

In this current series, *Pursuing A Heart Like David's*, we are now up to *Part 7* today. Last week in *Part 6* we ended by covering the poetic type of lamentation, a kind of poetic eulogy, if you will, that is really better stated, more accurately as an elegy. That's actually what it's called. It lamented the death of Saul and Jonathan.

I thought I'd go through that one more time. It's quite unique to see how David expressed himself in this, how he was moved to say what he did concerning Saul and his very close friend, Jonathan, a kind of friendship, in that case, once in a lifetime for him, and those are very, very rare to that extent, to that degree that he's describing here.

Let's begin by picking that up once again and looking at that in **2 Samuel 1:22**. It says, **From the blood of the slain, from the abundance of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan did not turn back, the sword of Saul did not return empty.** So again, what an incredible thing here. He's including Saul in this knowing that Saul was out to get his life, to take his life from him, and yet he upheld him at the king. All because of God. All because of his relationship, his thinking toward God.

I was thinking this morning here, what an incredible thing to have such a mindset toward someone who's against you, who is out to take your life, and yet because he's being worked with by God because he was set up and established by God, David had a special feeling toward him, in that respect, in the sense of recognizing that authority that was given to him. Because it was a matter of his thinking toward God and so he upheld him.

I was thinking, what an incredible thing. Here is someone that's against you, out to kill you, and I was thinking about the Church then and how unique it is that we have those within the Church, we're in a unique fellowship, and I think sometimes of the problems that have sometimes arisen, well, a lot of times through history through time in the Church. But relationships within the Church of people who are supposed to be for one another, and can't do this, have a difficult time doing this, having a right mindset because of their thinking toward God.

That's what should motivate us to have right relationships with others, to think right toward others, and yet sometimes, far too often people can fall, we can fall flat on our face in that kind of thinking. And to me, this is an awesome thing to contemplate, to think about, to realize here is someone is out to take your life and yet you look to the positive, you look to what was accomplished by them. How much more should that be done within the Church, to look at the good side, to look at the positive things that people are doing, to look at how God is working with someone and what God is doing, to keep that in the forefront.

That doesn't mean we don't have difficulties or problems or things that have to be dealt with from time to time. But overall, even within the midst of that we should see the good, the positive, the right because of what God's doing in them. Then it's in God's hand and God's responsibility to take care of His own people, to take care of those whom He's called.

That's the story of David over and over again here, that David knew that, that David believed in that, that David trusted in that. Yet he had a part in all that, but still, he did it in an incredible way with an incredible spirit and a right mind and putting God first and being very cautious then in what he did and how he did it.

This comes up over and over again in David's life. I just think within the Church, if we could do that so much better, and we could do that so much better if we focused upon it in this fashion. To realize then the responsibility upon us to uphold that, to support that, perhaps is a better way of even saying it, what God is doing and to see God in the picture of all these things.

We're all in God's hands, and in time God will bring all things to the surface and they will be dealt with if they need to be dealt with. At other times, God will take care of them Himself. Because sometimes there aren't easy answers to certain situations and there's not enough to deal with, to work with. Perhaps a gut feeling to know something is not right, but hoping that a person will repent and turn around and get things right in their life. But if they don't and if it doesn't come to the surface through different means that it oftentimes does, most often does, God takes care of those things. God will take care of it in His own way, in His own time.

We have to be careful that we don't interject ourselves into those kinds of situations in life, whether we be in the ministry or whether we be a friend, just one within the fellowship, and we have to be careful of what we do and how we do it.

From the blood of the slain, from the abundance of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan did not turn back, the sword of Saul did not return empty. Saul and Jonathan were loved and pleasant in their lives. So, he didn't bring up the bad things. What's the point of doing that? It's important, especially when someone is being worked with by God, to look at those things that are being worked with, those things that are positive, those things that a person has done in the sense of continuing on in the battle.

I look at the Church and I think of people who have continued through the fight through some of the worst of times in the history of the Church in the sense of that which has been thrown at the Church because of mass media today and the things that are written out there, the things that are said, the things that are twisted and distorted and people tend to kind of believe what they want to believe anyway because of the prejudice of their own heart and their own minds. They just don't see that in themselves and that's understandable.

But we of all people, to continue in the fight, to continue fighting. What an awesome thing to see that and to see that that takes effort, that that takes work, that that takes dedication,

that takes a mindset that is unique. To appreciate that then in one another, to love that in one another. And so, this is the kind of thinking of David.

Saul and Jonathan were loved and pleasant in their lives; in their death they were not divided. So, showing that bond that was between a father and a son. In this particular case here, Jonathan knew full well about his father, and yet he supported David, he loved David, had that unique relationship with him, but he supported his father as well through this period of time.

They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions. O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet and luxury, who put ornaments of gold on your apparel. So again here, looking at what they did have, what was given to them, the uniqueness of having a king now and what it was meaning for the country and how things were made better because of that.

It's oftentimes easy to look at what we don't have, to find fault with... I think of today's society, today's world and all the backstabbing and fighting that goes back and forth. People don't try to see good things that are accomplished or positive things that are accomplished. That's a sad state of affairs, it truly is, and just distorted minds, distorted thinking.

So anyway, he tries to help people focus on the right things. **How the mighty have fallen in the midst of the battle! Jonathan was slain in your high places.** So again, it goes back to Jonathan. There was more of that bond, that friendship with Jonathan, and his lamenting, his sorrow was deeply attached to that, obviously. **I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan.** So even after death here, because of what happened, tore him up inside. This was something that was just flowing out of him in what he had to say to others.

You have been very pleasant to me. In other words, a highly gratifying relationship is what he's saying here, a highly gratifying friendship. **Your love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.** Now, this can be misconstrued for what is being said here or not seen in the right light of what he's saying. I think it'd be good to come back to that in a moment.

But it goes on to say here, just finishing this, **How the mighty have fallen, and the weapons of war perished!** It's like this thinking about war and what does it accomplish, and all the fighting that goes on. And yet it goes on in life, it goes on in the world, and so he has this lamentation as well. You'd think, "And for what? What did it achieve? What did it accomplish?"

Anyway, their friendship was strong, speaking of David and Jonathan, and they had that unique bond of friendship here. It doesn't mean, it's not saying here, in essence, that a love to him as man was better than that of a woman. It's not saying that. It's not referring to that at all. It's making a comparison here about two men who had a love toward each other that was surpassing the love of women, what they were noted for. I'll come back to that in a moment here. But that's basically what he's comparing here because people were noted more for, are noted more for compassion and mercy and a bond and a love toward others in an easier way

than most men are, as far as the world is concerned, because of the make up and the way the world is.

But anyway, it reminds me of what it says in **Romans 5:6-8**. I thought it'd be good to go through that as well at this moment, to just reflect on some of this. It says, **For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.** God desires for us to consider these things when it comes to a willingness of others to sacrifice themselves, that kind of love that surpasses human love, as a whole, and yet this is something that God wants us to think about and reminds us of our calling, reminds us of what we were like in times past.

“When we were yet without strength,” without God’s help in our lives, in essence, without His spirit, without His guidance and direction, and didn’t have this ability, didn’t have the blessing and the ability of the forgiveness of sin, didn’t have the ability to have a relationship with God. It says, “In due time Christ died for the ungodly.” So, we understand that as him being our Passover and the ability to be forgiven of sin. But it wants us to reflect upon that kind of love that he was willing to go through all of this and that God was willing to go through all this concerning His own Son.

For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man someone would even dare to die. So, it’s showing here about human beings and about mankind as a whole. It’s saying here there are occasions in life where some are willing to die for someone else. It says, these things happen from time to time in the world. It’s not a norm for human beings to do these kinds of things, in the sense of giving their life for someone else.

And yet this embodies, in large part, much of the relationship of Jonathan and David, and a willingness to give their life for each other. That’s basically the kind of bond they had. They were that close that they would be willing to do something like that. They were men of war. They went out in battle. Again, they were willing to do that and in battles a lot of times you’ll find situations of people who are given medals and so forth because they go above and beyond, meaning above and beyond normal human nature, in the sense of what they will do for their friends, for their comrades, those with whom they’re fighting, and because of a bond that they have amongst themselves.

Yet this friendship here with Jonathan that David had was of that type but even stronger because they shared everything, in that sense, in their lives, in their thinking, in their discussion. We see that in how they were willing to do the things they did when Jonathan’s own father is out to kill David, and that which they share together.

It says, **But God committed His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.** So again, it’s that kind of love that God has to us, that Christ has to us that’s far beyond that of human life. Yet He has it for all of us. When He calls us, He has a desire for us to succeed. When He calls us, He has a desire for us to begin a process that can lead us into His family.

This is the mindset we need to have for each other, toward each other, that God desires each and every one of us to succeed, to come through all this, to be in battle together. Because that's what we're in. We're in a spiritual warfare. We fight day in and day out and people go through all kinds of things in their life to be molded and fashioned, to be transformed. We need to realize we're all in this together. We go through some difficult times. We go through hardship and to respect that, in a sense, admire that in one another, a willingness to do those things for the right reasons in this age at this time and to uphold those and to see the positive in those things.

So again, what an incredible thing to have that kind of a mind and to pursue a heart like David in that regard.

So, when it talks about here, the "surpassing the love of women," I think of an analogy in that respect, of what Herbert W Armstrong made concerning human love and that of a mother. There is that of love that is unique and strong and binding that begins as a mother carries a child before birth, and there is that bond, that uniqueness, again, that mothers are known for. Yet he showed the flaw and the weakness in that, in part because even there a mother doesn't have that same love toward other children.

Again here, to realize the love of God that's unique and different far above and beyond that of human life, and so basically this is a part of what David is talking about when he says that this friendship that he and Jonathan had surpasses the love of women, that they're noted for. So, it was something beyond that, in that sense, of something that just is a part of a way of thinking as far as a physical human thinking and love, a mother toward a child and so forth, and in general anyway compared to that of men.

Now, these are men of war. They're fighting. They fight together and that's a unique kind of thinking anyway, a unique kind of mind, mindset, and then to build this bond and friendship that they had that was started after the death of Goliath.

So anyway, wanted to start there again today and now continuing in the story flow.

2 Samuel 2:1 it says, **It followed after this that David enquired of the Eternal, saying, Should I go up into any of the cities of Judah? The Eternal answered him, Go up.** So, we already know the process here of what David used to know what to do. This is incredible to think about. He wanted to do things so very much in a way that was pleasing to God. He kept God in the forefront and so he wanted to do things in the right way.

He would go before God, in that respect, call a priest and go through this process that we've already looked at, because he wanted to know how he should do things, not by his own way of thinking it should be done but what does God want of him, what does God say in these decisions that he had to make in his life, so, he would continually. That was his mindset.

And that's, again, something that we need to focus upon in our lives, to make sure we're doing that in life, to make sure that we're putting God first. What would God, what does God want us

to do? Do we pray about it? How deeply do we look, in that regard, of keeping God first? Because that's a part of the process.

He's saying, "Should I go up to the cities of Judah?" He didn't just take it upon himself just to go up now, but it was a question in mind because it seemed to him, and God very well and very likely leading him in that anyway, to come into his mind to ask such a question.

Is this the time now to go up into Judah? And the Eternal answered him, Go up. Then David said, Where shall I go up? He said, To Hebron. So, whether they asked of this back and forth thing, generally was asking about different areas and so forth, and that would be the answer.

So, David went up there and his two wives also, Ahinoam of Jezreel, and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. Also, David brought up the men who were with him, every man with his household. So they dwelt in the cities of Hebron. So, they went to this particular little region there and that's where they lived, that's where they began to dwell, to make their homes, and all those that were fighting with him through this period of time, and all that they owned and families and so forth. So, a big step of something to do in this particular case.

Verse 4—Then the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. So, now is this knowledge or this thinking of David asking for guidance of what to do and now David is made king over Judah. At one point in time here this began to go out to more of Israel here, of the knowledge of what God had done in anointing him a long time ago by Samuel to be king over Israel.

Right now, he's king over Judah. So, this knowledge had gone out and this thinking had gone out - at least things had been said. **And they told David, saying, The men of Jabesh-gilead...** Now, this is east of Jordan in Gad. So, if you look at a map it's kind of interesting some of the travelling they did, and here they are in an area north and going east then of the Jordan river. So, this is what they're talking about, the people who lived in this particular are of **Jabesh-gilead**, east of Jordan in the territory or the area of Gad, **were the ones who buried Saul.**

So, David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said to them, You are blessed of the Eternal, for you have showed this kindness to your lord, to Saul, and have buried him.

So, what an incredible thing. He's showing them that they had the whereabouts, if you will, the thinking, the proper thinking here of something that was noble, that was right, that was good, that they were willing to put themselves in harms way to go down to get Saul's body and to take care of it properly, to show that respect and so forth in their thinking. And so, this is a part of the story. Again, this mindset, this thinking here of what David was willing to recognize.

He says, "Here you have done this. This is a noble thing." Now, they weren't united, in that respect, as far as all of Israel and Judah. Judah was separate here, in that respect, in the beginning, and so this is where his strength began to come from, was because of what he was doing in Judah, and they acknowledged him as being their king. It wasn't happening with the

rest of Israel though. But yet David humbled himself in that respect and did the right thing in the sense of telling individuals, “Look, we recognize, I recognize you have done the right thing. You have done a noble thing, and you’re blessed of the Eternal for this.” Awesome!

Now may the Eternal show kindness and truth to you. So, what a mindset to have toward others, even if they’re against you. But I think especially within the Church, shouldn’t this be much easier for us if we have a situation where something flares up with two people? I don’t care if it’s in a marriage even, because these kinds of things happen. They’ve happened many a time in times past throughout the Church, and probably happening to various degrees even now because of carnal human nature. Or with others within the Church, somebody gets upset about something, somebody, something was said, and somebody takes offense to it. Not even sometimes even understanding what was really said. But it’s easy sometimes because of what people have experienced in their life, they’re sensitive in certain areas. You may not know it but they are and so they can have something against you and begin to think toward you in a wrong way and you begin to feel some of that, something is wrong here. Something when you’re around them or talking or whatever, something you just kind of feel, that something isn’t right.

Well, what an incredible thing here is we can go past those things, and if others who get caught up in that kind of thing can quickly get a hold of themselves and pursue a heart like David’s, to pursue a right kind of mind toward God. Because that’s what it’s about.

Again here, this desire for someone else. Prayerfully, they receive the help from God to be blessed of God. We’ve all been blessed of God because we’ve been called now to respond to that and hopefully be blessed to be able to respond to the right things and get a hold of themselves so that they don’t get hurt by these things that could hurt and carry someone away or cut them off from God’s spirit. We don’t want that for anyone in God’s Church.

Now may the Eternal show kindness and truth to you. What a desire for one another, that we don’t want to see individuals get cut off from God’s truth. That’s a spiritual matter then, and be genuine in our thinking about that because we have their interests at heart.

I also will repay you with this kindness because you have done this thing. David is letting them know, “I want to help you. I want to repay this kindness to you.” What an incredible conversation here and desire of something he’s showing, a genuine heart and care and concern about others who really aren’t supporting him at this point. But he’s still desirous of them.

Again, to put this in the context of the Church because this was a physical nation and yet David was willing to humble himself to say something like this to someone else that he knew wasn’t for him, and if we can do that then when something happens where someone has said something to us, done something to us, and perhaps had a bad day, whatever it was, but something flared up, and for both parties then to work beyond that and say the right things, to do the right things that cause or work toward creating peace, if you will. We have to be

peacemakers and that takes effort, that takes work, and it takes humility to do something like that.

So, he says, “I also will repay you this kindness because you have done this thing.” So, always very positive and speaking the truth, speaking the right desire that he had in his heart and his mind toward someone else who was a part of a congregation, the congregation of Israel in a physical way as a nation.

Verse 7—Now, therefore, let your hands be strengthened and be valiant: for your master Saul is dead. So again here, he’s showing he laments this. Saul is dead and this desire he had toward them, toward all of Israel.

And also the house of Judah has anointed me king over them. He’s telling them what’s taken place, being honest and truthful.

That’s what we need to be in our relationships with one another, honest and truthful. Too often in relationships people try to hide things, they’re still trying to hide things and hold back, not say something that might offend. But if we’re working and seeking to create peace in a relationship then we’re just going to speak from the right heart and a right mind and a right spirit and people are going to sense that, or at least they have the opportunity to do that. Whether they do or don’t, that’s in their hands.

It was in Gad, the nation of Gad, if you will, or the people, the tribe of Gad.

It says, again here, **Your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah has anointed me king over them. But Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul’s army...** Now, he’s the one that David chastised when he went down into the camp and could have killed Saul. But he didn’t. It wasn’t in his mind, in his heart. He took his spear and the water container, canteen type of device, whatever, and skins that generally held water and took them with him, and then showed that to them across the way when he revealed himself and what he had done.

Then he chastened Abner and basically told him you let this happen and you are the primary one, especially because he was over the army and he was right there beside him, you’re worthy of death because of this event. So, Abner didn’t have any fond feelings toward him at all because he was, in a sense, ridiculed before David by this and all the people heard it. So, anyway, pride, it gets in the way, pride.

But Abner, the son of Ner, commander of Saul’s army took Ish-bosheth the son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim. So again, he’s showing him here that this is the one that Abner has supported, the army has supported, and so, basically, decision time for people to make and the like. He’s being honest with them, this is what they’ve done. They’ve taken him now to be king of Israel. Anyway, he’s just being open about all this. It’s all you can do. Others have to make the choices.

Verse 9—There he made him king over Gilead. Basically, here he's pointing out something that I'm sure was in his mind, in his heart that they'd be able to see. But they couldn't. That Abner did this. He didn't say the Eternal did it. It was a matter that this is something that Abner has done on his own as support from the army because the majority of the tribes there with their army that made up Saul's army, here they've gone to the side, Abner has given his support to Ish-bosheth. He's saying here, in essence, he made him king over Israel.

He's saying, **There he made him king over Gilead, over the Ashurites, over Jezreel, over Ephraim, over Benjamin, and over all Israel, except Judah. Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned two years.** So, it didn't last long. It was only for two years. This is a part of the story flow we're going through, of what transpired in that time. He had the support of Abner. He is the one who made him king. The army supported that then. He definitely wasn't going to support David because of his feelings toward David.

Only the house of Judah followed David. And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months. So, this went on for some time. There are battles that went on in between and this is a part of the story we go through. There's not a lot written on some of this. But basically here, showing that Ish-bosheth only reigned for two years. We'll come to that story later, of what took place in time here. But David, in this particular case, reigned over the house of Judah for a continuing period of seven years and six months, seven and a half years.

Now, Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon. Then Joab, the son of Zeruah... Now, it's stated that Zeruah was David's sister, and Joab was her son and making him David's nephew. So, this is a relationship that's here. We'll talk about the brothers here a little bit as we go along as well. But here Joab had this relationship then being the nephew of David, and he had been with David for a long time, as had the brothers. This is the relationship that's going on here.

Then Joab, the son of Zeruah, and the servants of David, went out, and met them by the pool of Gibeon. So, they sat down, one on one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool. So, there wasn't much trust. There was this moment of time of still being single peoples, in that sense. They knew their history. They were only willing to go so far because now they had two kings, one for Israel, one for Judah, and there's this contention that's going on. They still had these friendships.

It kind of reminds me a little bit of some of the stories you hear that took place during a time of war here in the United States when people, brothers and parents and different ones on each side, were fighting with each other. Yet there were times of certain kinds of truces that were unique. All kinds of stories like that in history in that horrifying war where so many were killed. Yet this is kind of the result of what we're seeing here and still this relationship.

So, they sat down, one on one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool. Not beside each other because there wasn't that kind of trust yet. It was like, where is this going to go, can we talk certain things out, what's going to happen?

Then Abner said to Joab, Now let the young men rise up and compete before us. So, most likely in his heart and mind not a thing of peace by any measure, but here we're going to put certain ones on your side and certain one on this side and let them have this battle. Not a battle, but a contest before us to fight, to have a fight, have it out. Not a real good idea but better than the two armies going against each other at this point all out.

This is what he had to say, **Then Abner said to Joab, Now let the young men rise up and compete before us. So, Joab said, Let them rise up. So they rose up and went out by number, being twelve from Benjamin, followers of Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul, and twelve from the servants of David.** So, twelve Benjamites and twelve from Judah were going together in this competition, if you will, and have it out.

Now, this is what followed: **Verse 16—Now, each one grasped his opponent by the head.** They all did the same thing. They'd all been trained in war together in times past. They all knew each other's strategies, tactics, and so forth, but this is what transpired. So, if you see one reach for a sword, what's the other one going to do? Or a knife? This is what took place on a massive scale all at one time. **Now, each one grasped his opponent by the head and thrust his sword in the opponent's side, so they fell down together.** All twenty-four. Incredible!

Therefore, the place was called The Field of Sharp Swords, which is in Gibeon. A horrifying thing to take place right there on the spot. Definitely not a kind of contest that was supposedly going to take place. This was a battle, and it was going to be a battle to death. Some were going to die. But in this case—incredible—all twenty-four died.

So, there was a very fierce battle that day, and Abner and the men of Israel were beaten before the servants of David. So again here, this thing that happened over and over again, that David was always blessed in the battles. His army. It says "servants" but it's referring to his men, fighting men, army, part of his army. It says here that they received, they had favor. They had the strength. They'd go into different battles and they'd have the strength. They'd go into battles and wouldn't lose one person because God was with them and God blessed them and it might be a horrible battle.

Just like things we go through in the Church at times. We may go through some horrible battles, but we're blessed and we're blessed in a fellowship, to be able to stay together, depending on choices and decisions that each of us makes and that is a battle.

Verse 18—Now, the three sons of Zeruiah were there, Joab, Abishai, again, who had volunteered to go down into Saul's camp with David, if you remember the story here backing up

a little bit. Here they're brothers. **Joab, Abishai, and Asahel.** The three of them are brothers, nephews of David, and here they're all together.

And Asahel was as swift on foot as a wild gazelle, or a gazelle. So, it's telling here that he was young, he was fast, he was quick, he was agile, and it tells here what happened then. **So, Asahel pursued Abner.** So, in this battle that was taking place David's men were gaining the upper hand there with Joab, as a leader over them in essence at this point, and the one brother took out after Abner. He was quick, he stayed on his heels. He was right there, so close to him that Abner was able to talk to him, holler out at him at different times there.

It tells why here, what took place. **...and in following he did not turn to the right hand or to the left from following after Abner.** He pursued. He didn't give up. He just kept at him, and it talks about how swift and agile he was, and he didn't let go.

Now, Abner looked behind himself, and said, Are you Asahel? And he answered, I am. So, Abner said to him, Turn away to your right hand or to your left, and seize one of the young men, and take his armor for yourself. It's like, "Don't keep after me. Go ahead and go after one of the other and go after their armor, but quit pursuing me." **But Asahel would not turn away from following him.**

So, Abner said again to Asahel, Turn away from following me. Why should I strike you to the ground? He felt confident in his abilities. He was a strong man of war. That's why he was a leader of the military there, had been for a long time under Saul and noted for that, and strong in war. So, he, in his mind, he's going to kill him if he continues doing this, and he's trying to reason with him, "Quit doing this."

There's this kind of a strange relationship, in that respect, that they're kind of a family and yet they're battling. It's kind of like the war I mentioned here in the States between the states, the Civil War.

Why should I strike you to the ground? Then how could I face your brother, Joab? So, there is still this relationship of brotherly kind of thinking toward one another within the tribes of Israel. It's like, "How could I face him if I have to strike you dead?"

Anyway, going on here it says, **However, he refused to turn away.** So again, Asahel wouldn't stop pursuing. **Therefore, Abner struck him in the stomach with the blunt end of the spear so that the spear came out of his back, and he fell down there and died on the spot.** He wouldn't stop pursuing him, so he did what he felt he had to do, Abner did, he killed him. Otherwise, it was going to be him. So, he stopped to have battle with him.

So it was, as each came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood still. And Abishai also pursued Abner. The sun was going down when they come to the hill of Ammah, which is before Giah up the road to the wilderness of Gibeon. So, this pursuit was going on. The other brother had been pursuing so he continues to pursue after him as well.

Now, the children of Benjamin regrouped behind Abner and banded together. Here they are, they've come together now of this tribe of Benjamin and they're going to square off now in battle. ...and they banded together, took their stand on the top of a hill. So again, militarily if you will, looking down, the others have to come up the hill, they have the advantage, in that sense, of being able to fight from the top and fighting downward. It's going to take a lot more energy to come up the hill.

Here they are ready to do this battle, to take this stand. **Then Abner called to Joab, and said, Shall the sword devour forever?** "Are we going to continue fighting where people just continue to die? Are we going to continue to keep this up?" **Do you not know that it will be bitter in the latter end? How long will it be until you tell the people to return from pursuing their kinsman?** So again, this dilemma of battle and fighting and how long is this going to continue on.

Then Joab said, As God lives, unless you had spoken, then surely all the people would have continued pursuing their kinsmen until the morning. It's like at this point here, "If you hadn't said this, if you hadn't stopped and asked this," in essence, because that's what he's saying, "How long are we going to keep this up and how long are we going to have kinsmen fight with each other?" So, basically the response is, "If you hadn't stopped to ask this, to put a stop to this at this point and just know that my men wouldn't have stopped until all you were dead before morning." In other words, he's showing here a willingness to talk, a willingness to go over some of this.

That's why it says here, "Then Joab answered, as God lives, unless you had spoken," unless you had said this, "we would have pursued you until you're all gone, until you're all dead." **Then surely all the people would have continued pursuing their kinsmen until the morning.**

So, Joab blew a trumpet, and all the people stood still. They stopped because of what Abner had said that they would do, that they would stop this killing of each other. Joab was of that mindset, he was willing to offer this before Abner at this point to see what dialogue would follow.

It says, **they quit chasing Israel and did not continue fighting any longer.** So, he stopped it there just because of the request that was made.

Verse 29—Then Abner and his men... It shows a reflection here in Joab as well, of having been around David for so long there were things that he was picking up on or had picked up on, had a heart and a mind that was willing to think along those lines of things that David had reflected in his life. It had an impact on Joab. Good, you know, that people can learn those things, can learn from others, to see things of the right way of doing something. This was a part of Joab's thinking at this point.

It says, **Verse 29—Then Abner and his men went on all that night through the plain, crossed over the Jordan, and went through all Bithron, and they came to Mahanaim.**

So, Joab returned from following Abner. So again, rather than just continuing in the battling and the fighting and killing of kinsmen. **And when he had gathered all the people together, there were missing of David's servants nineteen men,** so now there is loss, something they hadn't been experiencing. But now they're fighting kinsmen, and this is something that took place then, whereas large numbers of those that had been in Abner had died, in this particular case here they had lost nineteen men **and Asahel.** So, his own brother was in the midst of this.

But the servants of David had struck down of Benjamin and Abner's men three hundred and sixty men who died. So, still a victory, and yet they lost a lot of men. A difficult thing for them to go through, to address at this particular point, especially now because it's his own brother.

Then they took up Asahel, and buried him in his father's tomb, which was in Bethlehem. Then Joab and his men went all night, and they arrived in Hebron at daybreak. So, this was a long way from where they were living. They had pursued a great distance away going into Israel, the area of Israel at that particular moment in time. I'm not talking about Judah, but farther north there. Some of those regions are quite a way a way when you talk about crossing the Jordan and some of the fighting that went on in Gibeon and some of these areas.

Then Joab and his men went all night, and they arrived in Hebron at daybreak. So again here, after all this fighting and so forth, and the short reprieve here of taking care of the dead, they went all night until they got back to Hebron.

Now, **2 Samuel 3:1.** It says, **Now, there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David.** This battling that continued on for a long time, back and forth, back and forth, Israel and Judah, with the rest of Israel to the north.

It says here, **But David grew stronger and stronger.** God continued to give him favor. David continued to grow stronger in this process. It says here, **and the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker.**

Now, the next few verses tell of the children born to David in Hebron. We'll skip over some of that and continue on with verse 6.

It was while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, that Abner was strengthening himself on the house of Saul. So again, this is about Abner. It's about his power. He was the one, as a military leader; this has happened so often throughout history, that military leaders have determined who will be a puppet kind of leader, in that respect, over the people, while they're the ones with the power behind them. And as long as they have that backing of the army...

This is something that's going on right now in certain parts of the world, and it's gone on for ages. This is the mindset then of what Abner and what he was doing in the background, but the actual power behind the rule, behind the throne. It's showing here that he was actually then in this process here strengthening himself more and more through the house of Saul, if you will.

Now, Saul had a concubine, whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah. Then it was asked of Abner, and this is by Ish-bosheth, who was the king, he asked then, goes and asks Abner, questions him, **Why have you gone into my father's concubine?** Why have you taken her? So, it was done not in a supportive way or not a positive way in any light. His father was dead but still he took offense by this, and then is asking him or confronting him, if you will, by questioning him, questioning Abner.

Then Abner became very angry. He was highly indignant. That's basically the bottom line here. He was highly indignant that this would be asked of him. He was highly justified in his own mind in anything, basically, that he wanted to do anyway, so this is what was taking place.

He became very angry, highly indignant, if you will, **at the words of Ish-bosheth, and said, Am I a dog's head that belongs to Judah?** So, in other words, "Who am I? Why are you treating me like this, questioning me like this, treating me like this?" **Am I a dogs head that belongs to Judah?** You know, "Giving me away to Judah, to David's reign, to David's rule over Judah?"

All this time I have shown loyalty to the house of Saul your father, to his brothers and to his friends. So, he's bringing up the fact that "I have been a loyal servant. I've been loyal throughout to Saul's house, to the military and the fighting of battles and so forth for Saul," and now for Ish-bosheth, "and to you," in other words.

He's going through this dialogue, and so **to his brothers and to his friends, and have not delivered you into the hand of David.** So, in other words, basically, he's telling him, "I have that power! I didn't do that from the beginning. I haven't been doing that. I have been supporting you, the descendant of Saul, supported your family, supported Saul in his life, and now you're treating me like this? He was highly indignant and thought much more of himself, in that respect, and the power that he had. He knew that he had power and had been giving power to Ish-bosheth.

It says, **Yet you charge me today with a fault concerning this woman?** So, it's like, basically asking the king, "Who are you? After all that I have done, after all that I have given, and now, what are you doing? Why are you treating me this way?" So again, highly indignant by what was said. Whether that be right or wrong in what happened is evidently just something that Ish-bosheth felt wasn't proper for whatever reasons, felt that he should have been perhaps asked beforehand. So, whatever the reasons, we don't know, but again, he was highly stirred up by this and highly stirred up against this Ish-bosheth.

His reaction was then pretty strong in what he had to say to the king he had placed in power there. He had done this for some time here. Again, his reign was very short, two-year period of time. This is what was added, and this is what took place at that time.

He said, **May God do so for Abner, and more also, if I do not do for David as the Eternal has sworn to him.** So, now he's bringing up that which is knowledge, which has been given for

whatever state at whatever point that it was, that which had gone out especially after David had been made king over Judah, and then this is stated. He's saying, "God will take care of him if I don't do this now." In other words, he's saying, "This is what is going to happen. This is what is going to take place." ...to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul, and set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan to Beersheba.

Again here, pretty strong reaction here for this being questioned and his being so indignant by what had taken place, by what had been said to him and how he was made to feel before the king for this when he himself, he knew his power, that power that he'd given to put the king in position there in the first place. But he didn't support David because of the past and because of his feelings toward David.

Verse 11—Then he could not respond to Abner another word, because he was afraid him. So, it finally struck him what he had done, what he had said, and the way he'd gone about it, because here is Abner's response and he realizes his life is in jeopardy now and recognizing here what Abner says he's going to do. It's not a small thing.

Then Abner sent out messengers on his behalf to David, saying, To whom does this land belong? So, he continued by saying, Make your treaty with me, then indeed, my hand will be with you to bring all Israel to you. So, all of a sudden now there is this willingness to communicate because he realizes here he's not going to support Ish-bosheth anymore. It so riled him up that his anger toward the king he'd established was greater than his anger in the past toward David. And so, not strong enough to take over the kingdom because of their feelings toward the kings and what had come down through Saul, and he knew he wasn't of that lineage. So again here, a time of following through with something that he thought he would use, "The Eternal has said that David was to be king, so now I'm going to support that." He didn't before, but now he's going to because it fits him better to do so, to bring all of Israel then down to be a part with Judah.

He says, **Make this treaty with me.** Let's stop the fighting. Let's stop the battling. Let's end this. He said, **Then my hand, indeed, will be with you to bring all Israel to you.** Now, this didn't happen right away as we read through some of the story, because it tells how long David reigned in Judah, and all Israel didn't come together right away by any measure. It was a slow process, but nevertheless, things began to change here, and this was the turning point, in that respect.

So, he replied, Good. I will make a treaty with you. But one thing I will require of you. You shall not see my face unless you first bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come into my presence. So, in other words, "When you come, she'd better be there or this isn't going to happen."

So, David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, saying, Give me my wife, Michal, who was betrothed to me for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines. Then Ish-bosheth sent, and took her from her husband, from Phaltiel the son of Laish. So, what a horrible thing. She had

been David's wife, and then Saul hadn't kept his word and gave her to another. They had been together for several years now. Yet in this here, this incident now, she is being taken back to be with David, and yet there is this other husband now that she'd been together with for a long time, but had been with David first, promised to David, given to David.

It says, **Then her husband went along with her to Bahurim, weeping as he followed her.** He was torn up by what was taking place. Power greater than his, obviously, in the midst of all this because of Abner and because of what he had said and because of what David had said now. **So, Abner said to him, Go and return. And he returned.** So, he went and stopped him from following any longer. Told him to go back home, in essence, and to end this. This was where it was going to stop.

Now, Abner had communicated with the elders of Israel, saying, There was a time when you were seeking for David to be king over you. So, there were those things under the reign of Saul that hadn't gone well. A lot of the elders, in that sense, throughout the kingdom there, their heart and their desire was to support David. They saw the things that had been done that weren't right and were aware of a lot of those things. This is what Abner is basically saying.

Now he says, **Now then do it, Make him king. For the Eternal has spoken to David, saying, By the hand of My servant David I will save My people Israel from the hand of the Philistines, and from the hand of their enemies.** So again here, here is something that is the beginning portion of a promise given to David that had become known, but only on a physical plane, in that respect, how God was looking upon David. Basically saying that this is from God, "by the hand of My servant David, I will save My people Israel."

So again here, yes, it was a physical thing happening at that particular point in time, but it was given, as so many things were in the sense of that which is physical and that which was worked through David and spoken of David, spoke by David, spoken by David, that God had a plan in establishing him as the king and a type of that which was to follow later, and also to point to a time of that which God was going to do in saving Israel.

It wasn't specifically by David, but through David, because of the lineage of what was to follow, because of the Messiah that would be born of the lineage of David. This has a broader meaning than what is seen here physically. But so many things that start out physical, just like this here in the story of David's life and what happened in Judah and in Israel and in battles with other peoples, it has great meaning then for the Church.

That's what it's about. That's why we started this series out talking about some of these things. That we can look at physical examples of things in the mindset of David, in the heart of David, and we can recognize here then certain things that happen on a physical plane. Just like for David, how he could think toward a king, to one established by God, to have promises given to him, to David himself, and yet he didn't have that right away. He had patience. His life was in God's hands. That's how he looked at it. It wasn't a matter of taking things upon himself. He

continually, as he went down this path, looked to God for guidance and direction in how we should do things. That's the way we all should be.

But we can look at some of these physical examples as we have, as we've gone throughout this series, and see incredible things on a big physical plane that take place and think almost like this is unbelievable, that things can happen like this. And yet on a spiritual plane, a very small plane, we're not able to live up to that standard because it's spiritual by nature. Again, a lot of those examples of things that we have looked at going throughout this series here, of the way David thought and the way David was, and how we should be.

It's for the Church. It's about lessons that we need to learn within the Church on a spiritual plane. Because if we can see those things, as has been mentioned over and over again here, in a big physical way and think, "How could that be?" then we need to be able to ask the same thing in small things in our life on a spiritual plane that we do so poorly oftentimes in our relationships with others who are a part with us. Anyway, going on.

So again here, this is partially prophetic in that respect; it wasn't just a physical thing by any measure, "I will save My people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and from the hand of all their enemies." It wasn't just about physical Israel. It's about spiritual Israel that would follow. We can see that on a physical plane, of something being done, but what was to follow prophetically was a far greater thing of far greater importance that God was working out. But it was starting here to teach lessons, to teach things along the way that we can see physically but we're to learn spiritually from it.

They're not just written as nice little bible stories that people can read and feel good about. They're things that are to teach people in God's Church who have access to God's spirit, who have God's spirit working with them so they can learn those things and be strengthened by them on a spiritual plane.

Abner also spoke directly to Benjamin. So again, there is that strong relationship with Benjamin. Benjamin was a strong fighting group at this particular time, in the sense of those who had fought in the military there alongside Abner. They were the ones on the top of that hill there that banded together. They stuck together so they were a strong fighting group. It makes it clear here that he approached them because of their influence, because of their strength. At this time here, they were a strong tribe.

Abner also spoke directly to Benjamin. Then Abner went to speak with David in Hebron to say that all this seemed good to Israel. In other words, Israel is responding to what has been sent out to them. It seems good to them, that they desire to have you as king. ...and the whole house of Benjamin. He's going down with this message here, of something with those whom he's spoken to, to say to David this is doable, this is a good thing, this is something that can unite now, the entire nation.

So, verse 20 it says, 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.

So again here, we can look at a story like this and think, here he has been fighting against David, a lot of people have died just in the recent battle that took place there, even his nephew who had been killed by him and he's willing to lay aside these differences in order to have peace.

I think of the scripture again, to be peacemakers is not an easy thing. You have to work at it. There are things you have to bury in the sense of your thinking, your prejudices, your own anger, to let self get in the way, selfishness, of things we judge by and feel we're so right in doing. That here is an example, that David could have done that, but he didn't because that wasn't his mindset. His mindset was that which was converted, in that respect, on a spiritual plane. God had been working with him for a long time and his thinking was unique, in that regard, about relationships and thinking toward others, of what it takes.

It comes back to this thing of swallowing your own pride and of humbling yourself. It's a difficult thing for people to do. It's difficult for us to do in the Church oftentimes. We find this over and over again. But if a person isn't willing to swallow their own pride, because that's what it is, that's what gets in the way in all kinds of disputes and arguments and disagreements with others. There's pride so often then that stands in the way and not humility. If humility isn't there then peace isn't going to materialize. It isn't going to be given a chance to work.

If individuals aren't willing to do that then all that's going to take place is more drama, greater drama, just drama, drama, drama. That's where drama comes from. It comes from the unwillingness to have a humble spirit. Drama comes from pride! Seems like that would be easier to grasp and understand, but we don't fully without God's help, without God's spirit, without praying about these things.

If you find drama in your life you know what you have to do? You have to trace back to where it's coming from. The bottom line is your response to it. Now, there can be drama all around you, but you don't have to be a part of it. You don't have to be entangled in it. You don't have to let it affect your life, but it affects your life to where you begin living it and begin judging situations in a harsh way, a strong way, and having bad feelings and you're having battles and you're not at peace yourselves. What does it produce?

We have to look at ourselves and think about drama. Is it drama or is it peace, because they're contrary to each other. They don't work together. Peace comes from specific actions in our lives. We have to judge those things about what creates peace and where will it work at this time because sometimes it won't work in certain areas and so you have to leave certain things be. You have to let it go. Other things that can be worked with, then you work with it and you're always first to place peace there, to hope that certain things can be worked out.

Because an atmosphere and a relationship of peace is a whole lot better than this thing of drama and pride and different attitudes that get in the way then and anger and all the other things that go with it. David was excellent in these kinds of things, of working toward peace and a willingness to sit down with Abner, who had killed his nephew, knew the story behind it, killed several of his other men who he had spent a long time with, knew them well, knew all of them well.

When you have a group like that that's banded together, fought together, bled together in battles and wounds and so forth, they were a very close-knit group, in that respect, as far as their thinking toward each other and their support toward David, and David's support toward them. They knew it. They knew how David felt toward them and they knew they'd receive favor. Different times they had to be reminded of it, this is from God. This is because David continually looked to God. He had that mindset.

This is quite an incredible thing, that he's willing to sit down like this to work toward peace. Peace doesn't just happen. You have to work for it.

So, David made a feast for Abner. So, it wasn't just a matter of a meeting, but it was a matter of a festive occasion. What an incredible thing here, of something that David was willing to do, to do this for Abner and for those who were there, to work toward peace. It's an awesome thing.

Then Abner said to David, I will arise and go, and gather all Israel to my lord the king, that they may make a treaty with you. Now Abner is working toward this. He is willing to put effort into this. He's willing to travel out to the other tribes more and work toward bringing them together, the leadership of these different groups and so forth, to bring them together to work toward peace.

It says here that he would go out. He's going to spend this effort. This thing of setting a treaty, having peace on a physical plane is a great thing. How much better on a spiritual plane. It makes the physical thing look pretty small, candidly, and yet these were big things that took place all because of an attitude and a heart of David.

Then Abner said to David, I will arise and go, and gather all Israel to my lord, the king. He humbled himself. He had to humble himself in doing this, too. This is kind of unique on Abner's part and his response, though it started with his indignation and anger toward Ish-Bosheth, he was willing to humble himself in this case, to go before David. Because his attitude hadn't been good toward David. He'd gone out with Saul to try to pursue David to kill David. Yet now was willing to bury all this for the sake of something bigger.

He said to David, **I will arise and go and gather all Israel to my lord, the king, so willing to call him king now, humbling himself to do that, that they may make a treaty with you and that you may reign over all that your heart desires.** So, David sent Abner away, and he went

in peace. So, the past is the past, willing to work toward something better now, to bring peace throughout all the nation of Israel, to have a nation now of Israel.

I think of the Church again. If people are willing to, when there is dispute, when there is something that comes up, that someone doesn't get along with someone else, it causes hurt within the Body. Because so often those things aren't something that's done in a private place together; it spreads, and others begin to have to make judgments and decisions and whether they support one thing or another. People get caught up in these kinds of things and it's never good and rather than creating anything that's good, it just causes more division.

We see that in a massive way in this country today. But it's horrible, horrifying, candidly, when it happens in God's Church, and yet it's something that's been a history of the Church and can only be seen as horrifying when someone recognizes the kind of mind, the kind of relationships we should have spiritually toward one another that go above and beyond that which is physical that we can see in the world around us.

That's a whole different plane of thinking, this kind of thinking, the kind of thinking that David had toward God, placing God first, the Eternal first in his life, and if we do that then the other things will follow because it's about God, it's about a relationship with God. That's what determines then our relationship with others, of what they will be, because we love God, we fear to go against God, we have a healthy fear of doing things that aren't pleasing to God. That's the way we should think. That way God is always first in our mind.

So, it says, **David sent Abner away, and he went in peace.**

Verse 22. Because Abner didn't know when he went down there if David is going to kill him. I mean, that took quite a bit on his part, candidly. How is he going to respond? Sometimes people get too wrapped up in going to someone else alone or talking something out with someone because they're more afraid of how they're going to respond or how this might turn, and afraid of things that really aren't meaningful or real sometimes in order to justify self.

Anyway, **verse 22—At that time the army of David and Joab came from a raid and brought a large spoil with them. And Abner was not with David in Hebron.** It's saying here that at this moment now that they were returning, Abner had already gone. They didn't know what had happened. That's what it's telling us in the story here. **...for he had sent him away, and he had gone in peace.** So, this had just happened. Abner was there, the men who were with him were there, and they'd been sent away in peace. Now we have a situation where Joab is coming back with the army that was with him in this raid and they don't know anything of this, of what had just taken place.

And when Joab and all the troops that were with him had come, they told Joab, saying, Abner, the son of Ner came to the king. This is big news. Here he was, Abner our enemy had come into the camp, the one who killed your brother. He'd come into the camp and David

received him and sent him away in peace. ...and he has sent him away, and has gone in peace. So, David didn't take his life, and this is going on right now.

Then Joab came to the king, and said, What have you done? It's like, "I can't believe this! What have you done?" Look, Abner came to you; and why is it that you have sent him away, and he is already gone? "How could it be that he could come here, meet with you, and leave, and still be standing?" This was hard for Joab. It really was.

Surely you realize that Abner, the son of Ner, came to deceive you. "He didn't do this in peace. It's not in Abner!" Because when you battle and fight sometimes people can enter into on a spiritual plane, take the spirit of God out of it, because when that happens it's a matter of ignoring the spirit of God and just doing what we want to do as human beings, and they begin to have problems with each other, harsh judgment toward each other, confrontational with each other, feelings get hurt, people are on edge of the slightest little thing that might be said that can stir up something because "You're judging me from something I'd done in the past."

Sometimes people just can't let themselves be free and let the past be the past and let it be gone, and so, different things will pop up. Because too often, people know how they are. They know how they judge others and how harsh they are in their own judgment, "So, you must be doing that to me." And blah, blah, blah, seems like it never ends sometimes, those kinds of things when they happen.

It's like here, "There has to be some other motive that Abner had," because how did he judge him, "because he's been fighting with us, he's been killing our men, he killed my brother! You know he isn't coming here in peace to be your friend. He's doing it deceitfully. Something is going on. Abner is not that kind of person!" So, an unwillingness to make peace, a different kind of mind totally than David's. David was willing to look past that for the greater good of the body of all of Israel.

And so must we as God's people for the greater good of the Body, that the Body be healthy, that we're concerned about God's Church and not just ourselves and how we can feel and "I've been offended," or "I've been mistreated," or "someone has judged me. I know they are! I know they are!" Some of these stupid things that we can get caught up in as human beings. They really are stupid and pitiful in every way.

But that's the way we are as human beings, and so these things happen. But the closer the relationship with God, the less they will happen, the more the mind of God that's in us. The more that we seek that kind of mind, which is the heart that David had...because that came from God.

The bottom line is that that mindset came from God. That relationship was basically built by God first and foremost. God is the one who molded and fashioned David to be the man he was because of a plan that God had as a part of the life that David would live.

God molded and fashioned every facet of his life in so many ways. He didn't make him make the choices, because He worked with him closely and gave him of His holy spirit and worked with him through the power of His holy spirit in his mind. David was responsive to that and God continued to work with him in those things and made him the kind of person that he was.

That's the way it is in our lives. We don't do it; it's God doing it. But we have to yield ourselves to the process and we have to desire and want that. When we don't then we won't, we won't have it anymore. That's happened so often. Again, "Many are called, and few are chosen." Because few are willing to go through the entire journey and the entire battle to the end. Because it's not in their heart fully to do it forever. That's not the thinking. And yet that's should be our thinking from the moment of baptism, "I belong to God."

Surely you realize that Abner, the son of Ner, came to deceive you, to know your going out and your coming in. "There's something he's plotting here, to see your strength and to see how things are done and to bring an army, whatever. But Abner can't be doing this for right motives." ...and to know all that you are doing.

He just couldn't bring himself because his hatred, his anger was so deep. God wasn't in the picture at all. He didn't have that kind of relationship. But David did.

Verse 26—Now, when Joab had left David's presence, he sent messengers after Abner...

Think, man, to do this? Highly disgusting, what he did. **He sent messengers after Abner, who brought him back from the well of Sirah. And David did not know.** David didn't know about this, what Joab had done. So, Joab knew that he'd just barely had left in peace, and so he pursued him knowing the journey he would likely go from point A to point B to go back. Sure enough, the messengers found them and brought them back, basically, under a false disguise here of coming back, that there is more that needs to be discussed or gone over type of thing.

Joab did this deceitfully, totally on his own without consulting David whatsoever. Now, candidly, at that time that was worthy of death to have done that. But that wasn't the mind of David. He considered other things that were going on in Joab's life in his thinking, in his mind. But he sure caused some great problems for David, for the country, for the nation, for the combining of all the tribes together because of what he did.

So, now when Abner had returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him privately, and there stabbed him in the stomach so that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother. So again, the brothers got together here. Joab is the one who did the killing and under false pretenses and totally damaged and destroyed so much of what David was working toward. What could have been done in a far more peaceful manner, because it wasn't done in a peaceful manner, things didn't happen as quickly as they could have otherwise. There is this damage that was done. You can't undo it once it's been done like this. Because an individual wasn't supportive as he should have been, brought a great deal of harm.

These kinds of things have happened in the Church as well through time, that there are times when individuals rather than seeking guidance and direction of the right thing that should be done and how to do something have taken it upon themselves, been presumptuous about various things when it comes to God's government, and have done more damage then within the Church. Anyway, things that have happened over and over through time here, and even of recent time.

Verse 28—Afterward, when David heard it, he said, My kingdom and I are guiltless before the Eternal forever for the blood of Abner, the son of Ner. So, he wanted this to go out quickly, that he wasn't a part of this, that he and the rest of Judah had no part in this. This isn't their thinking. This wasn't their purpose. Yet he wants it to be known as far as his relationship toward God Almighty, that this wasn't from him.

Let this rest on the head of Joab, and all his father's house; and let there never fail... He had some pretty strong words of what he said because what Joab did here was so hideous, so atrocious. David spelled it out and put the blame where it belonged. **And let there never fail to be in the house of Joab one that has a discharge,** talking about open sores, **or is a leper, or who is crippled, or who falls by the sword, or who that lacks bread,** in other words, suffers from hunger. In other words, it's as this curse will follow through in the house of Joab from that point forward, and from others in the families.

What a horrifying thing because Joab didn't do things the right way. Because he took things upon himself, he was going to suffer for it. Candidly, not just himself, but others throughout time would suffer as a result of it. A lot of times there are things that happen where people pass down things because of, well, I think of different nations who have such hatreds toward each other that have gone on, even those who live close to each other.

I think of Ephraim and some of the battles and fighting going on between different groups there between the north and the south, and farther to the west in Ireland and so forth, and things that have just gone on for centuries and centuries and centuries that go back to family squabbles and battles of things that happened a long time ago, hundreds and hundreds of years ago in many cases, and they're just passed down from generation to generation. This is something that David said would be a matter of something physical upon Joab.

So, Joab and Abishai, his brother, killed Abner because he had killed their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle. Others in the family were part of this so they were going to suffer as well in some of this as well. That's what's brought out in this example here then. Incredible.

Verse 31—Then David said to Joab and to all the people who were with him, Tear your clothes, gird yourselves with sackcloth, and mourn for Abner. And king David, it says, followed the coffin. David is telling them this is what they should act like, this is what they should be like, this is their thinking, this is the kind of mourning and the way it should be toward someone. Though he had been an enemy, what happened to him was done in a very

wrong way and it shouldn't have happened like this whatsoever, and we need to have a right thinking for it.

So again, over and over again here David had this incredible mind and attitude and heart that's reflected by things he did that God wants us to see on a spiritual plane. We see these things in a physical way and yet the small things, the little things in our life, we can't see them spiritually oftentimes. Yet we're supposed to. We're to learn from these physical examples what the spirit of it is. If we can't learn those things, bad, bad, bad indeed, because there's a thinking that needs to be in our heart and our minds.

It says, **So, they buried Abner in Hebron. And the king lifted up his voice and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the people wept.** He set this example of letting the truth go out as to what had happened. Joab, his brother, the family, how they thought, they just wouldn't let it go it was so deeply entrenched in them. And so, he's making it very clear here they're guilty and this guilt is going to be upon them. Basically, a curse that's going to be in the family from generation to generation because of what Joab did in killing Abner, and now we should mourn Abner because he was trying to unify the nation.

He looked at the greater good here of a willingness that Abner had. After all that Abner had done, he was willing to humble himself. That says a lot toward someone. David recognized that aspect of Abner, not the bad that he'd done in the past, but a willingness to change.

We have to be that way toward one another as well. The past is the past, to put it behind, to embrace friendships, to work toward peace, to work toward being and giving people the opportunity to make those changes. David gave that opportunity to Abner. He made the door wide open for Abner. He let him know, "Yes, come and we'll go over these things." Abner knew David well enough to know that David was a man of his word, that he was a man of God indeed and that he would respond properly. Though he could have been of a mindset to be fearful of going in there and might have had that in the back of his mind, but he was still willing to humble himself. That says so much.

Yet we can look at this on a physical plane and sometimes we're not willing to humble ourselves to resolve issues, to bury the past, to bury the wrong that's been done and to try to make peace. When we know that we have done wrong, and even if someone else has done wrong.

David was of a humble mind. He was willing to receive Abner. But Abner, having done the wrong in his life over and over again was willing to humble himself in order to stop all the stupidity and the foolishness within the nation, if you will, and between themselves, between him and David.

He's looking at the positive again, just like he did at the death of Saul and of Jonathan. Understandably so with Jonathan, but even toward Saul. But he was willing to do so toward the

one who had been over the army of Saul. He still was willing to humble himself and speak of him in this light.

So, they buried Abner in Hebron. And the king lifted up his voice and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the people wept. It wasn't a put-on thing. It was something that David felt. It wasn't fake. Sometimes we can put on things, we can act in a certain way that isn't real, isn't genuine, and that's despicable. We have to be of a right spirit. If we're of a right spirit we're going to have certain reactions in life that others are going to see.

Now, people saw this, and they knew David well enough they believed what was going on here. Here David wept at the death of Abner, his enemy who had been fighting him, pursuing with Saul to kill him. He had the same kind of response he had toward him as he did to Saul. Incredible.

Again, these things happening on a physical plane and sometimes we just can't do it on a small spiritual plane. We need to be able to see that so we can change.

Then the king sang over Abner, and said, Should Abner die as a fool dies? "Yes, there are things he did wrong, but there are those things he did right." He had that mindset. **Your hands were not bound, nor your feet put into fetters. As a man falls before wicked men, so you fell.** So, in essence by what he's saying, by his response and his weeping for Abner, others saw this. Other people saw this and they responded in a positive light, in a good light, and they began to believe then as it spread, of David's response, and it had a good effect then on Israel.

As a man falls before wicked men, so you fell. Then all the people wept over him again. So again, this moved others to see David doing this. And basically, what an incredible light, in that respect, of something, the right way of doing something.

Verse 35—And when all the people came to persuade David to eat food while it was still daylight... So, here is this period of time here. They've gone through all this, he fasted, he was mourning, **David took an oath, saying, God do so to me, and more also...** In other words, there's something he had to complete and do right now. He said, **if I taste bread, or anything else before the sun goes down.** So, in other words, he had a time set that he started this. He was going to finish it and he wasn't going to break that time that's set aside in mourning as he was going to do for that day. So again, they're counting day by sunset to sunset and this is what David was living up to, in that respect, in his thinking.

Now, all the people took note of it, and it pleased them. Since whatever the king did pleased all the people. For all the people and all Israel understood that day that the king had nothing to do with the killing of Abner, the son of Ner. So again, because of David's example, because of what went out, people saw it and they responded to it in a very positive light.

Then the king said to the servants, Do you not know that a prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel? So again here, he's lifting him up in the sense of look at his past, the right things he's done and what he stood for, and then a willingness to humble himself to bring all the nation together. So, this is a part of it.

He talked about how he was weak that day, in the sense from fasting, **though anointed king; and these men, the sons of Zeruah, are too harsh for me.** In other words, Joab and what he had done, his brother had done and their thinking within the family, what they had done in being deceitful and not supporting David as they should, took things into their own hands. That's a part of what is being addressed here by David.

He made this comment then at the end, **The Eternal will repay the evil doer according to his wickedness.** So again, it ends this story then by going through all this and making it clear that this is in God's hands and God will take care of what needs to be done and how it's to be done. There are those things at times that that kind of judgment has to be made. This is a matter of God's doing. This is a matter of God's judgment and God will take care of it.

Many things within the Church happen that way too, that there are some situations that are indeed left in God's hands because there are things that we are not to put ourselves into, and to let some things go their course because there are other things that God is working out.

We learn from that process and it's an exciting thing to go through, in that respect, to see how God does things, how God works with us. We have an entire history of the Church to see how God works with various things and what happens when people inject themselves into situations that shouldn't have taken place and it messes things up.

So, anyway, I'm not certain whether we're going to continue specifically in this part of the series, but we will know next Sabbath.