

2 Samuel 2, Chapter Introduction

2 Samuel 2:1-7; "With Saul dead and Israel without a king, David sought guidance from the LORD" (Wm. MacDonald, p.325). First David inquired of the LORD if he should go up to Judah and present himself to the cities. The LORD's instructed David: "Go up." David then inquired as to what city; and again, the LORD answered: "To Hebron."

So David went to Hebron, Judah's leading city, along with his two wives and a very large contingency of men and their households. When David arrived, God had prepared the hearts of the people to receive him. The men of Hebron came to David and anointed him as their king. God's sovereign plan for David to be the shepherd of His people had now advanced one more step. In Hebron, David would remain and rule over Judah for the next 7 ½ years.

2 Samuel 2:8-11; Not all in Israel, however, were ready and willing to recognize David, the anointed of the LORD, as king. Abner, commander of the army over the other tribes, took Ish-bosheth the son of Saul and made him king instead. Without Samuel, the man of God, the spiritual condition of Israel continued in rapid decline. Ish-bosheth's reign would last for only 2 years. Without the blessing of God, instability would mark every ruler that ruled them.

2 Samuel 2:12-28; After some time, Abner, the commander of the army of Israel (the 11 tribes) met Joab, the son of Zeruiah, the commander of David's forces in Gibeon of Benjamin. In Gibeon, Abner suggested the 12 best from both camps engage in a contest to recognize who is militarily superior (the number 12 represented all Israel). The well-known pool near Gibeon suited the occasion. Often pride leads to foolish and senseless acts. This was one such occasion. In the providence of God, this foolish and senseless contest resulted in the tragic death of ALL 24 elite military men: each seizing his opponent by the hair then thrusting a dagger into his side. Undoubtedly, it was a divinely sent picture of the eventual outcome in Israel if, as a people, they remain divided.

After the death of the 24, "a very fierce battle broke out between the rest of the men" (Wm MacDonald, p.325). Joab's youngest brother, Asahel was struck dead by Abner, which enflamed battle passions even more. As the carnage increased, Abner appealed to Joab: "*Shall the sword devour forever? Do you not know the end will be bitter? How long will it be before you tell your people to turn from the pursuit of their brothers?*" (v.26). At these words from Abner, Joab blew the trumpet, and his men stopped their pursuit. But not before 380 died in Israel: the dead in Joab's army were 19 plus Asahel; the death toll for Abner's army were 360 men. As is often the case, the hostility did not cease with this battle; but rather, warfare between the two camps in Israel continued on.