

## Exegetical Notes – 2 Samuel 3:1-21

Prepared by Charles H. Jensen for Cornerstone Fellowship

101 Kyllies Road, Coatesville, PA 19320

610-384-1375

[charleshjensen@aol.com](mailto:charleshjensen@aol.com)

### 2 Samuel 3:1-21

#### Verse 1

***<sup>1</sup> The war between the house of Saul and the house of David lasted a long time. David grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker.***

- Even though David's forces soundly defeated those of the house of Saul in the battle described in 2 Samuel 2, the civil war in Israel did not end. The war continued for a long time. With the passage of time, David grew stronger but the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker.

#### Verses 2-5

***<sup>2</sup> Sons were born to David in Hebron:***

***His firstborn was Amnon the son of Ahinoam of Jezreel;***

***<sup>3</sup> his second, Kileab the son of Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel; the third, Absalom the son of Maakah daughter of Talmai king of Geshur;***

***<sup>4</sup> the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith;***

***the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital;***

***<sup>5</sup> and the sixth, Ithream the son of David's wife Eglah.***

***These were born to David in Hebron.***

- Sons were born to David. He had six sons, each born to him by a different wife.

#### Verses 6-11

***<sup>6</sup> During the war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner had been strengthening his own position in the house of Saul. <sup>7</sup> Now Saul had had a concubine named Rizpah daughter of Aiah. And Ish-Bosheth said to Abner, "Why did you sleep with my father's concubine?"***

***<sup>8</sup> Abner was very angry because of what Ish-Bosheth said. So he answered, "Am I a dog's head—on Judah's side? This very day I am loyal to the house of your father Saul and to his family and friends. I haven't handed you over to David. Yet***

***now you accuse me of an offense involving this woman! <sup>9</sup> May God deal with Abner, be it ever so severely, if I do not do for David what the Lord promised him on oath <sup>10</sup> and transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and establish David's throne over Israel and Judah from Dan to Beersheba." <sup>11</sup> Ish-Bosheth did not dare to say another word to Abner, because he was afraid of him.***

- Abner was the chief commander of Saul's army.
- Ish-Bosheth was Saul's only surviving son. As the only surviving son of Saul, he was Saul's heir and heir to the throne of Israel. But God had rejected Saul and his heirs in favor of David because of Saul's consistent unfaithfulness. Ish-Bosheth was a weak man.
- Abner supported Ish-Bosheth's claim to Israel's throne because he believed that he could control Ish-Bosheth and thus rule Israel himself.
- One of Saul's concubines, a woman who was part of the harem but not actually married to the king; a woman who was kept for the king's sexual pleasure, was named Rizpah. Ish-Bosheth accused Abner of sleeping with this woman. The harem belonged to the king. Sleeping with the women of the harem if you were not the king was treasonous. So, by this accusation, Ish-Bosheth was accusing Abner of treason.
- The accusation made Abner extremely angry. He reminded Ish-Bosheth that he only sat on Israel's throne because of Abner's support. He threatened to swing his support to David knowing that others would follow him to David if he forsook Ish-Bosheth. By swinging his support to David, he would make David Israel's king.

#### **Verses 12-16**

***<sup>12</sup> Then Abner sent messengers on his behalf to say to David, "Whose land is it? Make an agreement with me, and I will help you bring all Israel over to you."***

***<sup>13</sup> "Good," said David. "I will make an agreement with you. But I demand one thing of you: Do not come into my presence unless you bring Michal daughter of Saul when you come to see me." <sup>14</sup> Then David sent messengers to Ish-Bosheth son of Saul, demanding, "Give me my wife Michal, whom I betrothed to myself for the price of a hundred Philistine foreskins."***

***<sup>15</sup> So Ish-Bosheth gave orders and had her taken away from her husband Paltiel son of Laish. <sup>16</sup> Her husband, however, went with her, weeping behind her all the way to Bahurim. Then Abner said to him, "Go back home!" So he went back.***

- Abner sent word to David telling David that he wanted to make a deal with him and would support David's claim to Israel's throne.
- David agreed to deal with Abner under one condition, that Michal, the daughter of King Saul, who had been married to David (see 1 Samuel 18:20-29), be returned to him as his wife.
- Abner agreed that Michal should be returned to David.
- But David also sent messengers to Ish-Bosheth demanding the return of his wife, Michal. Ish-Bosheth either agreed with David that Michal was his wife or hoped to get ahead of Abner. He ordered that Michal be returned to David.
- Her husband followed behind Michal as she was being taken to David in tears because she was being taken away from him.
- Abner was angry because he had been upstaged by the King (Ish-Bosheth). He ordered Michal's husband to go home and the man did as he was commanded to do by Abner.

#### **Verses 17-19a**

***<sup>17</sup> Abner conferred with the elders of Israel and said, "For some time you have wanted to make David your king. <sup>18</sup> Now do it! For the Lord promised David, 'By my servant David I will rescue my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and from the hand of all their enemies.'"***

***<sup>19</sup> Abner also spoke to the Benjamites in person.***

- Abner went to the leaders of the other tribes of Israel and told them that it was time to drop Ish-Bosheth and support David as Israel's king. Apparently, they had been wanting to do this anyway.
- He made a special appeal to the Benjamites because this was the tribe from which Saul came.

#### **Verses 19b-21**

***Then he went to Hebron to tell David everything that Israel and the whole tribe of Benjamin wanted to do. <sup>20</sup> When Abner, who had twenty men with him, came to David at Hebron, David prepared a feast for him and his men. <sup>21</sup> Then Abner said to David, "Let me go at once and assemble all Israel for my lord the king, so that they may make a covenant with you, and that you may rule over all that your heart desires." So David sent Abner away, and he went in peace.***

- Abner then went to David to tell him that, through his efforts, all Israel was ready to proclaim David king of all Israel.

- David accepted Abner's offer and let Abner go in peace to arrange for David to be king of all Israel. Abner switched his loyalties from Ish-Bosheth to David. He intended to impress David and expected to be rewarded for bringing the kingdom to David. But he had also shown himself to be untrustworthy and an unreliable friend.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon based on 2 Samuel 3:1-21. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen. All rights are reserved by Cornerstone Fellowship & The Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen. They are used here by permission.)