

2 Samuel 3-4

- Let's jump right back into the intrigue as Abner, the commander of Ish-bosheth's army in the north, has decided to throw his support behind David in the south
 - He took the bold step of having one of the king's concubines for himself, and when Ish-bosheth found out, he confronted Abner
 - Abner responded indignantly and defensively, and he succeeded in intimidating Ish-bosheth into silence
 - But Abner knows his position advising the king is in jeopardy so Abner sends word to David that he's ready to switch sides
 - Abner says he will throw his support behind David and promises to deliver the loyalty of the northern tribes to David
 - David responds cautiously by asking Abner to prove himself first
 - David demands that Abner send David's first wife, Michal (*incorrectly stated in the audio as Abigail*), back to him as proof he has authority and influence in the north
 - Abner agrees and sends Michal back, so now it's time for Abner to make good on his promise to deliver the north to David
- That leads us to v.17 as Abner visits the elders of the northern tribes of Israel

2Sam. 3:17 Now Abner had consultation with the elders of Israel, saying, "In times past you were seeking for David to be king over you.

2Sam. 3:18 "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 from the hand of all their enemies.'"

2Sam. 3:19 Abner also spoke in the hearing of Benjamin; and in addition Abner went to speak in the hearing of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel and to the whole house of Benjamin.

2Sam. 3:20 Then 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.

2Sam. 3:21 Abner said to David, "Let me arise and go and gather all Israel to my lord the king, that they may make a covenant with you, and that you may be king over all that your soul desires." So David sent Abner away, and he went in peace.

3-4-1

- Abner approached the elders of Israel, likely without Ish-bosheth knowing, to convince them to give their allegiance to David
 - Abner's primary argument was two-fold
 - First, Abner reminds them David was their first choice
 - Apparently, the northern tribes had been inclined to follow David rather than Ish-bosheth in the first place
 - And this makes some sense, because David was a hero in Israel
 - David dominated Israel's chief enemy, the Philistines, and in the process he had earned the respect of the people
 - Moreover, everyone knew that the reverend prophet, Samuel, had anointed David to be Saul's successor
 - So when Saul died, many if not all the tribes in the north were prepared to throw their support behind David...until Abner intervened
 - And that makes this meeting especially ironic, because now it's Abner seeking to win them back to David
 - So Abner is working to undo what he previously worked to achieve
 - Secondly, Abner reminds them that David was God's anointed warrior to defeat the Philistines, after Saul failed in that regard
 - Abner was saying the way to defeating Israel's chief enemy was to support the one man who could beat them
 - And this comment leads Abner to now turn his attention specifically to the tribe of Benjamin
 - Notice in v.19 he addresses the elders of Benjamin because Saul was a Benjamite as was Ish-bosheth
 - So it was especially important to win them over
- The diplomacy works and the elders agree it's better to support David at this point than Ish-bosheth, and it's not a hard call
 - Remember, in v.1 we were told that the house of David was growing steadily while the house of Ish-bosheth was weakening

- These men are nothing if not pragmatic
- They do not want to back the losing side, and now that it seems clear David will prevail, they decide it's better late than never
- So they are simply making a decision of self-preservation to support the winner while they still have time
- Finally, the elders send a delegation to David under Abner's leadership to strike covenant with David
 - A covenant is always a life-long commitment which is punishable by death if broken
 - It is formally established with a blood sacrifice, and since an animal is killed in the process, it leads to a feast as well
 - So in v.20 we see the men sitting down with David to eat as part of the covenant ceremony promising David is their king
- And at the conclusion of the meal, David sends Abner away in peace, which is an important phrase
 - It means that David has now entered into a covenant with Abner obligating David to protect Abner in exchange for Abner's loyalty
 - Effectively, David has now promised that he will not harm the commander of his enemy's army
 - This is one of many head-scratching moments for those around David
 - Who pledges to protect the leader of his enemy's military forces?
 - And that's exactly what the leader of David's military forces asks when he finds out what David has done

2Sam. 3:22 And behold, the servants of David and Joab came from a raid and brought much spoil with them; but Abner was not with David in Hebron, for he had sent him away, and he had gone in peace.

2Sam. 3:23 When Joab and all the army that was with him arrived, they told Joab, saying, "Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he has sent him away, and he has gone in peace."

2Sam. 3:24 Then Joab came to the king and said, "What have you done? Behold, Abner came to you; why then have you sent him away and he is already gone?"

2Sam. 3:25 “You know Abner the son of Ner, that he came to deceive you and to learn of your going out and coming in and to find out all that you are doing.”

- Joab is a chief commander of David’s forces in the south, and we were first introduced to Joab in Chapter 2 at the pool of Gibeon
 - Joab was one of three brothers who joined together in battling Abner after a failed peace negotiation
 - In the course of that battle, Abner killed Asahel, Joab’s brother, so naturally Joab wants his revenge on Abner
- But after returning from a raid of Amalekites bringing much spoil, Joab learns that Abner had just been in the camp with David
 - Joab is frustrated that he missed his chance to kill Abner
 - More than that, he learns that David entered into a covenant of peace with Abner, which makes him even angrier
- So Joab approaches David declaring that he has entered into the covenant by mistake and that Abner is just deceiving David
 - Abner was simply spying on David and his forces to learn his movements and strength of forces, Joab argues
 - And it’s hard to tell if this is Joab’s true concern or if he’s simply making a case for killing Abner despite the covenant
 - Besides his anger at Abner for killing Asahel, Joab might also have been concerned about losing his job to Abner
 - Abner was likely expecting to be rewarded for brokering the peace with the position of commander of the army
 - That would have threatened Joab’s job security
 - So Joab decides to take matters into his own hands

2Sam. 3:26 When Joab came out from David, he sent messengers after Abner, and they brought him back from the well of Sirah; but David did not know it.

2Sam. 3:27 So when Abner returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside into the middle of the gate to speak with him privately, and there he struck him in the belly so that he died on account of the blood of Asahel his brother.

- Joab sends messengers to Abner asking him to return, so Abner comes back thinking that the king has sent for him
- As he reaches Hebron, Abner is met by Joab at the gate of the city, where Joab stabs Abner fatally
- This is Joab's revenge for killing his brother, but in the process Joab has placed the southern kingdom and David's rule at great risk
 - David had entered into a covenant of peace with Abner, and now David's commander had killed Abner in violation of the covenant
 - Not only might David be accused of violating his oath to Abner but also of breaking his peace accord with the northern tribes
 - David's chance to be king of Israel is now suddenly in jeopardy because of the selfish actions of his commander
- The conflict between David and Joab illustrates the challenge David faces in governing the Israel he will inherit
 - Historically, this is an Israel that did what was right in its own eyes, going back to the days of Judges and ever before that under Moses
 - This nation is stiff-necked, rebellious, prone to wandering and generally unwilling to obey the Lord's commandments
 - They came out of Egypt worshipping idols and once in the land they came under the influence of Canaanite idolatry
 - So naturally when someone kills a man's brother, the only response the people understand is revenge killing
 - So clearly the people's ways are not God's ways, which means they also struggle to understand David, a man after God's own heart
 - David continually does the thing that the people wouldn't do, as in this case where David makes peace with his enemy
 - Of course, this is one of the primary ways King David pictures Jesus as King, as Jesus makes peace with His enemies too
 - Jesus forgives those who hate God, and He does so purely as an act of His grace
 - But Joab was like the people and not like God, so he couldn't understand David's ways nor was he willing to let David's decision stand

- So now it's time to see how David responds to this egregious affront to David's power and authority
- And once again, David does the unexpected

[2Sam. 3:28](#) Afterward when David heard it, he said, "I and my kingdom are innocent before the LORD forever of the blood of Abner the son of Ner.

[2Sam. 3:29](#) "May it fall on the head of Joab and on all his father's house; and may there not fail from the house of Joab one who has a discharge, or who is a leper, or who takes hold of a distaff, or who falls by the sword, or who lacks bread."

[2Sam. 3:30](#) So Joab and Abishai his brother killed Abner because he had put their brother Asahel to death in the battle at Gibeon.

- And once again, David does the unexpected by not retaliating against Joab in the way most would have expected
 - First, David distances himself from Joab's actions, and this was an absolute necessity
 - David must make clear to the northern tribes and even to his own tribe that he would not go back on his word to Abner
 - And to do that David issues a punishment for Joab but it isn't the expected response
 - Typically, a king in David's position would simply have taken Joab's head and been done with it
 - And in fact, David's son, Solomon, eventually does kill Joab after David dies in revenge for Joab's actions
 - But David doesn't take that route and instead allows Joab to live
 - Instead, David asks the Lord to bring Joab's family to ruin through one calamity or another
 - Either they will die violently, live in poverty, suffer a chronic disease like leprosy, or they will take hold of a distaff
 - A distaff is a spindle for weaving cloth, which implies the work of a widows or a man in slavery
 - It's a harsh curse that means the eventual wasting away of Joab's family tree

- David apparently decided to indict the whole family because in v.30 we're told Joab's brother also conspired in Abner's death
- The brothers acted against the king's authority so the entire family would pay a severe price
- In fact, David's curse on Joab's family is a much more devastating punishment than simply killing Joab outright would have been
 - And it's also more purposeful because it creates a lasting testimony and witness
 - For as long as Joab's family is around, people in Israel will be able to look at their circumstances and remember Joab's sin
 - And by that testimony, Joab's folly is remembered, David's righteousness is acknowledged and the Lord's power is seen
 - David is confident that the Lord can deal out justice in a better way, and here again we see David acting after God's heart
 - Because this is the way the Lord deals out revenge against His enemies
 - It's how the Lord turns something evil into good for His purposes in Israel while holding the guilt under punishment
 - This is what Paul means when he tells us to leave room for the wrath of God when confronting our enemies or adversaries
 - Appeal to the Lord for protection and let Him decide how it should be handed out and when
 - It's better for three reasons...first, we remain innocent having not sinned through retribution of one kind or another
 - Secondly, the Lord's style of punishment is always better than ours since He has far more options at His disposal
 - Thirdly, the Lord can turn the situation to good in ways we can't, perhaps even leading the person to repent and reconcile
 - This principle lies at the heart of the Christian call to forgive our enemies
 - We don't take revenge because we are supposed to leave room for God to use our circumstances to further the Gospel

- Every moment of our lives is supposed to be a Gospel advancing moment, including moments of conflict
- We rob God of those moments when we take our own revenge
- David's willingness to leave revenge to the Lord was an example of David having a heart after God's own heart
 - But it confused and frustrated others around him who didn't know the Lord or understand the Lord's heart
 - So men like Joab couldn't understand David when he extended mercy to men like Abner
 - But ironically, that same heart of mercy came to Joab's aid in a moment like this as David allowed him to live
- So by the curse, David makes clear this was entirely Joab's family's doing, but to make sure everyone knew this was true, David conducts an elaborate funeral

2Sam. 3:31 Then David said to Joab and to all the people who were with him, "Tear your clothes and gird on sackcloth and lament before Abner." And King David walked behind the bier.

2Sam. 3:32 Thus they buried Abner in Hebron; and the king lifted up his voice and wept at the grave of Abner, and all the people wept.

2Sam. 3:33 The king chanted a lament for Abner and said,

"Should Abner die as a fool dies?

2Sam. 3:34 "Your hands were not bound, nor your feet put in fetters;

As one falls before the wicked, you have fallen."

And all the people wept again over him.

2Sam. 3:35 Then all the people came to persuade David to eat bread while it was still day; but David vowed, saying, "May God do so to me, and more also, if I taste bread or anything else before the sun goes down."

2Sam. 3:36 Now all the people took note of it, and it pleased them, just as everything the king did pleased all the people.

2Sam. 3:37 So all the people and all Israel understood that day that it had not been the will of the king to put Abner the son of Ner to death.

2Sam. 3:38 Then the king said to his servants, "Do you not know that a prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel?"

[2Sam. 3:39](#) "I am weak today, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruiah are too difficult for me. May the LORD repay the evildoer according to his evil."

- David directs Joab and everyone else with him in Hebron to engage in a period of public mourning for Abner
 - They tear their clothes and wear sackcloth as symbols of mourning
 - And when the funeral procession took place, David himself walked behind Abner's bier carrying his body
 - Then when they reached the gravesite in Hebron, David wept loudly and publicly for Abner
 - And all the people at the funeral mourned as well, loudly proclaiming Abner's death
 - Then David leads the eulogy for Abner with a chant
 - David laments Abner dying as a fool dies at the hands of criminals rather than as a war hero
 - David's emphasizing that Abner's death was not the result of a conflict between the north and the south
 - Rather his death was a criminal act of violence committed by an individual
 - Finally, in v.35 we learn David has been fasting, probably since Abner died, so now that he has been buried the people urge David to eat
 - But David refuses saying he will not eat until the end of that day
 - David's devotion to mourning Abner strikes the people as admirable and praise-worthy
 - And in v.36 we're told that this pleased the people as did everything David did in mourning Abner
- This entire episode was designed by David to convince everyone of his innocence and to distance himself from Joab's actions
 - It was a public state funeral designed to honor Abner as a state hero in the hope of convincing the northern tribes to stay

- And when v.36 says it pleased the people, the point is that the funeral had the intended effect
- In fact, notice in v.37 the writer tells us that all the people knew from that day forward that David was not responsible
- David pulled victory out of the jaws of defeat and has saved his kingdom from a disastrous start
 - David's mourning may have been over the top, but it wasn't insincere
 - Because in v.38 David acknowledges that Abner was a prince and a great man who has fallen
- And Abner was certainly that...a prince in the sense of a man of great authority working in support of kings
 - Despite having opposed David, he ultimately threw his support behind David
 - And as an advisor to David, Abner could have been a very powerful and useful counselor to the new king
- Finally, David says in v.39 that he is weak, perhaps a reference to having fasted but also to the weariness of starving for his throne
 - Joab and his brother are too difficult for David, meaning they are headstrong and unwilling to fall in line
 - So David repeats that he will wait on the Lord to deal with these evildoers
 - Ironically, David's personal weakness forced him to rely on the Lord to defend him
 - And in the long run, that dependence upon the Lord became a source of David's strength as a leader
- Now we move into Chapter 4, and as we do, we find the narrator planting seeds for important moments that follow later in the story

2Sam. 4:1 Now when Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, heard that Abner had died in Hebron, he lost courage, and all Israel was disturbed.

2Sam. 4:2 Saul's son had two men who were commanders of bands: the name of the one was Baanah and the name of the other Rechab, sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, of the sons of Benjamin (for Beeroth is also considered part of Benjamin,

[2Sam. 4:3](#) and the Beerothites fled to Gittaim and have been aliens there until this day).

[2Sam. 4:4](#) Now Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son crippled in his feet. He was five years old when the report of Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled. And it happened that in her hurry to flee, he fell and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth.

[2Sam. 4:5](#) So the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, departed and came to the house of Ish-bosheth in the heat of the day while he was taking his midday rest.

[2Sam. 4:6](#) They came to the middle of the house as if to get wheat, and they struck him in the belly; and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped.

[2Sam. 4:7](#) Now when they came into the house, as he was lying on his bed in his bedroom, they struck him and killed him and beheaded him. And they took his head and traveled by way of the Arabah all night.

- Back in the north, Ish-bosheth hears the story of Abner and it disturbs him
 - Remember, he probably didn't know that Abner had been negotiating with David in the first place
 - So Ish-bosheth learned not only that his commander is dead but that before he died he had entered into a covenant with David
 - And even worse than that, he has heard that the elders of his tribes are ready to throw their support to David
- So naturally, all this news takes away Ish-bosheth's courage, which simply means the guy is afraid and panicked
 - Not only is his short-lived kingdom at risk, so is his life
 - Disposed kings typically don't live long, and he knows it
- In fact, the obstacles to David's rule over Israel are falling like dominos
 - Saul is dead, Jonathan is dead as are Saul's other two sons
 - And now the commander of the northern forces is gone
- So now there are only two possible heirs to Saul's throne; Ish-bosheth and Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth

- Mephibosheth is briefly introduced in v.4 where we learn he was crippled from an early age
 - His nurse fled with the baby when the news of Saul and Jonathan's death came from the Jezreel
 - She was afraid that with the king's passing, his family might be at risk
 - But in her haste, she dropped the baby and likely broke a limb, which caused him to be lame the rest of his life
- We learn more about Mephibosheth in Chapter 9, but the point for now is that David's challengers for the throne are few and fading fast
 - A lame boy is no threat to David's rule, so if Ish-bosheth were to die, there would be nothing to stop David's ascent to the throne
 - That's why Ish-bosheth is troubled, as is all Israel because they wonder what Ish-bosheth might do to hold on to power
- And then in v.2 we hear of two brothers who decide to force the issue
 - We're introduced to two military commanders, Baanah and Rechab, from the tribe of Benjamin
 - They lived in Beeroth, which was a town outside the territory of Benjamin yet these men were of the tribe of Benjamin
 - These men begin to plot against Ish-bosheth
 - In v.5 we're told they go to Ish-bosheth in the heat of the midday when it was customary for people to take an afternoon nap
 - The heat made everyone tired and made work hard, so people just went into the shade somewhere and slept
 - When the sun had dropped and the winds picked up, they re-emerged to finish the day
 - This pattern gave these men the opportunity they needed to attack and since they were part of the army, they raised no suspicions
 - In v.6 we're told they came into Ish-bosheth's house pretending to come for a supply of wheat and attacked him with a knife
 - Then in v.7 we get the details...they found their way to his bedroom struck him and then beheaded him as well

- They escaped taking the man's head and traveled through the Arabah, which is the Jordan river valley

2Sam. 4:8 Then they brought the head of Ish-bosheth to David at Hebron and said to the king, "Behold, the head of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, your enemy, who sought your life; thus the LORD has given my lord the king vengeance this day on Saul and his descendants."

- Having reached Hebron, they now complete their mission by bringing Ish-bosheth's head to the king
 - In v.8 they present it to David quite proudly declaring that the Lord has given David the head of Ish-bosheth
 - This is the son of the man who wanted to kill you, they say, and therefore you now have vengeance this day on Saul
 - Once again this is how the world thinks and sees the situation
 - They saw Saul attacking David, and so they thought that David would be happy to see that man and his son die
 - But remember that David did not view Saul as his enemy, because Saul was the Lord's anointed leader for Israel and David honored that
 - Moreover, David made a covenant with Jonathan before he died that when David became king he would protect Saul's house
 - David promised to protect Saul's descendants out of love for Jonathan, which was not typical when dynasties changed
 - But here again, David was doing what men didn't expect because he had a heart to do as God would do
 - So David was bound to honor Ish-bosheth and Mephibosheth by a covenant that David took seriously
 - But these men made the same mistake that the Amalekite made in assuming David wanted revenge
 - So once more David has to teach these men the same lesson

2Sam. 4:9 David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said to them, "As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my life from all distress,

[2Sam. 4:10](#) when one told me, saying, 'Behold, Saul is dead,' and thought he was bringing good news, I seized him and killed him in Ziklag, which was the reward I gave him for his news.

[2Sam. 4:11](#) "How much more, when wicked men have killed a righteous man in his own house on his bed, shall I not now require his blood from your hand and destroy you from the earth?"

[2Sam. 4:12](#) Then David commanded the young men, and they killed them and cut off their hands and feet and hung them up beside the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth and buried it in the grave of Abner in Hebron.

- David begins swearing by the Lord who has redeemed David's life from all stress, and that's an important preface for what follows
 - David is declaring that he doesn't need rogues like these men seeking to avenge David, because the Lord has his back
 - The Lord has protected David from Saul for over a decade of running and David had plenty of chances to avenge himself
 - But he purposely declined to attack or harm Saul because David respected the Lord's choice to allow the attacks
 - That's a man after God's own heart...a man who looked past the moment and tried to understand what God was doing through it
 - David knew the Lord had promised David the throne one day, and if the Lord promised it, David didn't need to force it
 - Moreover, David trusted that the Lord had good purpose in holding the throne back from David for a time
 - In hindsight, David probably understood that those years running in the desert produced great maturity and understanding
 - David learned prayer, patience, resourcefulness, and leadership
 - He wrestled with his flesh and gained important skills
 - He wrote most of the psalms and most of all, learned to rely on the Lord in times of adversity
 - So now with that hindsight, David realizes it's more important for him to keep his word and wait for God than to force his own outcomes

- And when he's confronted with men who act sinfully in his name, David is especially upset
- So ironically, as these men claimed to be gaining David's revenge against Saul, in the end David executes Saul's revenge on them
- In v.10 David reminds these men of what he did to the Amalekite who came to report that Saul had died in battle
 - That news earned the man a death sentence, which David called his "reward"
 - So then David looks at these men and asks what will I do to those who kill a righteous man in his own bed?
 - David calls Ish-bosheth "righteous" by comparison to his attackers
 - Ish-bosheth had done nothing worthy of death, and yet they had betrayed his confidence by killing him in his bed
 - So David asks shouldn't they have expected him to do as much to them as David did to the messenger before?
 - And at that moment, David has the men taken, killed, their hands and feet removed, and their bodies hung in Hebron by a pool
 - Interestingly, the battle between north and south got started at a peace negotiation around a pool
 - And now the conflict ends with David's enemies hanging by a pool
 - Their bodies are a message that David doesn't want help in this way
 - He is bound to respect the Lord's anointed and will not reward those who do otherwise
 - Meanwhile, Ish-bosheth's head is buried with Abner in a grave of honor
 - Even as David's enemies fall and his path to the throne is cleared, David continues to respect the timing of the Lord in these things
 - Every time David resists the urge to force the outcome he wants or to reward those who act for him, the Lord blesses David

- The more David seeks to keep his word to Saul's house, the more the Lord acts in keeping with His word to David
- Or to put it simply, the more David does the right thing, the more opportunity he gives God to bless David for doing so
 - I'm not saying that this was a *quid pro quo* relationship or even that David wouldn't be king if he didn't obey the Lord
 - I'm saying that there is an easy way to follow God or a hard way
 - When we obey the word of the Lord and keep our promises and live according to godliness, we follow the Lord closely
 - Like a child holding his father's hand, we stand nearby and the walk is gentle and easy and the relationship is rewarding
 - But when we live a worldly, disobedient and ungodly life, we're no longer walking side by side with the Father
 - We're no less a child of the Father, nonetheless we've strayed away from His word and so we've left His company
 - He hasn't walked away from us, but we've put distance between us and Him
 - We've gone from holding His hand to being dragged on a leash, and the experience goes from gentle to painful
 - That's the hard way to follow the Lord, and though you still get to the place the Lord wants to take you, you won't like the trip
 - When we take the easy way of obedience, yielding and righteousness, the Lord is in a position to bless us even as He keeps His promises to us
 - He will ensure our life is directed at our spiritual benefit, building us up through those experiences as He did David
 - He fights our battles, so we can sit back and trust in His control in the midst of the storm
 - Then when the time is right, the Lord will elevate us into the place He has prepared for us
- So we have an easy way and a hard way to walk with Christ, and the difference is a matter of pride versus humility, trust versus control

- David lived in an age when strong men took control, forced outcomes and killed anyone who stood in their way
 - But David was a man after God's own heart, and God doesn't work that way
 - The Lord doesn't destroy His enemies...He shows them mercy
 - The Lord doesn't break His promises...He keeps His word for generations and generations
 - The Lord doesn't seek to please men...He acts for His own glory
- And David was a man who thought in similar ways
 - David didn't need to validate his authority and power by taking it from other men by force
 - David didn't destroy those who opposed him because he knew that true authority doesn't fear opposition
 - David kept his promises because he knew that if he protested his honor, God would protect him in all circumstances
 - And David often didn't do what others expected of him because he was more concerned with what God expected
- David's patient, godly approach has brought him to this moment in God's timing and with his honor intact
 - David didn't need to grasp for the throne promised to him
 - He just needed to wait for God to give it to him
- So the time has come for David to receive what God gave him

2Sam. 5:1 Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "Behold, we are your bone and your flesh.

2Sam. 5:2 "Previously, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and in. And the LORD said to you, 'You will shepherd My people Israel, and you will be a ruler over Israel.'"

2Sam. 5:3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them before the LORD at Hebron; then they anointed David king over Israel.

2Sam. 5:4 David was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years.

[2Sam. 5:5](#) At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.

- With Ish-bosheth gone and no one left to challenge David, all the elders of all the tribes come to David in Hebron to pledge their support and allegiance
 - They declare David is their flesh and bone, which is an important statement acknowledging David is king of all tribes, not just Judah
 - It's a statement to the effect that Israel is one people, and it's a temporary reversal of the north-south split that has emerged
 - David is reuniting the nation after seven years of rivalry
 - Secondly, they recognize that David has been the nation's true shepherd even during Saul's rule
 - David led Israel out and in, meaning in and out of battle successfully defeating Israel's foes
 - And they recognized that the Lord had declared David would shepherd his people and be ruler over Israel
 - This is the first time in the Bible a human being is called a shepherd of people
 - So David's right to rule Israel came down to three basic qualifications, which forevermore set the requirement to be king of God's people
 - His human kinship with his people
 - His meritorious service to God's people
 - And his divine election as shepherd
 - David met these qualifications in human terms, and Christ perfects them
 - Christ was born a man so He too is our flesh and bone
 - This allowed Jesus to take our place in God's plan of redemption, to be our intercessor
 - Jesus rendered service to God's people by living a perfectly righteous life in our place and giving Himself up to death for us

- And He is divinely appointed as the Good Shepherd and the only name by which we may be saved
- So once again, David entered into a covenant with all the elders of Israel at Hebron, and he is anointed King of Israel
 - The year is 1004 BC and this was his third such anointing as King
 - The first time was done by the prophet Samuel when David was a young boy
 - The second time was done by the elders of Judah when Saul died
 - And now for the third time the entire nation embraces David as king
 - David is now 30 years old, an age considered the ideal minimum age for a person to assume a leadership position governing God's people
 - In fact, 30 is the age that several notable Bible characters assumed their first position of authority
 - Joseph was 30 when he ascended to the Pharaoh's court
 - Priests didn't begin their work in the tabernacle until age 30
 - Saul was 30 when he began to rule Israel
 - And of course, Jesus was 30 years old when He began His earthly ministry
 - Why is this the number God seems to prefer? It's probably for two reasons...
 - First, it's an age that generally means a person has moved beyond youthful ignorance and arrogance
 - Secondly, it's young enough to still be teachable so that experience can be gained and applied over the years
 - Having said all that, Scripture never makes that age a biblical requirement for any purpose in the church today
- Finally, David served a total of 40 years as king, including the seven years over Judah

- This too is an interesting number, since we know the number 40 is the number of testing or trial
 - But it's also the length of time for many notable events involving leaders of the nation
 - Moses led Israel in the desert for 40 years
 - Saul rules for 40 years, David rules for 40 years and Solomon rules for 40 years
- Beyond any specific meaning in the number 40 or 30, the fact that these specific numbers reappear so consistently is proof of one thing
 - God is in control of the lives of these men, and all men and women, raising them up to serve in places He chooses
 - And assigning them to their place according to His timing
- Even as David lives his life respecting God's sovereignty, his life was itself a testimony to God's control over all events
 - And even the timing of David ascent to the throne and the length of his service reflects God's sovereignty
 - Seeing God in control to that degree gives us confidence to acknowledge that control in our lives
 - And to live with the same patience and humility that drove David