

Lesson 6 – 2 Samuel 1-6

Text: 2 Samuel 1-6; 1 Chronicles 11-15

Main Characters: God, David, Ishbosheth, Abner, Joab, Uzzah

Key Passages:

- 2 Samuel 3:35-37 – David’s fast over Abner pleased the people; in fact, all he did pleased them.
- 2 Samuel 6:7 – When Uzzah touched the Ark of the Covenant, God immediately struck him dead.

Main Storyline:

David had returned to Ziklag (following his victory over the Amalekites) when an Amalekite man came to him and told him that he had killed Saul. (It seems that the Amalekite was just trying to gain favor with David; it does not appear that his story was true based on 1 Samuel 31.) David tore his clothes and wept for Saul and his sons; then he ordered the Amalekite to be killed for his claimed deed.

Following this, David asked God if he should return to Judah; God told him to go back, and specifically to the city of Hebron. David, his men, and their households returned from Ziklag to Hebron as God had instructed. There, the men of Judah anointed David king over them. Meanwhile, Abner, the commander of Saul’s army, took Ishbosheth, Saul’s son, and made him king over the rest of Israel. Thus, a great civil war began between the two “kingdoms,” Israel and Judah, a foreshadowing of the future.

Abner and Joab, the commander of David’s army, fought with each other numerous times as the war went on. In one particular battle, Judah had won, and Joab’s brother, Asahel, was pursuing Abner. Abner did not want to kill Asahel, so he begged him to stop chasing him and to take the spoils from some other man. Asahel continued pursuing Abner, so Abner killed him with the butt end of his spear.

The war went on between Judah and Israel for two years. Eventually, a rift developed between Abner and Ishbosheth over one of Saul’s concubines, so Abner decided to approach David about giving the entire kingdom of Israel over to him. Abner went to Hebron and met with David; they planned for Abner to restore the whole kingdom of Israel to David. Joab, however, not trusting Abner and wanting revenge, tricked and murdered Abner. David and all Israel mourned over the death of Abner.

When Ishbosheth heard that Abner had been killed, he lost all heart, and his kingdom became troubled. Two of the captains of the army, Rechab and Baanah, conspired to kill Ishbosheth. They pretended to come to his house to get wheat, but instead stabbed him in the stomach and killed him. They cut his head off and brought it to David, thinking they had done a good thing for him. David, as in the case of Saul’s “killer,” was furious and had the two captains both executed.

Following Ishbosheth’s death, all of the tribes of Israel came to David and pledged their allegiance to him. David was then anointed king over all Israel. He was very successful as a warrior, defeating all of his enemies through the counsel of the Lord. David began reigning when he was 30, and reigned over Israel for 40 years. He moved the capital of Israel from Hebron to Jerusalem after 7 years.

David decided to move the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem (it had been in the house of Abinidab for years, 1 Samuel 7:1). David prepared a new cart to move the ark. Unfortunately, it seems David did not realize that this was wrong to do until later (Exodus 25:10-15; 1 Chronicles 15:11-15). During its transport, the oxen pulling the cart stumbled, and one of the drivers, Uzzah, reached out to steady the ark. God struck him dead for his sin (Numbers 4:15). After 3 months, David continued moving the ark, this time in the right way. The ark arrived in Jerusalem to much fanfare and rejoicing.

Lessons/Applications:

- 1.) Sinning in order to gain prestige in the eyes of others is, at best, temporary honor (Acts 5:1-11).
- 2.) God demands that we obey His laws as He has given them; ignorance is not an excuse.