**2 Samuel 3. The rise and fall of Abner, 5/4/2018**

**Opening**

* Was David’s life perfect? Why did God say that he was a man after his own heart (合神心意的人, 1 Samuel 13:14)?
  + Who can be used by God? How? In a good way or in a bad way? Examples? Judas?
  + How about us?
* Coming back to the story of Liu Bang and Xiang Yu. What happened finally? Key stories?
  + What happens in general when two factions fight for the position of a king or emperor?
* Do you remember what we discussed last Friday? Introduction to 2 Samuel. David Hears of Saul's Death. David's Lament for Saul and Jonathan. David Anointed King of Judah. Ish-bosheth Made King of Israel. The Battle of Gibeon. What happened then?

**Outline** (ESV Study Bible)

1. Story of King David ([1:1–20:26](https://www.esv.org/2+Samuel+1-20/))
   1. David and the death of Saul ([1:1–27](https://www.esv.org/2+Samuel+1/))
   2. David becomes king ([2:1–5:5](https://www.esv.org/2+Samuel+2-5.5/))
   3. Jerusalem, the city of David ([5:6–25](https://www.esv.org/2+Samuel+5.6-25/))
   4. Zion, the place of worship ([6:1–23](https://www.esv.org/2+Samuel+6/))
   5. Davidic covenant: eternal throne ([7:1–29](https://www.esv.org/2+Samuel+7/))
   6. Catalog of David’s military activities ([8:1–18](https://www.esv.org/2+Samuel+8/))
   7. Mephibosheth ([9:1–13](https://www.esv.org/2+Samuel+9/))
   8. Israel-Ammon war ([10:1–12:31](https://www.esv.org/2+Samuel+10-12/))
      1. Beginning of Israel-Ammon war ([10:1–19](https://www.esv.org/2+Samuel+10/))
      2. David and Bathsheba ([11:1–12:25](https://www.esv.org/2+Samuel+11-12.25/))
      3. End of Israel-Ammon war ([12:26–31](https://www.esv.org/2+Samuel+12.26-31/))
   9. Absalom’s banishment and reinstatement ([13:1–14:33](https://www.esv.org/2+Samuel+13-14/))
   10. Absalom’s rebellion ([15:1–19:43](https://www.esv.org/2+Samuel+15-19/))
       1. Absalom’s conspiracy ([15:1–12](https://www.esv.org/2+Samuel+15.1-12/))
       2. David’s escape from Absalom ([15:13–16:14](https://www.esv.org/2+Samuel+15.13-16.14/))
       3. Ahithophel and Hushai ([16:15–17:23](https://www.esv.org/2+Samuel+16.15-17.23/))
       4. David arrives at Mahanaim ([17:24–29](https://www.esv.org/2+Samuel+17.24-29/))
       5. Death of Absalom ([18:1–19:8a](https://www.esv.org/2+Samuel+18-19.8/))
       6. David’s return to Jerusalem ([19:8b–43](https://www.esv.org/2+Samuel+19.8-43/))
   11. Sheba’s rebellion ([20:1–26](https://www.esv.org/2+Samuel+20/))
2. Epilogue ([21:1–24:25](https://www.esv.org/2+Samuel+21-24/))
   1. Famine and the death of Saul’s sons ([21:1–14](https://www.esv.org/2+Samuel+21.1-14/))
   2. Philistine wars ([21:15–22](https://www.esv.org/2+Samuel+21.15-22/))
   3. Song of David ([22:1–51](https://www.esv.org/2+Samuel+22/))
   4. Last words of David ([23:1–7](https://www.esv.org/2+Samuel+23.1-7/))
   5. David’s heroes ([23:8–39](https://www.esv.org/2+Samuel+23.8-39/))
   6. The census and the threshing floor ([24:1–25](https://www.esv.org/2+Samuel+24/))

**Abner Joins David (3:1-25)**

* Chapters 3–4 describe the slow steps of the process whereby David grew stronger and stronger (3:1) and thus became king over all Israel. A major concern of the author is to show that David was not guilty of involvement in the death of Abner or Ish-bosheth. ESV Study Bible.
* 2 Sam. 3:2–5 A list of David’s sons born in Hebron. David’s sons Amnon and Absalom come to the fore in chs. 13–18, and the struggle for the succession between Adonijah and Solomon is described in 1 Kings 1–2. The other sons are not mentioned in the narratives of Samuel – Kings. It is assumed that Chileab (called Daniel in 1 Chron. 3:1) died young, since he is not mentioned as a possible successor in 1 Kings 1. After the deaths of Amnon (2 Sam. 13:28–29) and Absalom (18:15), Adonijah is apparently the eldest surviving son of David. ESV Study Bible.
  + What else can you tell from these verses? Any of them had the same mom? Why not? Can you see David’s personality deficiency or political expediency here that eventually led to his downfall?
  + Remember that this is during the period when David is growing stronger and stronger.
* 2 Sam. 3:6–39 Abner, after a quarrel with Ish-bosheth, convinces the elders of Israel that they should go with David. But Abner is killed by Joab. The author repeatedly stresses that David had not consented to this (vv. 21, 26, 28, 37); indeed, since Abner was plotting to make David king of Israel, it would seem that David would have had nothing to gain and something to lose from Abner’s death. ESV Study Bible.
* 2 Sam. 3:7 Taking a king’s wives seems to have been considered a prerogative of the throne (see 12:8; 16:21–22; 1 Kings 2:22), though that is not necessarily what Abner had in mind, even if the accusation about his relationship with Rizpah was true. ESV Study Bible.
  + He neither denies nor owns the charge, and yet, by his not denying it, tacitly owns it; though, by his way of speaking, he suggests as if it was no fault at all, at least a very trifling one, and such as ought not to have been mentioned to him, considering the services he had done to Ish-bosheth and his family. Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible. http://biblehub.com/2\_samuel/3-8.htm
  + 3:7-21 Many, like Abner, are not above committing base crimes, who are too proud to bear reproof, or even the suspicion of being guilty. While men go on in sin, and apparently without concern, they are often conscious that they are fighting against God. Many mean to serve their own purposes; and will betray those who trust them, when they can get any advantage. Yet the Lord serves his own designs, even by those who are thus actuated by revenge, ambition, or lust; but as they intend not to honor him, in the end they will be thrown aside with contempt. Matthew Henry Commentary. http://biblehub.com/2\_samuel/3-8.htm
* 2 Sam. 3:9–10 As Saul’s general, Abner must have known about Saul’s recognition of David as his successor (1 Sam. 24:20). People in general also seem to have had knowledge about a promise of God to David (2 Sam. 3:18; see also 1 Sam. 24:4; 25:30). ESV Study Bible.
  + 1 Sam. 16:1. The Lord said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.”
  + 1 Sam. 16:13. Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah.
  + 1 Sam. 24:20. And now, behold, I know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand.
* 2 Sam. 3:12–15 David clearly does not mind taking the Israelite kingdom from Ish-bosheth, and he stresses his closeness to Saul as Saul’s son-in-law. In 1 Sam. 18:25–27, David gave Saul 200 Philistine foreskins though Saul had demanded only 100 as a bride-price, so the extra hundred was in essence a gift. David here just states that he has legally paid the bride-price. Apparently because David never divorced Michal even though her father Saul had given her to another man (1 Sam. 25:44), he still describes her as his wife. David presumably expects Abner to support David’s argument when the matter is discussed in Ish-bosheth’s court. ESV Study Bible.
  + 1 Sam. 18:20. Now Saul's daughter Michal loved David. And they told Saul, and the thing pleased him.
  + 1 Sam. 18:25–27. Then Saul said, “Thus shall you say to David, ‘The king desires no bride-price except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, that he may be avenged of the king's enemies.’” Now Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son-in-law. Before the time had expired, David arose and went, along with his men, and killed two hundred of the Philistines. And David brought their foreskins, which were given in full number to the king, that he might become the king's son-in-law. And Saul gave him his daughter Michal for a wife.
  + 1 Sam. 25:44. Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Palti the son of Laish, who was of Gallim.
* 2 Sam. 3:17–19 The Israelites, even the members of Saul’s own tribe of Benjamin, seem to think they are getting nowhere with Ish-bosheth as king. ESV Study Bible.
* Discussion
  + Why didn’t David want to fight against Saul but was willing to fight against his son Ish-bosheth? Saul was anointed by God but not Ish-bosheth.
  + 2 Sam. 3:24-25. Why did Joab say such things to David?
    - Perhaps Abner killed his brother earlier, or perhaps Joab was afraid of his own position if Abner took major positions in the kingdom later on.

**Joab Murders Abner and David Mourns Abner (3:26-39)**

* 2 Sam. 3:22–30 Here, as in 18:14 and 20:10, the motive for Joab’s actions in killing Abner can be seen either as concern for David’s position (3:25), concern for his own position (esp. since David had not told him what was going on, v. 23), personal revenge (v. 30), or a mixture. The readers are not told exactly what part Abishai (v. 30) plays, but he seems to have been a loyal supporter of his brother Joab (see 10:9–12; 18:2; 20:6–10). ESV Study Bible.
* 2 Sam. 3:28–39 Joab is apparently too important and useful for David to punish him for killing Abner, so he does the best he can by cursing him, having a funeral for Abner, and publicly mourning and chanting a lament for him. This is the only funeral described in detail in the OT. As elsewhere, tearing clothes, wearing sackcloth, and fasting are features of mourning. All Israel refers to Abner’s own countrymen. It was important for David and his future kingdom that “all Israel” know it was not the king’s will to put to death Abner son of Ner. ESV Study Bible.
  + In this crucial hour when David’s relationship to the northern tribes hung in the balance, he appears not to have felt sufficiently secure in his own position to bring Joab publicly to justice. The crime went unpunished until early in the reign of Solomon (1 King 2:5-6; 29-34).
* Discussion
  + What was the relationship between Ish-bosheth and Abner? The relationship between David and Joab? Why? Can you now understand what David said in v. 39?

**Wrapping up**

* From this chapter, can we see who were used by God? In a good way or in a bad way? How about us?
* What are your favorite verses?

Peter Luh, David Tai, Mu-Ping Nieh and Chunlong Liu, 5/1/2018

Copyright UCBSG, UConn Chinese Bible Study Group, 2018