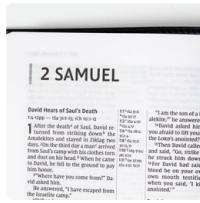


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2 Samuel 4 - 6



2 Samuel - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg provides an insightful analysis of 2 Samuel chapters 4 through 6, highlighting significant events during David's reign as king of Israel, such as the death of Abner and Joab's eventual demise by Solomon's hand. Among other topics, Gregg delves into the history surrounding Saul's grandson Mephibosheth and the use of the term "bosheth" as a replacement for the pagan term "bael." The lecture also explores David's desire to build a temple for the Lord and the incident involving Uzzah's death while moving the Ark of the Covenant. Throughout the lecture, Gregg offers his unique perspectives on these biblical narratives.

Transcript

So now we're at 2 Samuel chapter 4, and the last we read, Joab, who is kind of a loose cannon under David's reign, has killed Abner. And this was, first of all, from Joab's point of view, justifiable on behalf of his brother, Azahel, whom Abner had killed. Joab and Abishai, the remaining brothers of Azahel, avenged their brother's death by killing Abner.

And no doubt would have viewed themselves, if they were asked about this, probably would have justified their action by saying, well, we're the avengers of blood. Our brother was killed, and his brothers were the avengers of his blood. The problem was, of course, their brother wasn't murdered.

Their brother was killed in battle. In fact, in self-defense, Abner was fleeing, and Azahel was chasing him, in a situation of warfare, where if Azahel had caught him, he certainly would have killed him if he could. That was the intention.

And Abner killed him in self-defense. So a man who dies on the battlefield has not been murdered in cold blood, and especially if he's killed by the man that he is pursuing and that he's trying to kill. I mean, there's nothing about Abner's death that made it fall into the category of an ordinary murder.

And therefore, the duty of the avenger of blood would not apply in this case. Nonetheless, Joab and Abishai did kill Abner. Now, I have suggested that Joab's motive might have also been colored by ambition, because Abner was the commander of

Ishbatheth's armies in the northern tribes, and was bringing more than 300,000 troops under David's control, and no doubt with an agreement from David that Abner would still command those troops.

Abner was really the general under Ishbatheth, but was now defecting to David, and had met with David to negotiate the terms of this defection and of the merger of the two coalitions of tribes. And Joab, who had been the commander of David's armies up until now, he could see where things were going. Abner was going to be the new head commander.

Abner was going to take control over the armies and supplant Joab. But Joab took care of that. He killed Abner, and so he secured his place.

Now, you might think that Joab would be put to death for this, and David no doubt would have considered it, but he explains in verse 39 of chapter 3, he's explaining to his own servants, David says, I'm weak today, though anointed king, and these men, the sons of Zeruiah, meaning Joab and Abishai, are too harsh for me. Yahweh shall repay the evildoer according to his wickedness. Now, one of the problems that the death of Abner caused for David, was it looked like the kind of thing that could cause more trouble between David and the northern kingdom.

After all, Abner was technically a messenger from Ishbatheth. He was the general of Ishbatheth's armies. Ishbatheth was the rival king in the north, and David was the king over Judah in the south.

And for David to have Abner as his guest in his home and then kill him, or have him killed by Joab, would look like great treachery on David's part, although David had nothing to do with it. David didn't even approve of it. David was not into it, but it would not look that way to people from the northern kingdom.

It would look like it had been an ambush, that David had lured Abner down by promises of negotiations, and then had had him killed. This would make David look not only treacherous, but it would certainly prevent the people from the north from wanting David to be their king. And so Abner's death was something that David had to really publicly mourn in a big way.

And he did in a real big way. He composed an ode to Abner. He followed Abner's coffin through a funeral procession and buried him in state and buried him in honors, and basically pronounced a curse, David pronounced a curse upon Joab for having done the deed.

Now this can't have endeared David to Joab and vice versa. And yet David and Joab worked together again for the next 40 years. Joab remained the general over David's armies for 40 years from this point, and, or approximately, actually 33 years probably

more like, and Joab did some other things that displeased David.

Joab actually was politically probably more wise than David. For example, David didn't want Absalom killed because he was his son. Joab killed him anyway.

Joab knew that David's sentimentality would be bad for the kingdom. If Absalom was allowed to stay alive, he's a rebel. He's someone who's going to lead people against David.

In displeasing David, Joab did something that was more politically expedient. And, of course, when David numbered the people, we haven't come to these stories yet, but when David wanted to number the people, Joab objected, knowing it was wrong. And David insisted upon it, so Joab did it, but not with any enthusiasm, the Bible says, and he didn't even complete the job.

Joab sometimes seems to have been in the right when David was in the wrong. It's even possible that Joab could have seen Abner's plans correctly. Joab told David that Abner had come to spy out the land, and not with good intentions.

I think Joab was wrong about that. But Joab and David were sometimes at cross-purposes, here and later. And, of course, by the time David died, he gave instructions to his son Solomon to kill Joab, something David didn't have the guts to do, or whatever, didn't feel like he was in a position to do, but Solomon would be.

So, Joab displeased David in a big way, eventually. Now, how displeased David was on this occasion about this, it's hard to say. I mean, he probably was displeased, because Joab's actions had endangered David's political position with the Northern Kingdom.

And so David had to go to extra trouble to publicize the fact that he was sorry for Abner, and did not want this to happen, and he didn't approve of what Joab did. But that certainly had to drive some kind of a wedge between Joab and David. After all, for the king to publicly denounce his general, Joab, couldn't have really encouraged their relationship.

And they were first cousins. Zeruah, Joab's mother, was David's father's sister. So Joab and David were first cousins, but they did have a strained relationship after this, though they worked together for the remainder of David's reign.

And Joab remained loyal to him, even when there was a revolt. Even when Absalom revolted, and many of David's people defected to Absalom, Joab stayed with David and fought David's enemies for him. Now, when Saul's son, that's Ish-bosheth, heard that Abner had died in Hebron, he lost heart, and all Israel was troubled.

Now, Abner had been the strong man of the government of the North. Ish-bosheth was the weak, ineffectual ruler, and totally intimidated by his general, totally intimidated by

Abner. Abner had even made some kind of a play to replace Ish-bosheth by sleeping with Saul's concubine, a political act more than an act of passion.

I'm not saying there was no passion involved, but again, Joab could sleep with whoever he wanted to. He was the general over all the armies. He didn't have to sleep with that particular woman.

Sleeping with the former king's concubine was a political statement, basically saying, I am now in the position of the former king. Ish-bosheth had challenged Abner about that, and Abner had gotten angry about being challenged, and had said, okay, I'm going to turn the kingdom over to David now. That's why Abner had gone down there and had gotten himself killed by Joab.

And so now, Ish-bosheth has survived, and he's still the king, but he doesn't have Abner anymore, and there is definitely a power vacuum, because Ish-bosheth doesn't know how to rule. Now Saul's son had two men who were captains of troops. The name of one was Bayanna, and the name of the other, Rechab, the sons of Rimmon, the Beerothite, and the children of Benjamin, for Beeroth also was part of Benjamin, because the Beerothites fled to Gittaeum and have been sojourners there until this day.

Now, I don't know why the Beerothites fled. It's possible that they were Benjamites that were not on the good side of Saul's family, who were Benjamites also. Saul and Ish-bosheth were Benjamites, and these people were of the same tribe, but apparently alienated from the rest of the nation, maybe from the rest of the tribe, and therefore not as loyal to Saul and Ish-bosheth as you might expect the tribesmen of Benjamin to be, and these men certainly were not.

Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son who was lame in his feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled. Apparently, when Saul and Jonathan died, it was thought by the nurse who was taking care of Jonathan's son that the Philistines would press their advantage and come and wipe out the whole royal family, and Mephibosheth, the son, who was five years old at the time, was in danger, so his nurse sought to save him, and as she hastily tried to do so, she stumbled.

It happened as she made haste to flee that he fell and became lame. He had sustained a serious injury in his feet from which he never recovered, so his name was Mephibosheth, and Mephibosheth is actually also called Meribale. Now, in 1 Chronicles 8.34, I should point out, I didn't point out earlier, that even Ish-bosheth, see, Ish-bosheth and Mephibosheth both have the term bosheth at the end of the name.

Ish-bosheth and Mephibosheth really were named Ish-bale and Mephibale, as the Book of Chronicles tells us. These men are called Ish-bale and Mephibale in the Book of Chronicles, but in Samuel, they're called Ish-bosheth and Mephibosheth. Now, bosheth is

the Hebrew word that means shame or shameful thing, and their names really had the word bale in them in that place.

Ish-bosheth means a man of bale. Ish is the Hebrew word for man. Ish-bale, I should say.

Ish-bale means a man of bale. However, the word bale was the generic word for lord. There were two Hebrew words for lord.

One was Adonai and one was bale. And many times, even speaking of Yahweh, when calling him lord, they could call him bale because that was just the ordinary word for lord. And so, Ish-bale's name might have really meant man of the lord or the lord's man.

And so, names that had the word bale attached to them in these days were not necessarily associated with the false god bale, but simply would have the term lord in them in Hebrew. But, at a later time in Israel's history, bale became simply recognized as an unacceptable term because the pagans worshipped a god named bale or lord. The pagan lord, bale, was a false god that sometimes Israel compromised by worshipping.

So that the word bale came to have only negative connotations and only was seen as a reference to this false god of the pagans. And so, later generations were objected to the name Ish-bale and Mephib-bale. And so, they started calling them Ish-bosheth, which means shameful thing, and Mephib-bosheth, which means shameful thing.

So, the word bale was replaced by the word shameful thing to express disgust for bale worship and for bale. So, while Chronicles retains their original names Ish-bale and Mephib-bale, because Chronicles was written by priests and the priests were not as sensitized to such things as the prophets were. The prophets were the ones who denounced the worship of bale and the worship of idols.

Samuel and Kings were written by prophets. Chronicles was written by priests and apparently the priests did not have as much of a sensitivity about using the name bale as a part of the names of these people. Since that was their real names.

But the prophets who wrote these books hated the name bale and had no doubt spent a lot of their careers denouncing the worship of bale. And so, when they referred to these men, they replaced the word bale in their name for shameful thing, bosheth. So, anyway, just so you'll understand why there's that difference.

Bosheth means shameful thing. These men in their lifetimes were not really called Ish-bosheth and Mephib-bosheth. That is to say, the king in his lifetime wasn't called man of a shameful thing.

He was more called man of the Lord. But because bale was later replaced with bosheth in the pious speech of the Jews, the names have come down to us like this in these records. Now, Mephib-bosheth then was a grandson of Saul, the surviving son of

Jonathan.

David apparently didn't know about him. It's possible that he was born after David and Jonathan had parted company. In fact, he certainly was because he was only five years old at the time that Jonathan was killed.

David had been separated from Saul and from Jonathan probably for at least ten years at that time. So, David apparently was not really familiar with Mephib-bosheth and it was later on that David learned of him and chose to honor him. But we're told about him here so that we would know that as we're about to read of the assassination of Mephib-bosheth, that this was not really the total end of Saul's line.

There was another. There was a grandson who was kind of kept a low profile for fear of him being assassinated and he was a cripple. Now, the sons of Rimmon, the Bithonite, Rechab and Bayanna, set out and came at about the heat of the day to the house of Mephib-bosheth who was lying on his bed at noon.

And they came there all the way into the house as though to get wheat and they stabbed him in the stomach. Then Rechab and Bayanna, his brother, escaped. Now, it would appear that with Abner dead, Mephib-bosheth, his kingdom was so disorganized he didn't even have bodyguards.

Here's the king and these servants could just walk into the room with a knife and stab him. He certainly didn't have an organized police or military force at this point. Everything was apparently in disarray with the absence of their general.

And so these two guys were just able to kill him and leave without getting caught. For when they came into the house, he was lying on bed in his bedroom. Then they struck him and killed him and beheaded him and took his head and were all night escaping through the plain.

And they brought the head of Mephib-bosheth to David at Hebron and said to the king, here is the head of Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul, your enemy, who sought your life. And the Lord has avenged my lord, the king, this day on Saul and his descendants. Now, these men, of course, were very much like the Amalekite who brought news of Saul and Jonathan's death to David and took credit for having killed Saul.

They greatly miscalculated David's attitude toward his enemies. It is true Saul had been a true enemy of David, but David had not been hostile toward him and had seen him as the Lord's anointed. Even less was he hostile toward Ish-bosheth.

Ish-bosheth had done nothing wrong. It wasn't his fault he was Saul's son and that he was put into power, though a rival to David for the authority of the nation. But David had never had any complaints about Ish-bosheth personally.

And so these guys mistakenly thought that David would congratulate them and reward them for having killed who they regarded as his enemy. But David answered Rechab and Baanah, his brother, the sons of Rimmon, the Berethite, and said to them, As the Lord lives, who has redeemed my life from all adversity, when someone told me, saying, Look, Saul is dead, thinking to have brought good news, I arrested him and had him executed in Ziklag. The one who thought I would give him a reward for his news.

How much more when wicked men have killed a righteous person in his own house on his bed. Therefore shall I not now require his blood at your hand and remove you from the earth? So David commanded his young men and they executed them, cut off their hands, their wicked hands that had done the deed, and their feet, and hanged them by the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ishbosheth and buried it in the tomb of Abner in Hebron.

So he gave Ishbosheth's head an honorable burial with Abner right there in David's capital. So by burying it in Hebron, David's capital at this time, instead of sending it back to be buried in Gibeath or wherever else, David was basically saying, I'm in solidarity with these people, I'm giving them a burial place of honor in my own capital city. And so David, of course, now had no rivals to the throne, no military rival in Abner and no political rival in Ishbosheth.

So there was little else to do than for the ten tribes of the north to come and make David king. So in chapter 5, then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and spoke, saying, indeed, we are your bone and your flesh. All of a sudden, we've been resisting you for seven and a half years as you've ruled in Judah and we've followed Ishbosheth, but suddenly we realize we're related to you.

We just got the revelation. We are your bone and your flesh. Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and brought them in.

And the Lord said to you, you shall shepherd my people Israel and be the ruler over Israel. Well, if they knew that, why had they resisted that all this time? I mean, that sounds like they're kind of condemning themselves for their wrongdoing. You know, God said you'd be the king of Israel, but we were instead following this other guy.

So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David king over Israel. This is his third time being anointed. First time was privately in his own father's home by Samuel.

Then he was anointed at Hebron seven and a half years before this, and now he's anointed to be king over the whole nation. And David was 30 years old when he began to reign, and he reigned 40 years. Now, I believe that's when he began to reign over Judah, not this point.

Is that how you understand it, Frank? His total reign over Judah. It says he reigned 40 years, but it breaks it down. In Hebron, he reigned over Judah seven years and six months.

That's before this point. And in Jerusalem, which we have not yet read about, he has to conquer Jerusalem before that, but we're about to read about that next. Once he conquered Jerusalem and reigned there as his capital, it was another 33 years over all Israel and Judah.

So it was literally 40 years and six months that he reigned. And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spoke to David, saying, You should not come in here, but the blind and the lame will repel you, thinking David cannot come in here. They were pretty sure of themselves that he wouldn't get through their walls.

If Jerusalem had been an easily conquered city, it would have been conquered long ago. It resisted Israel successfully in the days of Joshua. When Joshua was destroying all the other cities around, they were unable to defeat Jerusalem.

Likewise, we're told in the book of Judges that neither Judah nor Benjamin were able to conquer Jerusalem. Jerusalem was positioned on the border between Judah and Benjamin. It was really shared by both tribes.

It was kind of like Washington, D.C. It wasn't really the possession of any one tribe. Washington, D.C. doesn't belong to any state. It's sort of its own jurisdiction.

Jerusalem was a very good place for David to choose as a capital, because it would not be in any tribal territory. It sort of straddles Benjamite and Judean territory. And it's interesting, because the last dynasty was Benjamite, and the new dynasty was Judean.

So in a sense, his capital would straddle both territories. It would not be strictly a southern city or a northern city. It was right in the middle.

And as we shall see, Jerusalem came to be the personal possession of David. It became the city of David. And it was not really a possession of any one tribe, but of his own family, as we shall see.

Now, the city of Jerusalem was hard to conquer. The people who lived in it were called Jebusites, and they were Canaanite. And they had been there for hundreds of years since Joshua's time and had been there in defiance of Israel, because Israel was supposed to, along with the other Canaanites, have driven them out, but had always failed to do so.

Now, David had grown up in Bethlehem, six miles from Jerusalem, and had tended sheep probably far enough from home at times, seeking pasture, that he had been in view of Jerusalem many times as a youth. David, being a zealous patriot for Israel and for the

God of Israel, no doubt had always resented Jerusalem standing there as a monument of defiance to Israel and to Yahweh, this pagan city that was not supposed to be there. It wasn't supposed to be a pagan city in the midst of the Promised Land.

My guess is that David, all his youth, wished he could conquer that city and drive the Canaanites out once and for all. And one reason I say that is because when David killed Goliath, we read that he took the head of Goliath to Jerusalem. Now, I doubt that he took it inside the city, since David would not have access to Jerusalem at that early date.

It was a Canaanite city. My thought is he probably took it to display outside the walls of Jerusalem to kind of wave it around and basically say, you see this giant I killed? You're the next. You're going down.

And I'm not sure that that's what David's meaning was, but we don't have any other answer for why he would have taken the head of Goliath to Jerusalem. But his doing so may well have reflected already his intention that someday when he was in power, he was going to take that city down. And now, for the first time, he's in power.

He's been in power over Judah, but Jerusalem's not technically Judean in its territory. Now he's ruler over Benjamin and Judah. He's ruler over all the twelve tribes, in fact.

And his first act is to do what probably was his lifelong dream, and that is to rid Jerusalem of its pagan Canaanite inhabitants. And so they saw him coming, but because no one had been able to conquer them previously, they were sure he couldn't either. They said, David can't come in here, so they taunted him and said, you know, our disabled in our population will be able to repel you.

Even the blind and the lame of Jerusalem can repel you. That is, we don't even have to put our best men on the wall. We can put our blind men on the wall and still defeat you.

You can't conquer us. Even the weakest of our warriors can stop you from conquering us. Nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion.

That is the city of David, which is Jerusalem. Now David said on that day, whoever climbs up by way of the water shaft and defeats the Jebusites, the lame and the blind, who are hated by David's soul, he shall be chief and captain. Therefore, they say, the blind and the lame shall not come into the house, into this house.

Now, what he's saying is that when he says the blind and the lame are hated by David's soul, he's not saying that he has a particular grievance against the handicapped people. He's saying that many people, some scholars believe that the Jebusites literally put the blind and the lame up on the wall to taunt David and say, here they are, they'll defeat you. And he says, okay, those are the ones, I'm targeting them.

I hate them. I'm going to destroy them, the blind and the lame that are there seeking to

prevent us. And he says, he's going to make whoever defeats Jerusalem, the chief captain.

Now it says, talks about whoever climbs up by way of the water shaft and defeats the Jebusites. Now it is thought by most that the water shaft is actually an access into the city that the Jebusites had never thought would be breached. There is in fact a vertical shaft about 40 feet deep inside the city where there's water down there and it drew water from a source outside the city.

And so because it's a vertical shaft 40 feet deep and perhaps those who would enter it would have to swim underwater some distance to get even to it, the Jebusites just never dreamed that anyone would come that way. And so most believe that Joab, who is the one who took up this offer and won the position, that he and his soldiers actually came up that way surprising the Jebusites and defeating them that way. Now not all agree with that because the term water shaft in the Hebrew is a little ambiguous.

The Hebrew letters could be pointed, the vowel points could go a little differently and it could be instead of the word water shaft it could be the word hook like a grappling hook. And if he's saying whoever climbs up by way of the hook, you know throwing a rope with a hook on it and climbing the wall that way, is a possible way that that could be translated. It's not entirely clear and scholars are not united in this.

But it seems more likely that they could surprise the city by coming up through a water shaft than by climbing the wall with a grappling hook because it'd be easy enough for the people in the wall to cut the line when you're climbing up the wall with a rope unless they did it at night or something where they were not seen. And after all if it's the blind who are guarding the city you might be able to pull it off you know. So in one way or another we read that this is what happened.

And David dwelt in a stronghold and called it the city of David. Then David built all around from the Melo and inward. Melo was one of the districts in Jerusalem.

So David went on and became great and the Lord God of hosts was with him. Now when I say Joab did this, I say that because that's what we're told over in Chronicles. It doesn't mention Joab's role in it here in 2 Samuel.

But in 1 Chronicles, let me turn there. Chapter 11 verse 4 says, David and all Israel went to Jerusalem which is Jebus where the Jebusites were, the inhabitants of the land. Then the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, You shall not come in here.

Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion, that is the city of David. Now David said, Whoever attacks the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain. And Joab the son of Zeruiah went up first and became chief.

So Joab is the one who conquered the city. And so we have that supplementary

information that is not given to us in 2 Samuel. Now back to 2 Samuel 5 verse 11.

Then Hiram the king of Tyre sent messengers to David and cedar trees and carpenters and masons. And they built David a house. So David knew that the Lord had established him as king over Israel and that he had exalted his kingdom for the people of Israel's sake.

And David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem after he had come from Hebron. So more sons and daughters were born to David. Now we've read previously of six wives, seven actually when you include Michael returning.

But when David was in Hebron, he had six wives and apparently six sons, one by each wife. Then in his negotiations with Abner to unite the kingdom, he got Michael back as a bargaining tool. So Saul had taken her from David and given her to another man.

Abner and Ishbosheth required her to return to David. So he had now seven wives. And now he takes more concubines and wives.

The number is not given. We know one of them is Bathsheba, though we haven't read the story of that yet. So we know of eight.

We know the names of eight of David's wives. But there clearly were more than that because Bathsheba is the only woman we know of him taking by name in Jerusalem. And yet we're told plural he took other concubines and wives while he was in Jerusalem.

Now these are the names of those who were born to him in Jerusalem. Now we can see that these names are mentioned out of chronological order. They were born apparently over the period of the thirty years, thirty-three years that he reigned from that city.

Because we see Solomon. And Solomon, of course, wasn't born at this time. He was the son of Bathsheba who we read that story considerably later.

So we're just given a summary of, you know, in the years that he lived in Jerusalem. These are additional sons that were born to him besides the ones we'd read about before. Now when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David.

And David heard of it and he went down to the stronghold. Now what's going on here, when David had been made king over Judah, the Philistines had not cared apparently. They might have even considered it to be to their advantage.

Because as long as the tribes of Israel were divided, they would not be as formidable a threat to the Philistines as if they were united. After all, as long as there was rivalry between David and Ish-bosheth, much of the energies of Israel and the military strength would be focused on, you know, protecting from each other and so forth. And the

Philistines would maintain their power without a serious challenge.

So David becoming king over Judah probably did not surprise or worry the Philistines. And so he reigned seven and a half years there in Hebron without any opposition. But once the nation was united under David, the Philistines realized, uh-oh, this development is not good.

These people we've been ruling over who had this weak Ish-bosheth as their ruler now has this strong David as their ruler. And we'd better strike before David gets organized. We'd better, you know, not let David consolidate his power because then we'll really lose our position over Israel.

So they didn't like the fact that David was now over all the kingdom. And so they decided to attack. And it says that David went down to the stronghold.

Now this is the region where David had hung out with his 600 men when Saul had been pursuing him. In other words, he didn't just wait in Jerusalem for the Philistines to arrive. He went out to intercept them and no doubt was hiding in the caves with his men and so forth to ambush them.

As, you know, this is the region where he had dwelt as an exile. He personally goes down with his troops it would appear to this area or maybe to say David went down there means that his armies did because what was done by his armies were his actions. Joab, remember, had been with David during those years too when they'd been in the stronghold hiding from Saul.

So whether it was David and Joab or just Joab leading the armies is not extremely important to decide. But the point is that instead of just waiting for the arrival of the Philistines they went out to intercept them and surprise them and ambush them there. And the Philistines also went and deployed themselves in the valley of Rephaim.

And David inquired of the Lord saying, Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will you deliver them into my hand? And the Lord said to David, Go up, for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into your hands. God says, I'm thinking so, doubtless. No doubt I will.

I think I will. So go ahead. And David went to Baal-perazim and David defeated them there.

And he said, The Lord has broken through my enemies before me like a breakthrough of water. Therefore he called the name of the place Baal-perazim which means master of breakthroughs. Again, Baal means master.

In this case not a reference to the false god named Baal but just the ordinary term for master. And they left their images there and David and his men carried them away. That is to say, apparently the Philistines had idols with them and ran off and were defeated

and left their idols behind.

And so their idols were taken captive by David as trophies apparently. Then the Philistines went up once again and deployed themselves into the valley of Rephaim. And when David inquired of the Lord, he said, You shall not go up, circle around behind them and come upon them in front of the mulberry trees.

So it shall be when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees then you shall advance quickly for then the Lord will go out before you and strike the camp of the Philistines. And David did so as the Lord commanded him and he drove back the Philistines from Geba as far as Gizer. Now this was essentially the ultimate and final end of the Philistine dominion over Israel.

There had been brief periods of victory before. Samson, you remember, had begun to deliver Israel from the Philistines. That's how it's worded.

He began to deliver them but he, of course, through his own misbehavior got himself into trouble and actually died. He did kill a lot of Philistines and himself too in the process. And he did not leave Israel free from that oppression.

Then Samuel came up and Samuel actually, as the leader of Israel, had marshaled the Israelites against the Philistines and what happened was that God miraculously sent a thunderstorm that was striking and terrifying the Philistines and so the Philistines, it says, entered Israel no more meaning for the time being they didn't. Then later when Saul was anointed king, the Philistines wanted to attack him and through Saul's entire lifetime the Philistines were a problem. But now at the beginning of David's reign he is, and of course the Philistines killed Saul, but David now defeats them finally.

He didn't exterminate them but they ceased ever to be a problem again to David. They did exist for a long time thereafter. Even some of the later prophets like Isaiah uttered prophecies against the Philistines.

There are still Philistines around but they were not a problem to Israel anymore. David totally subjugated them. Now in this particular second campaign, there were two campaigns through which David defeated Philistines and really ended the Philistine problem.

The second time God told him specifically don't go up against them, that is don't make a frontal attack, let's circle around behind them and apparently they were to be in a grove of mulberry trees and he says you'll know when it's time to march when you hear the marching in the tops of the mulberry trees. Now what was the marching in the tops of the mulberry trees that they were to hear and why was he supposed to wait for that? Well no explanation is given. But if there was in fact not just a sound but specifically the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees overhead, it may be that we're to

understand that David was to be made aware that the angelic armies fighting for Israel were on the move and that Israel should move when the angels are moving.

That is when God is moving and sending his troops ahead, that's when David is to follow after. Now why this wasn't true every time they fought and why it was only this time I can't say except it would suggest that David's ultimate victory over the Philistines for which he would get the most credit because it was the most long-standing threat of Israel was something that God wanted David to not really feel like he was doing without divine assistance. That whatever victories David might get credit for were actually victories accomplished by God fighting for him and sending his angelic hosts to fight for him.

You'll remember that Elisha when he was surrounded by the Syrian armies in 2 Kings chapter 6 in Dothan he and his servant had a vision of angelic armies chariots of fire all over the hillside surrounding the enemy troops and there were simply times when God made manifest to Israel that their defense was not really coming from their own swords and from their own skills and their own power but really from God. And so hearing the marching at the tops of the mulberry trees probably although we're not told this is true it's probably the sound of the angels marching as it were. You may recall having heard that Josephus described several amazing signs that happened in 70 AD around the time that Jerusalem was destroyed.

There were many portents Josephus records that he believed were supernatural signs from God of the doom of the city before it fell. One of them he said was that people in Jerusalem were able to look up into the clouds on one occasion and they saw soldiers in armor running in the clouds. Now if this is true we would be inclined to suspect that those soldiers in armor that were running in clouds were probably not ordinary men.

Jesus and Peter could walk on water but we don't know of anybody who ever walked on clouds and so no doubt we're talking about angels here. Josephus was not a Christian and he himself said that the signs that he was describing were so amazing that no one would believe them if not for the fact that many witnesses had testified to them. But apparently when Jerusalem was under siege the armies that were coming against Jerusalem were seen as angels in the clouds.

This was a judgment from God coming against Israel. Remember Jesus said then they shall see the sign of the Son of Man in the heavens. Talking about the destruction of Jerusalem maybe that's the sign.

The Son of Man and his armies were coming against Jerusalem at that time and Josephus said that some people actually saw such troops in the clouds. David maybe didn't see them but he apparently heard them in the trees and knew that it was the angels' armies were marching that God was therefore leading and was going to give the victory to the Israelites if they marched at that time. Remember the Philistines had been the most

stubborn and most difficult to defeat foe besides the Jebusites for generations.

I suppose the Jebusites were the most stubborn because they had been resisting since the time of Joshua. But the Philistines had been resisting for over a century and Israel simply despite their victories in many areas were never able to fully drive out either the Jebusites or the Philistines. So David first defeats the Jebusites and then he goes after the Philistines.

But it's made clear here that the victory against them that he had which was final and decisive was really a victory not of David but of the armies of God of the angels and so forth. And God gave David sort of a I would say a visual of that but it would be more of an audio of that. He could hear the angels marching.

And so David has gone from victory to victory. He was a great war hero even in the time of Saul. I mean almost from the first time that David appeared to the public even from that first time when he killed Goliath.

He was forever afterwards known as a mighty man of valor a mighty war hero. But now he's accomplished things that neither Saul nor any of the period of the judges were able to accomplish. And his victories went on and on.

Through his reign he not only liberated Israel from the oppression of Philistines eventually he set his sights further out and started an empire of his own where he conquered the lands around him the pagan lands outside of Israel and brought them under tribute to him so that in David's reign Israel experienced the greatest power and the greatest glory of any time in their history. After David's time some of that was lost and of course after Rehoboam's time the country was disintegrated. And so David ruled during the most noble the most proud time of Israel's history and that's why as the messianic hope developed among Israel that they always saw the Messiah would be like David and that he's going to restore the glory to Israel that David had brought to the nation.

And this is just the beginning here. Chapter 6 Again David gathered all the choicemen of Israel thirty thousand and David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Baal Judah or Baal Judah to bring up from there the ark of God whose name is called by the name the Lord of hosts who dwells between the chair of them. Now remember the ark had been captured by the Philistines in the days when Samuel was a young child or young man and it had been recovered not by any effort of Israel but by the Philistines finding it to be too hot to handle.

They kept the ark as long as they could but everywhere it went they had trouble. Every time they took the ark into a Philistine city the city would break out with a bubonic plague and it would have an infestation of rats and the people would have boils and hemorrhoids on them. And so they kept moving it from city to city until none of the cities

wanted it and they decided to send it back to Israel.

So the ark had come back to Israel but it had been placed in a private home and for some reason during the entire reign of Saul which is forty years there was no effort made to bring the ark into any central place of worship. In the reign of Saul there was a tabernacle in Nob. There was a table of showbread there from which David acquired food.

There were priests there at Nob. There was tabernacle and worship there but the ark for some reason was never brought back there. Not entirely clear why not.

But now that David has got a fine capital city and with the help of Tyre's King Hiram he has built a mansion for himself there. He is going to consolidate his power not only politically but religiously by bringing the ark, the symbol of God's presence into Jerusalem. Now David actually never did build a temple in Jerusalem.

Solomon did that. But it was nonetheless with the mind of centralizing worship of Israel and the emblem of the presence of God in Jerusalem that David brought the ark there. What he did was he eventually set a little tent up a shelter from the weather and put the ark in it.

But he did not build a house. And that becomes something that is talked about in chapter 7. After the ark has come to Jerusalem David thinks this seems like not right. I'm living in a house, a mansion and God's ark is only in a tent.

And that's when the idea first comes to David of building a temple which David is not permitted to do but his son does. That comes up in the chapter after this. But first we need to get the ark into Jerusalem and then David can be concerned about whether it should be housed more worthily.

So they set the ark of God on a new cart and brought it out of the house of Abinadab which was on the hill and Uzzah and Ahiel the sons of Abinadab drove the new cart. And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab which was on the hill accompanying the ark of God. And Ahiel went before the ark and Uzzah apparently was alongside it it would appear.

And David and all the house of Israel played music before the Lord on all kinds of instruments made of fir wood on harps on stringed instruments on tambourines on cistrums and on cymbals. Now the use of music and musical instruments in the worship of Yahweh was an innovation that David introduced. The law of Moses which prescribed the worship of God at the tabernacle and so forth never involved music.

There is no reference in Moses' law to having musical instruments or singing or anything like that at the tabernacle. David however was a musician and a writer of songs and his songs were dedicated to the Lord so he incorporated hymns and psalms and singing and

music in the worship of God. And that was something new.

So now the musicians are singing and celebrating as the ark is being paraded from the house of Abinadab to Jerusalem. However there is a slight interruption. In verse 6 And when they came to Nacon's threshing floor Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it for the oxen stumbled.

It would appear that the road was irregular there was a rough spot the oxen stumbled and apparently the cart wobbled and the ark on the cart perhaps looked as if it was in danger of toppling off the cart into the mud. And so it says Uzzah put out his hand to stabilize it and the anger of the Lord was aroused against Uzzah and God struck him there for his error and he died there by the ark of God. Now most people when they read this they think that's not very nice.

And by the way David had the same reaction. You'll notice in verse 8 David became angry because of the Lord's outbreak against Uzzah. So the Bible is not unaware that what God did was controversial.

Even David seriously objected to it. But the Bible does not explain God's actions here. It does not explain why God struck the man.

Now the man was almost certainly a priest and therefore one of those that technically could touch the ark. At least priests could touch the poles of the ark and carry it. That's who was supposed to carry it.

Most people could not touch the ark without punishment. But a priest could and it's almost certain that the priests were the ones in charge of moving the ark on this occasion. In fact, I wouldn't be surprised but I couldn't say for sure if Uzzah was the man in charge of the project.

David had to assign somebody to be in charge of the moving of the ark. And God's anger at Uzzah may well have been due to the fact that Uzzah was the most responsible party and he had blown it. You see the reason the ark almost toppled was because it was being moved on a cart.

That was not what God said should be done. It was in the law of Moses that the ark should be carried on the shoulders of the priests. The glory of God was to rest upon men not upon machinery.

God chooses anointed men not machinery to bear his glory. It was the Philistines who innovated the idea of moving the ark on a cart. The first time the ark had ever been moved on a cart was when the Philistines returned it.

And so in a sense the priests and it may have been Uzzah's responsibility he may have been the one who made the executive decision let's put it on a cart. Why? Why not carry

it the way God said? Well, you know, it worked well when the Philistines moved it on a cart. Let's just do that.

Let's just innovate. Let's not do things God's way let's do things the way the Philistines did it. There's no reason to think that this isn't what he thought.

I mean, you might think well, why would anyone think that way? Well, why do churches think that way? Why do churches do things instead of the way God said? They do it the way worldly corporations do it. They set up all kinds of corporate machinery to do the work of God and the people of God are kind of just spectators to the machinery that's run by the experts and so forth. I mean, there is a way that church is supposed to operate.

There is a way that God is to be worshipped. There is a pattern in the scripture. But why it is that modern churches feel there's better ways to do it than that, I don't know.

And what are the better ways? The same way the worldly corporations are run. CEOs, boards of directors, you know, business models, flow charts. Hey, this works for the corporations why not for the church? Why not just use the same machinery the world uses to carry the glory of God to the world? You know, to bring the gospel to the world.

Well, that's not how God works. That's not at least how he ordained it. Now, I'm not saying God has never worked through that.

Sometimes God will simply work with what's there. That doesn't mean he's happy about it. The Philistines moved the ark on a cart.

That's not the way God wanted it carried. But the Philistines didn't have any Levites to carry it and God gave them a pass. They had to move it some way.

But Israel did have the priests. Israel could do it the way God said and they chose not to do it for whatever reason. Maybe it's just too heavy.

I mean, it's a heavy box covered with gold. Gold is really heavy. That might hurt your shoulders.

Put it on a cart, make it easy. Well, you see, the problem is the only reason that the ark was even in need of being stabilized is because it was not being carried the way God said. If it had been on the shoulders of four priests it would not have been in danger and no one would have had to try to rescue it from this situation.

The fact that they were disobeying God and innovating their own ways of doing things instead of the way God said to do it was what put the ark at risk. And this man, Uzzah, might have been and I don't say that I know it but the severity of God toward him on this occasion may well be because Uzzah might have even been the man who made the decision. In any case, the man or the whole project was profaned.

And whether he's alone responsible for it or whether all the priests involved were responsible for it God was angry at them for doing things their way instead of his way. And so he struck Uzzah to make an example of him just like fire from heaven went out of the presence of the Lord in Leviticus chapter 10 and consumed the two priests, the sons of Aaron who were burning strange fire at a time when priests were badly needed. He had three million people to be served by one high priest and four priests and two of them died the first day the tabernacles opened.

But God made an example of them Nadab and Abihu in that case and he doesn't do that every time people do the wrong thing but he set an example and he made an example of Uzzah here too. Now David, it says, he became angry because of the Lord's outbreak against Uzzah and he called the name of that place Periz Uzzah which means outbreak against Uzzah to this day. David was afraid of Yahweh that day and he said, how can the ark of the Lord come to me? David apparently was not 100% sure why this had happened why God was so angry and he thought, well maybe bringing the ark to Jerusalem isn't a good idea after all.

Maybe I'm going to be like the Philistines who bring the ark into their cities and there's a plague. So it says that David would not move the ark of the Lord with him into the city of David but David took it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. Now Gittite is a Philistine of Gath.

After David conquered the Philistines they became his allies. At least some of them did. There was a group of bodyguards that David had called the Cherithites that were all Philistine and they often did some of the great and most loyal things for David in his reign.

How it was that the Philistines came to be at least some of them came to be so fond of David is hard to say since he was their great enemy for a while but there was a period of time when he was in Gath which is where this man Obed-Edom lived in Gath. David had spent a year and four months in Gath with Philistines under his command apparently along with his 600 men and apparently a lot of the Philistine warriors had come to respect David either as a good man or just as a man that commanded respect because of his abilities. So when the Philistines were defeated by David some of them were pretty fond of David and became very loyal to him.

And this Philistine man apparently now Obed-Edom might have been partly Edomite too he might have been a mixed breed might have been part Philistine part Edomite but in any case he was a Gittite that means he's from Gath and therefore the Ark was apparently kept in Gath or at least in the home of someone who was from Gath for a period of time. Maybe David put it there because he was afraid it was going to be, plagues were going to break out maybe he wanted it in a Philistine town instead of in Jerusalem for that to happen. But what happened was it says in verse 11 the Ark of the

Lord remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite three months and the Lord blessed Obed-Edom and all his household.

And it was told King David saying the Lord has blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that belongs to him because of the Ark of God. So David went and brought up the Ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the city of David with gladness and so it was when those bearing the Ark notice it wasn't on a cart this time David apparently got it figured out now he had the people bearing the Ark on their shoulders as they should have in the first place and so it was when those bearing the Ark of the Lord had gone six paces that he sacrificed oxen and fatted sheep apparently every six paces that's a slow procession I don't know how many miles it was but take six steps and set up a new altar and offer a sacrifice you gotta slaughter these animals this takes a little while this was at least an all day journey I don't know how far it was frankly but he's taking his time he's making sure that he's appeasing God every step of the way then David danced before the Lord with all his might and David was wearing a linen ephod so he put on some kind of a priestly garment at least for the occasion and he danced in front of the Ark David was kind of an emotional guy and exuberant and we don't know if everybody else was dancing or if it was just the king apparently he was leaping around and doing things that embarrassed his wife it says David and all his house of Israel brought the Ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet and as the Ark of the Lord came into the city of David Michael, Saul's daughter, looked through a window and saw King David leaping and whirling before the Lord and she despised him in her heart that means she felt he was not acting dignified she lost respect for him in her heart she despised him she felt low esteem low level of respect for him is what despise means and she thought he was behaving in a rather non-regal manner and reducing himself to the position of a commoner remember she was of royal family her father had been the previous king and she apparently had been raised with the idea of royalty having a certain dignity about them though hurling spears at your courtiers isn't exactly my idea of dignity but the point is that Saul nonetheless did apparently preserve his image for the most part and his family probably dressed royally and behaved with the kind of behavior that royal families are supposed to behave like and she was not accustomed to somebody being as casual and down to earth as David was as a ruler and so she despised him so they brought the Ark of the Lord and set it in its place in the midst of the tabernacle that David erected for it this is not the tabernacle of Moses this is just a tent of some sort to shelter it from the weather and David put it up an ad hoc structure to cover the Ark then David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord and when David had finished offering burnt offerings and peace offerings he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts then he distributed among all the people among the whole multitude of Israel both the women and the men to everyone a loaf of bread a piece of meat and a cake of raisins so all the people departed everyone to his house then David returned to bless his household and Michael the daughter of Saul came out to meet David and said how glorious was the king of Israel today uncovering himself today in the eyes of the

maids of his servants as one of the base fellows shamelessly uncovers himself now some people think that she's referring to him actually you know dancing and whirling in such a way that his you know private parts were exposed and uncovered but that's not necessary uncovering himself could be an idiom that simply means not wearing the kind of dignity in public that a king ought to have but you know exposing himself to be a mere man behaving like an ordinary person not maintaining his decorum as a king ought to do she thought just acting like one of the ordinary base fellows so David said to Michael it was before Yahweh who chose me instead of your father and all his house to appoint me ruler over the people of Yahweh over Israel therefore I will play music before the Lord and I will even be more undignified than this and I will humble I will be humble in my own sight but as for the maidservants of whom you have spoken by them I will be held in honor so you think I've disgraced myself in front of the maidservants actually they're going to respect me but I'm not going to I'm not going to exalt myself I'll be humble in my own eyes remember your father Saul when he was little in his own eyes God made him king when he got puffed up God removed him I'm not going to make the same mistake I'm going to stay humble in my own eyes I'm not going to put on any false airs pretend to have a dignity that is phony I'm just going to be real before God I'm going to rejoice before God I'm going to sing I'm going to dance I'm going to play I'm going to be myself rather than something that you know my regal office some image that I'm supposed to be portraying here that's just not me I'm going to be real here and if you don't think that's sufficiently regal or dignified well if you don't respect me at least the maidens will the ones that you think won't therefore Michael the daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death and we discussed that last time because there is a statement later on I believe it's in chapter 22 where it talks about five children that it says Michael brought up for Adriel the Maholothite and as I said actually it's chapter 21 verse 8 it says in chapter 21.8 So the king took Armoni and Mephibosheth the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah whom she bore to Saul and the five sons of Michael the daughter of Saul whom she brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Maholothite now we're told that Michael had no children to the day of her death in chapter 6 verse 23 but here it talks about five sons that Michael the daughter of Saul brought up for Adriel and of course it was actually her sister Merab who was married to Adriel so these five sons are apparently the sons of Merab and Adriel now it's possible that Michael ended up raising them and brought them up for her brother-in-law maybe Merab died or something like that and so perhaps Michael did bring them up did be a surrogate or a stepmother or a foster mother to them I should say but they weren't her children they were Adriel's children and he was the husband of her older sister Merab so these children were not hers okay so that brings us to the end of chapter 6 we'll take a break and come back to 7