORD and is told to move to Hebron.
 - *“Hebron” = Fellowship, Association, League or Alliance.*
- From the Philistine perspective, this appeared to be the advancement of their sphere of dominance, in that Achish believed David to be a submitted vassal. David claimed to have raided this area in prior days. cf. 1 Sam 27:10-11
- David's two wives, along with his men and their families, settle in Hebron and the surrounding territories.
 - Note: David took other wives as well! cf. 2 Sam. 3:2-5; 5:13
Polygamy, which was always accompanied by strife and turmoil, was never lawful for any of the persons in the Bible. Scripture merely describes what some did; it never condones their actions or indicates their multiple unions were blessed.

B. THE SELECTION OF DAVID v4a

- The men of Judah, to whom David had previously shown kindness, arrive to anoint him King. cf. 1 Sam 27:8-11; 30:26-31
- What was done privately by Samuel thirteen years prior, is done publicly by the tribe of Judah. cf. 1 Sam 16:13
- David is surely God's choice! cf. Gen. 49:10; 1 Chr. 10:14
- David's reign is initially over Judah alone, yet all Israel will come in due time. Rather than taking the throne, which had been clearly promised to him, David is content to wait until the the LORD brings Israel to him. cf. 2 Sam 5:1-3

C. THE PROMOTION OF PEACE v4b-7

- David's first act as King was not to fortify his own city or increase the size of his army, but to recognize the heroic men who risked their lives to honor Saul. cf. 1 Sam 31:11-13
- David appeals to the Jabeshites to give him the same allegiance they had given Saul, and in return, offers his “friendship” to them, hinting that he is Saul's rightful heir.
- Rather than seeing David's gesture as a swift political move to increase his kingdom, David, being true to his nature, was simply trying to give the despondent tribe a ray of hope.
- While David was Judean, his heart was for all of Israel!
cf. 2 Sam 1:11-12. Israel's future rests in David and no one else.

II. THE ILLEGITIMATE CROWNING OF ISHBOSHETH 8-11

A. THE ELEVATION OF ISHBOSHETH v8-11

- Motivated purely by selfish ambition, Abner, Saul's captain, single-handedly promoted Ishbosheth as king over all Israel.
- Ishbosheth = "*Son of shame.*" Originally "Eshbaal." cf. 1 Chr. 8:33
 - Names were often compounded with *baal*, the title of the Canaanite fertility god. Later editors substituted *bosheth* = "shame," for *baal*.
- Following the deaths of Saul and his sons, the foundations of Israel were shaken. It appears to have taken five years before Ishbosheth was declared king. His two-year reign corresponds with the last two years of David's 7 1/2-year reign over Judah.
- This was a secular anointing by man leading to a political office and not a sacral anointing. Thus, Ishbosheth is never referred to as "*the LORD'S anointed!*" cf. 2 Sam 1:14; 5:3,12; 12:7
 - Like Absalom, one can be *appointed* by man yet not be *anointed* by God. cf. 2 Sam 19:10 regarding Absalom.

B. THE RELOCATION TO MAHANAIM v8

- Ishbosheth moved the capital of his limited kingdom from Gibeah of Benjamin into the territory of Gad which was across the Jordan and well out of Philistine reach.
- "*Mahanaim*" = "*two camps*" cf. Gen. 32:1-2; 2 Sam. 17:24-27
- Ishbosheth may have claimed to rule a vast kingdom, however the Israel he inherited was little more than disjointed bands of nomads. Saul had lost more territory than he had gained, and his kingdom was smaller than when he was first inaugurated.

C. THE PROMOTION OF WAR

- Abner's army soon clashed with David's army, led by Joab (2:12-32), and civil war ensued between the house of David and the house of Saul. cf. 2 Sam 2:12-32
- As king, Ishbosheth was unable to defend even his own tribe, Benjamin, let alone claim to rule "all Israel!" cf. 2 Sam 2:31
- Following a quarrel between Ishbosheth and Abner, Abner deserted Ishbosheth, bringing support to David. cf. 2 Sam 3:6-21
- The outworking of God's blessing upon David is evidenced by his growing strength, as God's rejection of Ishbosheth is indicated through his mounting weakness. cf. 2 Sam 3:1
- Following the murders of Ishbosheth and Abner, the northern tribes of Israel came to David to crown him king. David reigned an additional 33 years over a united Israel. cf. 2 Sam 5:1-5