



# A BETTER KING

## A SERIES IN 2 SAMUEL



### 2 Samuel 2 – Civil War

March 12, 2023

#### Background

#### 1. David was a humble leader.

*After this David inquired of the LORD, "Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?" And the LORD said to him, "Go up." David said, "To which shall I go up?" And he said, "To Hebron." 2 Samuel 2:1 (ESV)*

#### How do I find God's will today?

- We look in the Bible for priorities and precedents that apply to choices in our life.
- We pray for wisdom to apply God's Word to our life and God's providence to open and close opportunities in our life.

*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:2 (ESV)*

*So David went up there, and his two wives also, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel. And David brought up his men who were with him, everyone with his household, and they lived in the towns of Hebron.*

*2 Samuel 2:2-3 (ESV)*

- The Bible doesn't explicitly condemn polygamy, but it implicitly shows the dangers of polygamy.

*And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah... 2 Samuel 2:4a (ESV)*

#### David extended peace to his enemies.

*...When they told David, "It was the men of Jabesh-gilead who buried Saul," 2 Samuel 2:4b (ESV)*

*David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh-gilead and said to them, "May you be blessed by the LORD, because you showed this loyalty to Saul your lord and buried him. Now may the LORD show steadfast love and faithfulness to you. And I will do good to you because you have done this thing. Now therefore let your hands be*

strong, and be valiant, for Saul your lord is dead, and the house of Judah has anointed me king over them.” 2 Samuel 2:5–7 (ESV)

## **2. Abner was a selfish, egotistical leader.**

And now, behold, I know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. 1 Samuel 24:20 (ESV)

God do so to Abner and more also, if I do not accomplish for David what the Lord has sworn to him, 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.”  
2 Samuel 3:9–10 (ESV)

But Abner the son of Ner, commander of Saul’s army, took Ish-bosheth the son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim, and he made him king over Gilead and the Ashurites and Jezreel and Ephraim and Benjamin and all Israel. 2 Samuel 2:8–9 (ESV)

Ish-bosheth, Saul’s son, was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned two years. But the house of Judah followed David. And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.  
2 Samuel 2:10–11 (ESV)

## **Selfish ambition creates chaos among God’s people.**

Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon. 2 Samuel 2:12 (ESV)

And Joab the son of Zeruiah and the servants of David went out and met them at the pool of Gibeon... 2 Samuel 2:13a (ESV)

...And they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool. 2 Samuel 2:13b (ESV)

And Abner said to Joab, “Let the young men arise and compete before us.” And Joab said, “Let them arise.” 2 Samuel 2:14 (ESV)

Then they arose and passed over by number, twelve for Benjamin and Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David. And each caught his opponent by the head and thrust his sword in his opponent’s side, so they fell down together. Therefore that place was called Helkath-hazzurim, which is at Gibeon. 2 Samuel 2:15–16 (ESV)

And the battle was very fierce that day. And Abner and the men of Israel were beaten before the servants of David. 2 Samuel 2:17 (ESV)

I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority. 3 John 9 (ESV)

## **Conflict leads to unexpected casualties.**

*And the three sons of Zeruiah were there, Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. Now Asahel was as swift of foot as a wild gazelle. 2 Samuel 2:18 (ESV)*

*And Asahel pursued Abner, and as he went, he turned neither to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner. 2 Samuel 2:19 (ESV)*

*Then Abner looked behind him and said, "Is it you, Asahel?" And he answered, "It is I." Abner said to him, "Turn aside to your right hand or to your left, and seize one of the young men and take his spoil." But Asahel would not turn aside from following him. 2 Samuel 2:20–21 (ESV)*

*And Abner said again to Asahel, "Turn aside from following me. Why should I strike you to the ground? How then could I lift up my face to your brother Joab?" 2 Samuel 2:22 (ESV)*

*But he refused to turn aside. Therefore Abner struck him in the stomach with the butt of his spear, so that the spear came out at his back. And he fell there and died where he was. And all who came to the place where Asahel had fallen and died, stood still. 2 Samuel 2:23 (ESV)*

*If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.  
Romans 12:18 (ESV)*

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.  
Matthew 5:9 (ESV)*

*But Joab and Abishai pursued Abner. And as the sun was going down they came to the hill of Ammah, which lies before Giah on the way to the wilderness of Gibeon. 2 Samuel 2:24 (ESV)*

*And the people of Benjamin gathered themselves together behind Abner and became one group and took their stand on the top of a hill. 2 Samuel 2:25 (ESV)*

*Then Abner called to Joab, "Shall the sword devour forever? Do you not know that the end will be bitter? How long will it be before you tell your people to turn from the pursuit of their brothers?" 2 Samuel 2:26 (ESV)*

*And Joab said, "As God lives, if you had not spoken, surely the men would not have given up the pursuit of their brothers until the morning." 2 Samuel 2:27 (ESV)*

*And Joab said, "As God lives, if you had not spoken, the people would have withdrawn this morning, each from following his brother."  
2 Samuel 2:27 (alternate translation)*

*So Joab blew the trumpet, and all the men stopped and pursued Israel no more, nor did they fight anymore. 2 Samuel 2:28 (ESV)*

*And Abner and his men went all that night through the Arabah. They crossed the Jordan, and marching the whole morning, they came to Mahanaim. 2 Samuel 2:29 (ESV)*

*Joab returned from the pursuit of Abner. And when he had gathered all the people together, there were missing from David's servants nineteen men besides Asahel. But*

the servants of David had struck down of Benjamin 360 of Abner's men.  
2 Samuel 2:30–31 (ESV)

And they took up Asahel and buried him in the tomb of his father, which was at Bethlehem. And Joab and his men marched all night, and the day broke upon them at Hebron. 2 Samuel 2:32 (ESV)

## Applications

1. **Am I more like David or Abner?** Am I seeking my God's will or my selfish ambitions? Do I offer to serve and lead, or do I force my will on others? Am I pursuing peace and bringing people together, or am I encouraging conflict that tears people apart?
2. **Whenever we pursue conflict instead of peace, there will always be unexpected casualties and regret.**
3. **Resisting God's chosen king is futile and leads to pointless suffering.** This was true for Abner, but it is also true for us. Jesus, the son of David, is God's chosen king of this world and our life. Rebelling against him is futile and only leads to suffering.

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:9–11 (ESV)

## Life Group Questions

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1. Read 2 Samuel 2 in your Bible or on this sermon handout. What did you learn that was new? What parts of this message were a surprise?
2. What conflicts are you facing in life? What did you learn about the importance of pursuing peace from this chapter?
3. **Read Matthew 5:9 and Romans 12:18.** David worked hard to heal divisions in the nation. What divisions does God want you to heal at home, with your neighbors, or at work?
4. Why do you think Abner sided against David and not for him? What can we learn from this about the way our hearts work?
5. **Read 1 Corinthians 1:10, 3:3-4.** Satan loves to create division among God's people, so we fight one another. Abner unwittingly became a tool in Satan's hand to divide the nation. What are some ways Christians are tricked by Satan into fighting one another today?
6. Pursuing conflict instead of peace will always lead to unexpected casualties we regret. How did that principle work itself out in this chapter? In war? In marital disagreements? In anger with our children? In conflicts at work?
7. Abner's resistance to God's chosen king was futile and only led to pointless suffering. God would make sure David became king one way or the other. Today God's chosen king is Jesus, the Son of David. How does realizing resistance to Jesus is always pointless and will only lead to suffering change how you think about obeying God's Word? How does it change how you look at the world around us that hates Jesus?