



PART 10 - David Anointed King (2 Sam. 2:1-11)

June 21, 2023 - Chris Altrock

Reading: 2 Sam. 2:1-11 (NRSVue)

As the text is read aloud, highlight, underline, note what grabs your attention:

2 After this David inquired of the Lord, "Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?" The Lord said to him, "Go up." David said, "To which shall I go up?" He said, "To Hebron." 2 So David went up there, along with his two wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel. 3 David brought up the men who were with him, every one with his household, and they settled in the towns of Hebron. 4 Then the people of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah.

When they told David, "It was the people of Jabesh-gilead who buried Saul," 5 David sent messengers to the people 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! 6 Now may the Lord show steadfast love and faithfulness to you! And I, too, will reward you because you have done this thing. 7 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."

8 But Abner son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, had taken Ishbaal son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim. 9 He made him king over Gilead, the Ashurites, Jezreel, Ephraim, Benjamin, and all Israel. 10 Ishbaal, 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. 11 The time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

Notices

1. What do you notice? What stands out to you? What questions do you have?

(Notice these points of tension)

2. The apparent ease with which David hears/ receives direct guidance from God and the great challenge we seem to have today in hearing/ receiving such guidance.
3. The pause to inquire versus the innate temptation (in some of us) to act, quickly, without discernment.

4. The mention of David's TWO wives (what about the trope that "biblical marriage" is "one man/ one wife/ for life?").
5. The rival rulers in Abner and David and the division among the people as to who reigns as king of all the people.

(Other noticings)

6. David's delicate handling of the people of Jabesh-gilead.
7. The almost anti-climactic way David is anointed as king, after such an arduous journey to the throne.

Commentary/ Application

1. General

- a. Joyce G. Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (IVP, 1988): *The death of Saul was the signal for David's departure from Ziklag and Philistine vassaldom, but the best way to proceed was far from obvious. Saul had left sons and men of power over his army who were capable of asserting their authority, and who had the backing of those who had supported Saul. In particular, they could count on the loyalty of Saul's tribe, Benjamin. The Philistines had their outposts as far north and east as Beth-shean, and had established their military hold over Israel, driving a wedge between the northernmost tribes and the central area of Ephraim and Benjamin. Israel's territory east of Jordan was more or less intact, but the general picture was one of fragmentation and uncertainty in the absence of one commanding figure to establish a lead and unite the country.* (196).
- b. **What do you think you would be feeling if you stood in David's shoes, dealing with grief over two important people in your life, the threat of a violent enemy (Philistines) and political/ geographical division of your country?**

2. Verses 1-3

- a. Joyce G. Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (IVP, 1988): *There were good reasons for [David] to move into the territory of Judah: it was geographically close at hand, it was the tribe to which he belonged, and he had recent contact with 'his friends, the elders of Judah' (1 Sam. 30:26), who might be expected to welcome his approaches. When he consulted the priest Abiathar, who had the ephod (1 Sam. 23:9), the Lord's answer through the sacred lot confirmed that David should proceed to Judah, and, when the cities of Judah were named, it was Hebron that received the affirmative answer.* (196)
- b. The Lexham Bible Dictionary (Lexham Press, 2016). *As described in Exodus, the ephod of the Israelite high priest is an extravagant garment, made of wool, linen, and gold thread. The wool is colored blue, purple, and scarlet (Exod 28:6-14). The exact shape of the ephod, however, is unknown. The presence of shoulder pieces indicates that it hung from the shoulders; furthermore, the use of sash indicates that it extended below the waist. The ephod included shoulder pieces, which contained two onyx stones on which the names of the sons of Israel (six names on each stone) were engraved. The onyx stones were in gold filigree*

settings on which were placed twisted gold chains. The high priest wore the ephod over a linen tunic. The gold, jeweled breastpiece, which held the Urim and Thummim, attached to the ephod. The priest wore a robe of blue wool over the ephod. Lastly, the high priest wore a turban, on front of which hung a gold plate with the words, “Holy to the Lord” (שֵׁדֶה לַיהוָה, *qodesh laihwh*; Lev 8:7–9). An ephod was also a linen garment commonly worn by priests (e.g., 1 Sam 2:18; 22:18). The exact design of an ephod is uncertain, but it appears to have hung from the shoulders, falling at or below the waist (Tsumura, *First Samuel*, 159–60; compare Klein, *1 Samuel*, 25). The biblical text notes that David wears an ephod while dancing before the Lord ... Several passages within the Hebrew Bible associate the ephod with divination. Although the Israelite high priestly ephod itself does not seem to be an oracular instrument, the Urim and Thummim contained in the breastpiece are likely some sort of small objects used for divination. Most likely, the priest would ask God a question, draw one or more of the Urim and Thummim from the breastpiece, and interpret an answer from the objects he had drawn (e.g., Num 27:21)

- c. Joyce G. Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (IVP, 1988): *Hebron, with its importance in the Abraham narratives and its associations as the burial-place of the patriarchs, was the most distinguished of Judah’s cities. David’s arrival was the signal for the men of Judah to anoint him king over the house of Judah.* (196)
- d. Stephen J. Binz, *David: Shepherd and King of Israel* (Brazos, 2011): *The anointing is a public, political act by the people, completing the earlier secret, religious anointing of David by Samuel.* (52)
- e. Robert Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel* New American Commentary (B & H, 1996): *David’s sizable group, which may have numbered more than a thousand, appears to have overwhelmed the city of Hebron itself. As a result, many in the returning group had to settle in ‘the cities of Hebron’, that is, the unwallled villages in the immediate vicinity.* (297-298).
- f. Walter Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, Interpretation (John Knox, 1990): *His first step is not recruitment, strategy, or public relations. It is to inquire of Yahweh (v. 1). David makes no move without Yahweh’s guidance.* (219)
- g. **Why did David turn first to discernment rather than action? What tends to be your first move--action or discernment? Why?**
- h. **David presumably made use of a very clear tool for discernment--the Urim and Thummim. How do you go about deciding the will of God; how do you determine what God wants you to do?**
- i. Mistaken Views of How God Speaks to Us (Dallas Willard *Hearing God* 76-83)
 - i. #1 - A message a minute - God is either telling you what to do at every turn of the road or he is at least willing and available to tell you if you would only ask. There is no evidence in the life of Peter and Paul, for example, that they were constantly receiving communications from God.
 - ii. #2 - It’s all in the Bible - Many of life’s specific circumstances are not dealt with in the Bible. Our reverence for and faith in the Bible must not

be allowed to blind us to the need for personal divine instruction within the principles of the Bible yet beyond the details of what it explicitly says.

iii. In what ways have you experienced any of these?

- j. There are at least 6 ways God speaks today (based on Evan Howard *The Brazos Introduction the Christian Spirituality* 391)
- i. Scripture
 - ii. Nature
 - iii. Internal Experiences
 - iv. External Circumstances
 - v. Reason
 - vi. Community
- vii. Which of these do you tend to rely upon? Would you add anything?**
- k. Stephen J. Binz, *David: Shepherd and King of Israel* (Brazos, 2011): **How can I better seek and respond to God's guidance? How do I take personal initiative and also respond to God's lead?** (55)

3. Verses 4-7

- a. Joyce G. Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (IVP, 1988): *David, concerned to know whether Saul and his sons had been given a decent burial, received the information that the people of Jabesh-gilead had rescued their bodies and had given them honorable burial. David took it upon himself to express appreciation of their loyalty, and to assure them that it would not go unrewarded, either by the Lord or by himself. 'I will do good to you' implies that he will soon be in control, and virtually invites this city, strategically placed on the east side of the Jordan, some eighty miles to the north of Hebron, to give him its allegiance as the people of Hebron have done.* (197)
- b. Walter Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, Interpretation (John Knox, 1990): *Jabesh-gilead was a special city for Saul; rescue of that city first called public attention to him (1 Sam. 11:1-11). Indeed, Saul had done a courageous and generous act of rescuing that city from the Ammonites. The people of Jabesh-gilead did not forget. They rescued the body of Saul after his final humiliation at Beth-shan, and it is in this city and by their hand that Saul was respectfully buried (1 Sam. 31:11-13) ... David acts with nerve and discernment toward this Saulide city. He immediately makes a play for its loyalty and support. In so doing, he seeks to cut to the heart of the Saul constituency ... This is an exceedingly shrewd approach. It is not coercive or threatening, it is honest and straightforward. David identifies himself as the best prospect for the future. David needs northern support, but his proposal is not merely a one-way deal. The proposed alliance would also be in the best interests of the city.* (220-221)
- c. Stephen J. Binz, *David: Shepherd and King of Israel* (Brazos, 2011): **How does David's approach to the people of Jabesh-gilead demonstrate his sincere compassion as well as his shrewd practicality? When do you notice that combination in yourself?** (54)

4. Verses 8-11

- a. Joyce G. Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (IVP, 1988): *Abner, cousin of Saul and captain of his army (1 Sam. 14:50), took the initiative in establishing as successor to Saul his son Ishbosheth, a survivor of the battle in which his three older brothers had lost their lives. The account clearly conveys Abner as the power behind the king; nowhere is any reference made to the reaction of the people to this imposed ruler ... Mahanaim, associated with Jacob (Gen. 32:1), was east of Jordan, probably near the Jabbok. In view of the Philistine occupation of the Gilboa range, and the Israelite withdrawal to the east of Jordan, the enthronement of Ishbosheth had to be at a safe distance from enemy lines. The territory over which he was regarded as king included, in addition to Gilead, northerly Ashur (probably Asher), and Jezreel, Ephraim and Benjamin, at the heart of Israel's territory, much of which was in Philistine hands. (197-198).*
- b. Robert Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel* New American Commentary (B & H, 1996): *In an effort to revitalize the Saulide dynasty and thus to retain his position as Israel's most powerful military leader, Abner had taken Ish-Bosh-eth, Saul's only surviving son, to Mahanaim to anoint him as king. Abner was Saul's cousin (1 Sam. 14:50) and apparently his closest confidant (1 Sam. 20:25; 26:7), so it was appropriate that he act loyally in behalf of his cousin/ commander/ friend. Mahanaim, a site whose remains have not yet been identified with certainty, was a Levitical city assigned to the Merarites (cf. Josh 21:38) east of the Jordan in the territory of Gad and had been associated with the patriarch Jacob (cf. Gen 32:2). Since it was east of the Jordan, it had likely escaped the ravages of the Philistines and thus provided relative safety and stability for establishing the monarchy in Israel. (299-300)*
- c. Robert Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel* New American Commentary (B & H, 1996): *At the age of forty Ish-Bosheth would have been qualified to have fought in the fateful battle against the Philistines on Mount Gilboa with his father and three brothers (cf. 1 Sam 31; Num 1:36). Perhaps he had been purposely exempted, however, in order to assure a direct heir to the throne in case of a battlefield catastrophe like the one that actually occurred. (300)*
- d. Walter Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, Interpretation (John Knox, 1990): *His authorization of Ish-bosheth as Saul's son and heir (vv. 8-9) is wonderfully contrasted with David's southern enthronement (v. 4). The 'men of Judah' make David king. It was a popular act. By contrast, it is Abner who 'made Ishbosheth king.' (v. 9). The kingship of the north is an inside job for which no popular support is reported. It is Abner, not Ishbosheth, who holds the real power ... (221)*
- e. **What are the differences between a leader who is appointed to their position by the people and a leader who is not? In what ways do you see these two, different, methods of power/ leadership in play today?**

5. Look back over the text. In what ways does the theme “people are complicated” stand out to you?