

# Making Promises

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## Part 6: The Kingdom

### Review

- Second Samuel begins as 1 Samuel ends—with an account of the death of King Saul and his son Jonathan, the heir apparent. Immediately after Saul's death at Gilboa, an Amalekite came to David at Ziklag and gave him the sad news that both the king and his son were slain.
- The messenger, hoping to get a reward from David, told him that he had personally killed Saul. David ordered the lying Amalekite messenger to be put to death because he lifted his hand against the Lord's anointed (or at least lied about it).
- David makes no move before he seeks direction from Yahweh, and the Lord authorizes David to leave Ziklag for Hebron of Judah. Abner, Saul's cousin and the captain of his army, makes Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, king over Israel.

### The "Nation" of Israel

- The eighty-year period of the reigns of David and Solomon is in many respects the **golden age** of Israel's long history. Up to this point, even in the best years of Saul, Israel hardly warranted the name "kingdom" or even "state" there had not emerged a significant recognition of fundamental political unity.
  - ▶ The whole burden of **the book of Judges** was the lament that there was no king in Israel; the people did not even view God as their king. Consequently, there was no political oneness.
  - ▶ Joshua was more a **covenant mediator** and **military leader** than politician.
  - ▶ The period of the judges to the reign of Saul (~1366-1051 BC) gave rise to the **occupation of territories**, but only served to further **disintegrate** Israel's solidarity.
  - ▶ The office of **elder** survived, but in only extraordinary circumstances did they exercise any kind of decisive leadership. The age was marked by **anarchy**, due to **covenant infidelity** (*Judg. 2:11-23*).
  - ▶ **Geography** also played a role in the dissolution of Israel's unity (*Josh. 22:13-20; Judg. 12:1-6*). When Deborah solicited help from the tribes of the east and south, she received none (*Judg. 5:12-18*).
- The rise of the monarchy under Saul did little to heal the ever-widening breach

between **Judah** and **the northern tribes**. As an example of this division, when Saul issued a call to arms to deliver Jabesh Gilead from **Ammon**, three hundred thousand men came from Israel and thirty thousand from Judah. A similar problem happened against **Amalek** (**1 Sam. 11:8; 1 Sam. 15:4**).

- ▶ After David killed Goliath, “the men of **Israel** and **Judah**” pursued the Philistines (**1 Sam. 17:52**), and when David became attached to Saul’s court, “all Israel and Judah” **loved him** (**1 Sam. 18:16**). It is clear that Israel and Judah were perceived as **two entities** following their own separate interests.

## Abner

- Having made Ish-bosheth king over the northern tribes, Abner takes an **aggressive position** in the fight against David and the southern tribe of Judah. Abner and his men made their way from Mahanaim to Gibeon (**2 Sam. 2:12-17**).
  - ▶ What takes place then in the rest of chapter 2 is not a civil conflict erupting from a chance encounter between northern and southern militia. It is Abner’s deliberate attempt to impose **northern might** on David’s Judean kingdom. Not only does Abner come on the offensive, he also instigated the 12-on-12 battle with Joab’s men, but it ended in a draw.
  - ▶ **Yahweh** had acted and had sent a clear message: He was not **taking sides** in this battle. There are no winners if **Israel** goes to war with **Israel**; when twelve fight against twelve, all twenty-four fall! But Abner and Joab did not draw this lesson from the event. Instead, this symbolic civil war turned into a real civil war, and David’s efforts to **keep Israel together** went up in flames.
- As Abner was fleeing from Asahel, he gave Asahel two opportunities **to turn back**. Asahel would not listen, and in the end Abner has no choice but to defend himself (**2 Sam. 2:18-23**).
  - ▶ Instead of getting rid of pursuit, Abner found himself **pursued** by Asahel’s two brothers, Joab and Abishai. He gathered his men on a hill in the wilderness of **Gibeon**, and from this strategic position he addressed Joab, urging him to give up the fight before all of them were killed (**2 Sam. 2:24-28**).
  - ▶ Joab agreed to call off his men and he returned to Hebron, but Abner’s losses were **much greater** (**2 Sam. 2:29-32**).
- Abner clearly knew that Yahweh had promised David the kingship (**2 Sam. 3:9–10, 17–18**), so his sin is that he is so **brazen** as to assume that the Lord’s plans to place David on the throne over all of Israel would ever be **thwarted**.

**Part 6: The Kingdom**

<p><b>Judges 2:11–23</b></p>	<p>11 And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals. 12 And they abandoned the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them. And they provoked the Lord to anger. 13 They abandoned the Lord and served the Baals and the Ashtaroth. 14 So the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them. And he sold them into the hand of their surrounding enemies, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies. 15 Whenever they marched out, the hand of the Lord was against them for harm, as the Lord had warned, and as the Lord had sworn to them. And they were in terrible distress. 16 Then the Lord raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them. 17 Yet they did not listen to their judges, for they whored after other gods and bowed down to them. They soon turned aside from the way in which their fathers had walked, who had obeyed the commandments of the Lord, and they did not do so. 18 Whenever the Lord raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge, and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. For the Lord was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who afflicted and oppressed them. 19 But whenever the judge died, they turned back and were more corrupt than their fathers, going after other gods, serving them and bowing down to them. They did not drop any of their practices or their stubborn ways. 20 So the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he said, "Because this people have transgressed my covenant that I commanded their fathers and have not obeyed my voice, 21 I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations that Joshua left when he died, 22 in order to test Israel by them, whether they will take care to walk in the way of the Lord as their fathers did, or not." 23 So the Lord left those nations, not driving them out quickly, and he did not give them into the hand of Joshua.</p>
<p><b>Joshua 22:13– 20</b></p>	<p>13 Then the people of Israel sent to the people of Reuben and the people of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh, in the land of Gilead, Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, 14 and with him ten chiefs, one from each of the tribal families of Israel, every one of them the head of a family among the clans of Israel. 15 And they came to the people of Reuben, the people of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, in the land of Gilead, and they said to them, 16 "Thus says the whole congregation of the Lord, 'What is this breach of faith that you have committed against the God of Israel in turning away this day from following the Lord by building yourselves an altar this day in rebellion against the Lord? 17 Have we not had enough of the sin at Peor from which even yet we have not cleansed ourselves, and for which there came a plague upon the congregation of the Lord, 18 that you too must turn away this day from following the Lord? And if you too rebel against the Lord today then tomorrow he will be angry with the whole congregation of Israel. 19 But now, if the land of your possession is unclean, pass over into the Lord's land where the Lord's tabernacle stands, and take for yourselves a possession among us. Only do not rebel against the Lord or make us as rebels by building for yourselves an altar other than the altar of the Lord our God. 20 Did not Achan the son of Zerah break faith in the matter of the devoted things, and wrath fell upon all the congregation of Israel? And he did not perish alone for his iniquity.' "</p>
<p><b>Judges 12:1–6</b></p>	<p>1 The men of Ephraim were called to arms, and they crossed to Zaphon and said to Jephthah, "Why did you cross over to fight against the Ammonites and did not call us to go with you? We will burn your house over you with fire." 2 And Jephthah said to them, "I and my people had a great dispute with the Ammonites, and when I called you, you did not save me from their hand. 3 And when I saw that you would not save me, I took my life in my hand and crossed over against the Ammonites, and the Lord gave them into my hand. Why then have you come up to me this day to fight against me?" 4 Then Jephthah gathered all the men of Gilead and fought with Ephraim. And the men of Gilead struck Ephraim, because they said, "You are fugitives of Ephraim, you Gileadites, in the midst of Ephraim and Manasseh." 5 And the Gileadites captured the fords of the Jordan against the Ephraimites. And when any of the fugitives of Ephraim said, "Let me go over," the men of Gilead said to him, "Are you an Ephraimite?" When he said, "No," 6 they said to him, "Then say Shibboleth," and he said, "Sibboleth," for he could not pronounce it right. Then they seized him and slaughtered him at the fords of the Jordan. At that time 42,000 of the Ephraimites fell.</p>

<p><b>Judges 5:12-18</b></p>	<p>12 "Awake, awake, Deborah! Awake, awake, break out in a song! Arise, Barak, lead away your captives, O son of Abinoam. 13 Then down marched the remnant of the noble; the people of the Lord marched down for me against the mighty. 14 From Ephraim their root they marched down into the valley, following you, Benjamin, with your kinsmen; from Machir marched down the commanders, and from Zebulun those who bear the lieutenant's staff; 15 the princes of Issachar came with Deborah, and Issachar faithful to Barak; into the valley they rushed at his heels. Among the clans of Reuben there were great searchings of heart. 16 Why did you sit still among the sheepfolds, to hear the whistling for the flocks? Among the clans of Reuben there were great searchings of heart. 17 Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan; and Dan, why did he stay with the ships? Asher sat still at the coast of the sea, staying by his landings. 18 Zebulun is a people who risked their lives to the death; Naphtali, too, on the heights of the field.</p>
<p><b>1 Samuel 11:8</b></p>	<p>When he mustered them at Bezek, the people of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand.</p>
<p><b>1 Samuel 15:4</b></p>	<p>So Saul summoned the people and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand men on foot, and ten thousand men of Judah.</p>
<p><b>1 Samuel 17:52</b></p>	<p>And the men of Israel and Judah rose with a shout and pursued the Philistines as far as Gath and the gates of Ekron, so that the wounded Philistines fell on the way from Shaaraim as far as Gath and Ekron.</p>
<p><b>1 Samuel 18:16</b></p>	<p>But all Israel and Judah loved David, for he went out and came in before them.</p>
<p><b>2 Samuel 2:12-17</b></p>	<p>12 Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon. 13 And Joab the son of Zeruiah and the servants of David went out and met them at the pool of Gibeon. And they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool. 14 And Abner said to Joab, "Let the young men arise and compete before us." And Joab said, "Let them arise." 15 Then they arose and passed over by number, twelve for Benjamin and Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David. 16 And each caught his opponent by the head and thrust his sword in his opponent's side, so they fell down together. Therefore that place was called Helkath-hazzurim, which is at Gibeon. 17 And the battle was very fierce that day. And Abner and the men of Israel were beaten before the servants of David.</p>
<p><b>2 Samuel 2:18-23</b></p>	<p>18 And the three sons of Zeruiah were there, Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. Now Asahel was as swift of foot as a wild gazelle. 19 And Asahel pursued Abner, and as he went, he turned neither to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner. 20 Then Abner looked behind him and said, "Is it you, Asahel?" And he answered, "It is I." 21 Abner said to him, "Turn aside to your right hand or to your left, and seize one of the young men and take his spoil." But Asahel would not turn aside from following him. 22 And Abner said again to Asahel, "Turn aside from following me. Why should I strike you to the ground? How then could I lift up my face to your brother Joab?" 23 But he refused to turn aside. Therefore Abner struck him in the stomach with the butt of his spear, so that the spear came out at his back. And he fell there and died where he was. And all who came to the place where Asahel had fallen and died, stood still.</p>

<p><b>Numbers 35:9-34</b></p>	<p>9 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 10 "Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, 11 then you shall select cities to be cities of refuge for you, that the manslayer who kills any person without intent may flee there. 12 The cities shall be for you a refuge from the avenger, that the manslayer may not die until he stands before the congregation for judgment. 13 And the cities that you give shall be your six cities of refuge. 14 You shall give three cities beyond the Jordan, and three cities in the land of Canaan, to be cities of refuge. 15 These six cities shall be for refuge for the people of Israel, and for the stranger and for the sojourner among them, that anyone who kills any person without intent may flee there. 16 "But if he struck him down with an iron object, so that he died, he is a murderer. The murderer shall be put to death. 17 And if he struck him down with a stone tool that could cause death, and he died, he is a murderer. The murderer shall be put to death. 18 Or if he struck him down with a wooden tool that could cause death, and he died, he is a murderer. The murderer shall be put to death. 19 The avenger of blood shall himself put the murderer to death; when he meets him, he shall put him to death. 20 And if he pushed him out of hatred or hurled something at him, lying in wait, so that he died, 21 or in enmity struck him down with his hand, so that he died, then he who struck the blow shall be put to death. He is a murderer. The avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death when he meets him. 22 "But if he pushed him suddenly without enmity, or hurled anything on him without lying in wait 23 or used a stone that could cause death, and without seeing him dropped it on him, so that he died, though he was not his enemy and did not seek his harm, 24 then the congregation shall judge between the manslayer and the avenger of blood, in accordance with these rules. 25 And the congregation shall rescue the manslayer from the hand of the avenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to his city of refuge to which he had fled, and he shall live in it until the death of the high priest who was anointed with the holy oil. 26 But if the manslayer shall at any time go beyond the boundaries of his city of refuge to which he fled, 27 and the avenger of blood finds him outside the boundaries of his city of refuge, and the avenger of blood kills the manslayer, he shall not be guilty of blood. 28 For he must remain in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest, but after the death of the high priest the manslayer may return to the land of his possession. 29 And these things shall be for a statute and rule for you throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. 30 "If anyone kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the evidence of witnesses. But no person shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness. 31 Moreover, you shall accept no ransom for the life of a murderer, who is guilty of death, but he shall be put to death. 32 And you shall accept no ransom for him who has fled to his city of refuge, that he may return to dwell in the land before the death of the high priest. 33 You shall not pollute the land in which you live, for blood pollutes the land, and no atonement can be made for the land for the blood that is shed in it, except by the blood of the one who shed it. 34 You shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell, for I the Lord dwell in the midst of the people of Israel."</p>
<p><b>2 Samuel 3:9-10</b></p>	<p>9 God do so to Abner and more also, if I do not accomplish for David what the Lord has sworn to him, 10 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."</p>
<p><b>2 Samuel 3:17-18</b></p>	<p>17 And Abner conferred with the elders of Israel, saying, "For some time past you have been seeking David as king over you. 18 Now then bring it about, for the Lord has promised 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.' "</p>