

Abner Secures the Kingdom for David

Call to Worship: Psalm 95:1-7a

1st Scripture: 2 Samuel 3:6-16

2nd Scripture: 2 Samuel 3:17-21

Hymn Insert- *Here I am to Worship*

Hymn Insert- *Blessed be Your Name*

Hymn #13- *O Worship the King!*

Introduction:

Following a sharp contention between Abner and Ishbosheth, Abner resolves to defect to David. And so, he sends messengers to David, asking him to make a covenant with Abner, whereby Abner would agree to transfer the kingdom over to David. David agrees, but only if one stipulation is met; Michal, Saul's daughter and David's first wife, must be returned to David. Under the order of Ishbosheth, Abner has Michal taken away from her husband, Paltiel, and is now preparing to secure a covenant with David.

This morning, we move on to consider the actions of Abner, as he organizes and arranges three critical meetings, in order to secure the kingdom for David.

I. Abner Secures the Kingdom for David

Having retrieved Michal for David, Abner then takes three critical steps:

- 1) He addresses the elders of Israel (vs. 17-18)
- 2) He addresses the tribe of Benjamin (vs. 19a)
- 3) He meets, face to face, with David (vs. 19b-21)

Let us then, consider all of these steps, individually, before seeking to process a few closing thoughts and applications, taken from the overall text.

1) Abner addresses the elders of Israel (17-18):

"Now Abner had communicated with the elders of Israel, saying, 'In time past you were seeking for David to be king over you. Now then, do it! For the Lord has spoken of David, saying, 'By the hand of My servant David, I will save My people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and the hand of all their enemies.'"

Clearly, if Abner were to fulfill his part of the covenant, in bringing the kingdom over to David, he would have to gain the approval of the elders of Israel. And so, he begins by meeting

with the elders, so as to accomplish that essential task. But, his words of motivation are very telling, as well, aren't they? Look at his two part motivation more carefully, for a few moments:

a) "In times past, you were seeking for David to be king over you. Now then, do it!"

Here we find that, although the Israelites had followed Ishbosheth, originally, they had expected and anticipated to make David their king! Indeed, they were seeking to make David their king! What does that tell us? Again, Abner was the chief hindrance to David becoming king! It was Abner, who had set up Ishbosheth as king, on the east side of the Jordan, compelling the eleven tribes to support his reign. But the people were set on making David king, from the outset, in accordance with God's promise through Samuel. And so, if Abner had not acted, and that for his own selfish reasons, all of Israel would have gotten behind David from the outset!

And now, as if to be doing the people a favor of some sort; now, when it is convenient for Abner because of his present opposition to Ishbosheth; now, when he is no longer able to secure his own power and influence over Israel, he acts as if he is doing everyone a favor! "You remember, following the death of Saul, when you wanted to make David your king, well, what are you waiting for! Go ahead, and do it now!" The door is open; nothing is standing in the way anymore; do what you have desired from the beginning!" Again, it is amazing to see how the one who had caused all of this mess, suddenly sets himself up as the mediator and reconciler; the sealer of the breach! He tears down the house, and then leads everyone to Home Depot, to buy the supplies, which are necessary to rebuild it! But again, God knows, and that is one of the critical messages given here, and all throughout Scripture! Men get over on men, and sometimes men get over on many men, and perhaps even all men....but men don't get over on God!

b) "For The Lord has spoken of David, saying, 'By the hand of My servant David, I will save My people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and the hand of all their enemies.'"

Well, isn't that just terrific! The people wanted David from the outset, but Abner (for his own selfish reasons, contrary to the revealed will of God, of which he was obviously not ignorant), sets up Ishbosheth to be king, when it is David, through whom God promises to give Israel the victory over the Philistines and all of their enemies. That being the case, "Why didn't you set David over Israel from the outset, Abner? Oh, wait a minute, you were never concerned about Israel, or David...or God, for that matter, were you? You were in it for Abner! The power, though short lived and not backed by God, was too tempting to you?"

Well, the people don't say that, after all, Abner is a strong and "to be feared" commander of the army. Rather, they take the motivation, which coming from any other pair of lips, would have been good, proper, and encouraging. What better desire could the Israelites have had? For, since Saul had been killed, the Philistines not only remained in existence; not only did they retain a thorn in Israel's side in some minor sense, but they still lived in some of the cities of Israel, which they had captured, when they killed Saul, and defeated Israel. And so, relief from that; deliverance from these heathen, who were presently a problem, along with all of Israel's other enemies, would be a significant motivation for the people to make David their king. And later on, we will find God using David, in part, to do that very thing! In fact, David stretched the borders of Israel, further than any other king, throughout the history of Israel! Indeed, God uses his chosen and anointed servant to conquer the enemies of Israel! And so, the elders of Israel gladly comply, accepting Abner's proposal, giving no attention to Abner's wicked and treacherous heart, which God will deal with, in due time. [see 1 Chronicles 12 also]

2) Abner addresses the tribe of Benjamin (19a):

Following his meeting with the elders of the tribes of Israel, we find in verse 19a, that Abner then arranges a meeting, specifically with the representatives of the tribe of Benjamin. "And Abner also spoke in the hearing of Benjamin." Why does Abner arrange a special meeting with Benjamin alone, apart from the remaining tribes? Well, I think the answer is obvious. Abner himself, and especially King Saul and now Ishbosheth, were from the tribe of Benjamin. And therefore, Abner would need to give special attention to Benjamin, in seeking to convince the tribe to support David, who was from the tribe of Judah, as their new king. Clearly, he would need to be a bit more sensitive to Benjamin, since they were the direct ancestral connection to Saul. In the past, the other tribes had already expressed a desire for David to reign, and so, to lump Benjamin into his meeting with the rest of Israel, could have been a poor decision, risking offending and losing Benjamin, in the process of bringing Israel over to David. They had a special familial interest in Saul and Ishbosheth. That said, we are not told of the content of Abner's message to Benjamin, but the clear implication (as we will see in a few moments), is that Benjamin was willing to receive David as his king.

3) Abner Meets Face to Face with David (19b-21)

Following then, his meeting with all of the tribes of Israel, Abner, having gathered the support of all of the tribes, goes on to meet with David. And the great benefit of having met with the tribal representatives first, is that Abner can now carry their support into this meeting, as a confirmation of what he had stated he could do, from the outset.

And so, we are told in verse 19b, "Then Abner also went to speak in the hearing of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel and the whole house of Benjamin." Clearly, Abner was not without a large measure of intelligence. He planned things well, indeed, cunningly well, and all seemed to be going right according to plan. Of course, the divine, "sovereignty of God" factor, will largely come into play, in a most realized sense, when we work through the remainder of this chapter (vs. 22ff), beginning next time, Lord willing.

"David, I have met with the elders of Israel, and they are ready to receive you as their king. They know that this is of the Lord. And of course, in case you are concerned about the tribe of Benjamin; the tribe of Saul's lineage, you have nothing to worry about there. I have also spoken with them, separately, and the whole house of Benjamin is on board with our plan."

Verses 20, "So Abner and twenty men with him came to David at Hebron. And David made a feast for Abner and the men who were with him." In formulating this covenant, which no doubt, had its great advantages for Abner as well, they feast together, as a confirmation of their union and commitment, concerning this important matter. [More than likely, the twenty men with Abner, were representatives of the eleven tribes].

Verse 21, "Then Abner said to David, 'I will arise and go, and gather all Israel to my lord the king, that they may make a covenant with you, and that you may reign over all that your heart desires.'"

Everything is going perfect, right according to plan. Abner and David have solidified their personal covenant, in the presence of several witnesses (again, probably representatives from the tribes of Israel), and now Abner will go and prepare to mediate the covenant between David and all Israel, so as to complete the agreement/pact. And finally, we are told, "So David sent Abner away, and he went in peace" (vs. 21b). And this last statement is particularly very important, because it serves as a preface to what happens in the next section of Scripture. When Joab murders Abner, it is important that the people know and understand that David had nothing to do with the murder. David was clear of the guilt of bloodshed, having covenanted with Abner,

and having sent him off peacefully, with no desire to harm him, whatsoever. And so ends this event, and everything seems to be moving in an ideal direction. What could possibly go wrong?

Abner has secured the kingdom for David. He has addressed the elders of Israel, and Benjamin as a whole, and he has come to David, with Michal, and presumably representatives from the various tribes. They make their covenant, solidified by the traditional feast, and Abner is off to arrange the ordination ceremony, as it were.

II. Closing Thoughts and Applications

Having then looked at the text, brethren, let us move on to consider a few relevant, concluding thoughts and applications:

1) Notice again, the hidden dimension, which lies behind all that is visible in this world. As the world turns, let us ever remind ourselves that a sovereign God watches on, and He orchestrates all things unto the fulfillment of His will.

In many ways, from a strategic standpoint, we can say that Abner was brilliant. Although he is one of the main antagonists, who has caused most of the problems that have existed in the present, he has spun his way into the position of "hero" and "reconciler," concerning David and the kingdom of Israel. He knew what to say and how to say it. He played on the original desires of the ten tribes of Israel, all of whom, desired and expected David to become king, after Saul's death. He motivates them by brining forth God's precious promises concerning David, who was to be Israel's great deliverer from present opposition and hardship, as it is now convenient for him, though he has opposed God all along, when he saw an opportunity for securing his own interests in the kingdom. He wisely separated Benjamin and spoke just the right words that they needed to hear, so as to support and receive David as their king. And finally, he has come to David, carrying the keys of the kingdom, as it were, and he is well received, and given a feast, in celebration of, and in the solidifying of their covenant. He has duped everyone, and will more than likely be given a favorable position in the new kingdom, for his labors. Though there is a finely hidden thread of chaos, caused by him, in all of this, he will manage to eat all of the royal delicacies, on David's side of the fence, as he just had on Ishbosheths.

But....but...God sees, doesn't He! And God is no fool! We may get over on everyone else in the entire world, but we can never, ever get over on God, can we? And though He is patient; and though He permits for a time, His judgment will not be withheld. God will deal with

Abner, at the height of his sense of security and rest. After He has used Abner for His own purposes, God will release Abner, into the hands of a vengeful and insubordinate Joab!

Friends, no one is getting away with anything in this world. Every last sin must and will be accounted for! You may pull the wool over everyone else's eyes, but God sees, God knows, and God will bring about a day of reckoning. The only hope for mankind is the Lord Jesus Christ! He is the only way of being reconciled to God, for all of the sinful, ungodly things that we have done. Oh, you may not fear your parents, friends. And you may not fear the police and the government, and anyone else in this world...and you may fool all of these, together. But you ought to fear God! You ought to fear the One, who holds your very life breath in His hand, and who is able to cast both body and soul into hell, forever. Repent, and seek God, in Christ! Let your reckoning be done in the Savior, who was once for all time, crucified as a substitute for sinners; even for sinners of the worst kind! Find pardon and forgiveness in Christ!

2) Recognize again the damage that one man can cause. We are told that Israel was preparing to make David king; they expected it and desired it, and yet, one man steps in and hinders the whole process, because of his own selfish desires. Abner sets up Ishbosheth as king, in Mahanaim. Oh, consider the dangers of selfish desires and selfish ambition! Consider how such a focus on the part of man has caused all manner of ruin and hardship in our world. Nations have fallen because of such sinful desires! When man wants to be God; to receive the praises that belong to God; to covet and worship the material things, which God has ultimately created, disaster ensues!

And on the flip side, consider the power of even one soul, who is bent on serving Christ; who is bent on putting the interests of others, above his own (Philip. 2). Consider a converted Apostle Paul, or better yet, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself! Oh brethren, the selfless, God honoring, Christ centered, other's focused soul, is a deadly weapon in the hands of God. Such a one is likely to tear down strongholds for Christ! Be such a weapon! Bear such a cross! Consider the joy set before us, beyond this life, and live with a heavenly mindset, here and now!

3) And finally, consider again, the finite and yet, glorious reflection of Christ, in David. Ishbosheth could not deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines and all of her enemies. Only David could! God had appointed David for that very purpose. And he will do that in the upcoming chapters. But Christ, in the far better and more eternal sense, is pictured here, is He not? There is no other deliverer for mankind, than The Lord Jesus Christ! There is only One

Way, One Truth and One life; there is only One way to the Father; One way of absolute victory over every enemy; the world, the flesh, the devil and death itself, and that is Jesus Christ! And brethren, we who have come to put our faith and trust in Him, will not be put to shame! He will prevail! He will come through! He will deliver! He is our Rock, our Defense, our Strong Tower, our Shield, and our Deliverer! He is our only hope in times of persecution and affliction. He is our only hope, in the midst of any manner of suffering, even from the deadliest diseases...none of which, can steal away our resurrection in Him. He is our glorious hope of perfection and a completed salvation/sanctification, such that we can look at the remaining defects and urges of sin, which still reside in our flesh, as dying parasites, who are powerless in the long run, indeed, breathing their last breaths, as I speak. All that remains corrupted, will be made perfect, when we see Him! We know the end of the story, don't we?! "What we will be, I know not, but when we see Him as He is, we will be like Him!" Christ is our deliverer, from the Philistines, and all of our enemies!

AMEN!!!

Benediction: Jude 1:24-25