Lesson 77 – David Called to the Throne

Based on 2 Samuel 2 to 5:5

Saul had just been killed in battle, David had at the same time gone to rescue his family and the families of his crew. He received the news of Saul and Jonathan's death, and after a time of mourning, enquired of the LORD to see what to do next.

1) What did God tell him?
   2 Samuel 2:2 And it came to pass after this, that David _____ of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the LORD said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, Unto Hebron.

Hebron was twenty miles north from Beersheba, and about midway between that city and the future site of Jerusalem. It was originally called Kirjath-arba, the city of Arba, the father of Anak. Later it was called Mamre, and here was the burial place of the patriarchs, "the cave of Machpelah." Hebron had been the possession of Caleb and was now the chief city of Judah. It lies in a valley surrounded by fertile hill country and fruitful lands. The most beautiful vineyards of Palestine were on its borders, together with numerous plantations of olive and other fruit trees.

2) What did they do?
   2 Samuel 2:3-4 And his men that were with him did David bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron. And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David _____ over the house of Judah…
3) What did David do as a first act as king?
   2 Samuel 2:5-7 And David sent messengers unto the men of _____, and said unto them, Blessed be ye of the LORD, that ye have shewed this _____ unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him. And now the LORD shew kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing. Therefore now let your hands be _____, and be ye valiant: for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.

One of the first acts of the new-crowned monarch was to express his tender regard for the memory of Saul and Jonathan. And he announced his own accession to the throne of Judah and invited the allegiance of those who had proved themselves so truehearted.

The Philistines did not oppose the action of Judah in making David king. They had befriended him in his exile, in order to harass and weaken the kingdom of Saul, and now they hoped that because of their former kindness to David the extension of his power would, in the end, work to their advantage. But David's reign was not to be free from trouble. With his coronation began the dark record of conspiracy and rebellion. David did not sit upon a traitor's throne; God had chosen him to be king of Israel, and there had been no occasion for distrust or opposition.

4) What was happening in Israel after the death of Saul?
   2 Samuel 2:8-10 But Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, took _____ the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim; And made him king over Gilead, and over the Ashurites, and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all _____. Ishbosheth Saul's son was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and reigned two years. But the house of Judah followed David.

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Ishbosheth was but a weak and incompetent representative of the house of Saul, while David was pre-eminently qualified to bear the responsibilities of the kingdom. Abner, the chief agent in raising Ishbosheth to kingly power, had been commander-in-chief of Saul's army, and was the most distinguished man in Israel. Abner knew that David had been appointed by the Lord to the throne of Israel, but having so long hunted and pursued him, he was not now willing that the son of Jesse should succeed to the kingdom over which Saul had reigned.

5) Why did Abner have an axe to grind with David?
1 Samuel 26:15-16 And David said to Abner, Art not thou a _____ man? and who is like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord. This thing is _____ _____ that thou hast done. As the LORD liveth, ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the LORD'S anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his bolster.

The circumstances under which Abner was placed served to develop his real character and showed him to be ambitious and unprincipled. He had been intimately associated with Saul and had been influenced by the spirit of the king to despise the man whom God had chosen to reign over Israel. His hatred had been increased by the cutting rebuke that David had given him at the time when the cruse of water and the spear of the king had been taken from the side of Saul as he slept in the camp.

This reproof had rankled in his breast, and he determined to carry out his revengeful purpose and create division in Israel, whereby he himself might be exalted. He employed the representative of departed royalty to advance his own selfish ambitions and purposes. He knew that the people loved Jonathan. His memory was cherished, and Saul's first successful campaigns had not been forgotten by the army. With determination worthy a better cause, this rebellious leader went forward to carry out his plans.

6) Where did Ishbosheth reign?
2 Samuel 2:12 And Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, went out from _____ to Gibeon.

Mahanaim, on the farther side of Jordan, was chosen as the royal residence, since it offered the greatest security against attack, either from David or from the Philistines. Here the coronation of Ishbosheth took place. His reign was first accepted by the tribes east of Jordan and was finally extended over all Israel except Judah. For two years the son of Saul enjoyed his honors in his secluded capital. But Abner, intent upon extending his power over all Israel, prepared for aggressive warfare.

7) How did the kingdoms fare?
2 Samuel 3:1 Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed _____ and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed _____ and weaker.

At last treachery overthrew the throne that malice and ambition had established. Abner, becoming incensed against the weak and incompetent Ishbosheth, deserted to David, with the offer to bring over to him all the tribes of Israel. His proposals were accepted by the king, and he was dismissed with honor to accomplish his purpose. But the favorable reception of so valiant and famed a warrior excited the jealousy of Joab, the commander-in-chief of David's army.

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There was a blood feud between Abner and Joab, the former having slain Asahel, Joab's brother, during the war between Israel and Judah. Now Joab, seeing an opportunity to avenge his brother's death and rid himself of a prospective rival, basely took occasion to waylay and murder Abner.

8) How did David take the news of Abner's death?
2 Samuel 3:28-29 And afterward when David heard it, he said, I and my kingdom are _____ before the LORD for ever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner: Let it rest on the head of _____, and on all his father's house; and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth on the sword, or that lacketh bread.
9) What did David declare in honor of Abner?
2 Samuel 3:31-32 And David said to Joab, and to all the people that were with him, _____ your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And king David himself followed the bier. And they buried Abner in Hebron: and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the people _____.
10) What effect did this have over the rest of Israel?
2 Samuel 3:36-37 And all the people took notice of it, and it _____ them: as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people. For all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to _____ Abner the son of Ner.

Abner had been sincere in his offers and representations to David, yet his motives were base and selfish. He had persistently opposed the king of God's appointment, in the expectation of securing honor to himself. It was resentment, wounded pride, and passion that led him to forsake the cause he had so long served; and in deserting to David, he hoped to receive the highest position of honor in his service. Had he succeeded in his purpose, his talents and ambition, his great influence and want of godliness, would have endangered the throne of David and the peace and prosperity of the nation.

11) What was happening in Isbosheth's Kingdom?
2 Samuel 4:1 And when Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands were _____, and all the Israelites were troubled.
12) What happened to Ishbosheth?
2 Samuel 4:6-7 And they came thither into the midst of the house, as though they would have fetched wheat; and they smote him under the fifth _____: and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped. For when they came into the house, he lay on his bed in his bedchamber, and they smote him, and _____ him, and beheaded him, and took his head, and gat them away through the plain all night.

Ishbosheth was foully murdered by two of his captains, who, cutting off his head, hastened with it to the king of Judah, hoping thus to ingratiate themselves in his favor.

13) Was David well pleased to see his rival dead?
2 Samuel 4:9-10 And David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said unto them, As the LORD liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity, When one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead, thinking to have brought good tidings, I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag, who thought that I would have given him a _____ for his tidings:

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2 Samuel 4:11 How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed? shall I not therefore now require his _____ of your hand, and take you away from the earth?
2 Samuel 4:12 And David commanded his young men, and they slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and _____ them up over the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ishbosheth, and buried it in the sepulchre of Abner in Hebron.

After the death of Ishbosheth there was a general desire among the leading men of Israel that David should become king of all the tribes.

14) How does the Bible record what happened next?
2 Samuel 5:1-2 Then came all the tribes of Israel to _____ unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh. Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the LORD said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a _____ over Israel.
2 Samuel 5:3-4 So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a _____ with them in Hebron before the LORD: and they anointed David king over Israel. David was thirty years old when he began to _____, and he reigned forty years.

Thus, through the providence of God the way had been opened for him to come to the throne. He had no personal ambition to gratify, for he had not sought the honor to which he had been brought.

15) What was recorded about him?
2 Samuel 5:10 And David went on, and grew _____, and the LORD God of hosts was with him.

The revolution was quiet and dignified, befitting the great work they were doing. Nearly half a million souls, the former subjects of Saul, thronged Hebron and its environs. The very hills and valleys were alive with the multitudes. The hour for the coronation was appointed; the man who had been expelled from the court of Saul, who had fled to the mountains and hills and to the caves of the earth to preserve his life, was about to receive the highest honor that can be conferred upon man by his fellow man.

Priests and elders, clothed in the garments of their sacred office, officers and soldiers with glittering spear and helmet, and strangers from long distances, stood to witness the coronation of the chosen king. David was arrayed in the royal robe. The sacred oil was put upon his brow by the high priest, for the anointing by Samuel had been prophetic of what would take place at the inauguration of the king. The time had come, and David, by solemn rite, was consecrated to his office as God's vicegerent. The scepter was placed in his hands. The covenant of his righteous sovereignty was written, and the people gave their pledges of loyalty. The diadem was placed upon his brow, and the coronation ceremony was over. Israel had a king by divine appointment.

Can you see that God keeps His promises? **Would you like to fulfill God's plans for you?**

When is it time to humbly seek the LORD for guidance?

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