



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

2 Samuel 2:1-32

“David: The Shepherd King of Judah”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] For those of you who may be visiting, you do not know perhaps that we are studying the life of David, looking preeminently at the practical lessons that appear in the scriptural account of his life. And we are in the course of the exposition at 2 Samuel chapter 2. Saul has been slain and now the right of accession to the throne is at issue. And for our Scripture reading today we are reading the entire 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter. Beginning with verse 1, the author of 2 Samuel writes.

“It happened after this that David inquired of the Lord, saying, ‘Shall I go up to any of the cities of Judah?’ And the Lord said to him, ‘Go up.’ David said, ‘Where shall I go up?’ And He said, ‘To Hebron.’ So David went up there, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite. And David brought up the men who were with him, every man with his household. So they dwelt in the cities of Hebron. Then the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, ‘The men of Jabesh Gilead were the ones who buried Saul.’ So David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh Gilead, and said to them, ‘You are blessed of the Lord, for you have shown this kindness to your Lord, to Saul, and have buried him. And now may the Lord show kindness and truth to you. I

also will repay you this kindness, because you have done this thing. Now therefore, let your hands be strengthened, and be valiant; for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah has anointed me king over them.’ But Abner the son of Ner, commander of Saul’s army, took Ishbosheth the son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim; and he made him king over Gilead, over the Ashurites, over Jezreel, over Ephraim, over Benjamin, and over all Israel.”

You might say simply this, that Mahanaim was to the east of the Jordan river and therefore this was in somewhat safe territory for Ishbosheth, who was the only son of Saul left, and a rather weak man. And Abner wanted to protect him, no doubt, and so that’s why he was taken over to Mahanaim. Verse 10.

“Ishbosheth, Saul’s son, was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned two years. Only the house of Judah followed David. And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months. Now Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon.”

And again, one word of explanation, Abner was the equivalent of the general of Saul’s army and, thus, probably the most important man in the kingdom by far. And he evidently is looking for a fight.

“And Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David, went out and met them by the pool of Gibeon. So they sat down, one on one side of the pool and the other on the other side of the pool. Then Abner said to Joab, ‘Let the young men now arise and compete before us.’ And Joab said, ‘Let them arise.’ So they arose and went over by number, twelve from Benjamin, followers of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, and twelve from the

servants of David. And each one grasped his opponent by the head and thrust his sword in his opponent's side; so they fell down together. Therefore that place was called the Field of Sharp Swords, which is in Gibeon.”

It's not exactly clear exactly what happened, whether this was something like Russian roulette and each plunged his sword into the side of his opponent, or whether this took place over a period of time. But, it's evident that all of them suffered as a result of this prelude to the battle that followed. In verse 17,

“So there was a very fierce battle that day, and Abner and the men of Israel were beaten before the servants of David. Now the three sons of Zeruiah were there: Joab and Abishai and Asahel. And Asahel was as fleet of foot as a wild gazelle.”

One word, another word of explanation, Zeruiah was the sister of David, and so these three individuals, Joab, Abishai, and Asahel were nephews of David. Verse 19.

“So Asahel pursued Abner, and in going he did not turn to the right hand or to the left from following Abner. Then Abner looked behind him and said, ‘Are you Asahel?’ He answered, ‘I am.’ And Abner said to him, ‘Turn aside to your right hand or to your left, and lay hold on one of the young men and take his armor for yourself.’”

It's quite obvious that Abner thought it would be rather easy to get rid of Asahel and he didn't want to slay this younger man who was not equipped to handle an experienced warrior like Abner and he did what he could to avoid it.

“So Abner said again to Asahel [Verse 22], ‘Turn aside from following me. Why should I strike you to the ground? How then could I face your brother Joab?’ However, he refused

to turn aside. Therefore Abner struck him in the stomach with the blunt end of the spear, so that the spear came out of his back; and he fell down there and died on the spot. [I think we can understand that.] So it was that as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died, stood still. Joab and Abishai also pursued Abner. And the sun was going down when they came to the hill of Ammah, which *is* before Giah by the road to the Wilderness of Gibeon. Now the children of Benjamin gathered together behind Abner and became a unit, and took their stand on top of a hill.”

And you'll also remember that Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin and therefore it's not surprising that they should be prominent in this representation of the tribes of Israel. So the reference to Benjamin is because they were, evidently, the chief of the warriors in the army of Abner. And, remember, the Philistines control a large part of the land as a result of the battle at Gilboa. Verse 26.

“Then Abner called to Joab and said, ‘Shall the sword devour forever? Do you not know that it will be bitter in the latter end? How long will it be then until you tell the people to return from pursuing their brethren?’ And Joab said, ‘As God lives, unless you had spoken, surely then by morning all the people would have given up pursuing their brethren.’ So Joab blew a trumpet; and all the people stood still and did not pursue Israel anymore, nor did they fight anymore.”

That 27<sup>th</sup> verse, incidentally, is rather difficult to render. Now, there are a few in the audience who may know some Hebrew, but if you look at this, you'll find it's rather difficult to be certain of the sense. The general sense given by the majority of interpreters and students is, “If you had not spoken,” Joab is speaking, “Surely the men would not have given up the pursuit of their brethren until the morning.” In other words, Joab is

saying, “If you had not said what you have said, then we would have pursued you through the evening and into the morning.”

On the other hand, it’s possible that Joab is referring to the first gathering at the pool of Gibeon and he is referring to that. And he is saying, “If you had not spoken,” that is, if you had not challenged us to the combat where the twenty-four men fought, “If you had not spoken, the people would have gone away in the morning.” In other words, we would have stood looking at each other across the pool. We didn’t want to fight. You made us fight. We would have gone away in the morning, every one from his brother, so there would not have been any fratricidal conflict at all.

It’s difficult to know exactly how the Hebrew text should be rendered there. I’ve read that a number of times and I still have a little bit of question about it. But we’ll take it at least to indicate that Joab and Abner at this point terminated their struggle. In verse 28, we read.

“So Joab blew a trumpet; and all the people stood still and did not pursue Israel anymore, nor did they fight anymore. Then Abner and his men went on all that night through the plain, crossed over the Jordan, and went through all Bithron; and they came to Mahanaim. So Joab returned from pursuing Abner. And when he had gathered all the people together, there were missing of David’s servants nineteen men and Asahel. But the servants of David had struck down, of Benjamin and Abner’s men, three hundred and sixty men who died. Then they took up Asahel and buried him in his father’s tomb, which was in Bethlehem. And Joab and his men went all night, and they came to Hebron at daybreak.”

You know, when Bible expositors look at a passage like this, they say, “I think I’ll go on to the next chapter.” [Laughter] Because, it’s not easy to expound a chapter like this to a general audience such as you are. But one of the great things of biblical

exposition is that we do have such chapters as this and, therefore, it's important that we give them attention just as well as those, which appear to us to be more rewarding so far as public exposition is concerned.

I've often thought of John Calvin, who expounded the Scriptures, chapter by chapter in Geneva. And at the difficulty, no doubt, that he and others who have tried to follow that, have had from time to time, but there usually is some significant lesson or lessons to be found in any portion of the word of God. And, I think, and at least I hope I'm able to make it plain, that there is significant lesson or lessons in the verses that we've read.

Now, we're taking a little more time this morning because of the announcement and I'll try, when the time comes for the message to be given, to center attention on the major lesson. I hope you'll read this chapter for yourself and that you'll ponder it as you continue to study with me the life of David.

But, let's look now to the Lord in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for all of the Scripture. We thank Thee for the chapters that appear, obviously, interesting to us and rewarding as we reflect upon their contents. And we also thank Thee Lord for those that are difficult; some that are hard to be understand. And some that appear to be unrewarding. We know that the entire word of God has been given with a specific purpose in mind to point us toward him who loved us and gave himself a sacrifice for sin for us for we surely have need of that. And we are grateful for the message that they proclaim in all of the parts of this marvelous book. We pray that we may learn the lesson today that 2 Samuel chapter 2 has for us.

We thank Thee Lord for Believers Chapel and its ministries and we pray Thy blessing upon it as it seeks in the present day to reach men and women and children for the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we pray that we as individuals may be responsive to the will of God for each one of us.

We pray for this country, for our President, for others associated with him and especially in the critical days that have to do with the confrontation in the Near East. We pray that Thou wilt give our President wisdom and guidance and that the decisions that are taken may be pleasing to Thee and that our forces may have Thy protecting hand over them.

We pray for the whole Church of Christ. We pray for the Chapel and its ministries, for its elders and deacons, for the tape ministry and those who sacrificially and voluntarily work in it, for the radio ministry and for any publications that go forth. We are grateful Lord for the provision that makes these things possible. And for those who listen over the radio, we pray for them. We thank Thee for the letters that we receive from them saying that they have profited. And we pray for the sick. We ask Thy blessing upon them, give encouragement and answers to their petitions.

And Lord, glorify Thy name in the provision that Thou dost make for each one of us in our needs; for we all have needs. Be with us as we sing, as we hear the word of God.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] The subject for today is, “David: The Shepherd King of Judah.” Now, underline at this point the word Judah because we are looking at David as the king of Judah, not as the king of Israel, but as the king of Judah. Saul has left the scene, having been slain by the Philistines and to all intents and purposes, David is soon to reach his divinely promised destiny.

You may remember that Samuel anointed him in Bethlehem in a private anointing as the one who would succeed Saul as king of Israel. If you reflect upon that and realize that for years David has been the anointed king but, nevertheless, has lived in remarkable passiveness and patience. I think you can understand something of the faith that underneath all of his experiences has been a part of his life. But now his remarkable

passiveness illustrated most clearly in his refusal to slay Saul when he had opportunities to do it, is to be rewarded. After the long night of waiting, David's day is in process of coming.

And a question that naturally arises as you think about that is, how is David going to respond to the fact that now, no longer a fugitive in the sense that he was before, no longer having someone like Saul and the armies of Israel seeking him constantly, no longer living in the caves and in the wilderness, how will he respond to the new position in which he finds himself? Will the subtle perils of success, as has often happened in the cases of individuals who have come to success, overcome him? Will the strength that he acquired in his adversity keep him in dependence and submission to the Lord?

One can look at heroes of Scriptures such as Joseph and reflect upon the fact that the years that Joseph spent when he was suffering were years that gave him the kind of moral strength for the authority that ultimately became his as the Prime Minister of Egypt. Or one can think of Paul in Arabia and see how, obviously, the years that he spent, or the months or whatever the time it really was, that time that he spent in Arabia was a time that had definite purpose in his life preparing him for the future that lay before him. But David has spent his time in the wilderness and in the caves and now we ask the question, Will what he has learned be the strength that will enable him to confront what now he faces? Or will his new power and authority be tempered by caution and consideration?

One of the great tests of those that are in power and authority, and the great temptation is to use it falsely. So will his new power and his new authority be tempered by caution and consideration? Will in his life as king of Judah and ultimately of Israel as a whole, will he be in that an anticipation and illustration of our Lord Jesus Christ, who came with the authority of heaven as the Son of God, the Eternal Son, but nevertheless had the most generous feelings towards the neglected and overlooked, the one who could stand and watch the Israelites casting money into the treasury and seeing the rich men casting in their funds and Mark tells us they gave much. But then, upon seeing the



widow come with her two Mites and then adding the widow gave more than they all. So there are some tests that David is going to face and the questions for those who read his life's story will be these questions; perhaps others as well.

Now, to summarize the chapter because of the limited time that we have, in the first seven verses the author of the book tells us of David's removal from Ziklag, where he had been, to Hebron, the ancient and important city. And then, in verse 8, 9, 10 and 11, we have the account of the coronation of Israel's new king, Ishbosheth, arranged fundamentally by Abner, the general of Saul's army, who was left.

And then finally, the last verses of the chapter, verse 12 through verse 32, are verses that have to do with the fratricidal strife that arose between Judah and Israel, and specifically as it was headed up in the struggle of Abner, the general of Saul's army, and Joab, the general of David's army. It was the beginning of a civil war for a time.

Now, these are the main sections of the chapter and, with that in mind, I'd like to make just a few comments about each one of these sections and then close with some comments about the general lessons that appear to me to be foremost in chapter 2 of 2 Samuel.

In the section in which David's removal to Hebron is described, our author says in verse 1, “It happened after this that David inquired of the Lord, saying, “Shall I go up to any of the cities of Judah?” And the Lord said to him, “Go up.” And David said, “Where shall I go up?” And He said, “To Hebron.”

I think that's so interesting because when he asks for guidance, God gives him general guidance and David, not wanting just simply general guidance, asks specifically after he is told to go up, “Where shall I go up?” And the Lord replies specifically, “Go to Hebron.”

Now, whether there was also from David's standpoint an interest in going to Hebron or not, we are not specifically told. But it seems extremely likely, after all, he was from the general territory of Bethlehem and, perhaps also, he was interested in going up

because he knew that Saul had been slain, the Israelites had been defeated at the battle of Gilboa, and therefore the threat of the Philistines to the land was no doubt upon his mind, as well. But, at any rate, he removes from Ziklag and he goes up to the great and distinguished place of Hebron, very important in the lives of the Patriarchs and, consequently, then and important place for David. But beside all of that, I want you to notice the very first line. “It happened after this that David inquired of the Lord.”

Now, that indicates itself that for David there is some spiritual growth. It wasn't long ago, too long ago, when we read in chapter 27 of 1 Samuel in verse 1, “And David said in his heart, “Now I shall perish some day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape to the land of the Philistines; and Saul will despair of me to seek me anymore in any part of Israel. So I shall escape out of his hand.” What a difference there is between saying “in ones heart” and inquiring of the Lord. Now, I don't think there is any greater practical lesson in this chapter than that and that is simply that in the decisions of life, the first responsibility, not only the first responsibility but the first hope of success, is to inquire of the Lord. If there are any people, if there is any person or any people who need to inquire of the Lord, it is you and I. We are sinners. It is not within us, as Jeremiah said, to direct our paths. These are his words that he expresses and I think expresses so beautifully. “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.” It's so important for Christians to realize that we do not have within ourselves the power of direction in our lives. And so, when I see David inquiring of the Lord, then that's precisely what we urgently need, to inquire of the Lord. Steps before us in any part of our lives are first to be brought before the Lord. We urgently need it.

David, himself, says we should diligently seek it, in his psalms he speaks often of this. And, furthermore, he goes on to say that God graciously gives it. In fact, it's David who says that the Lord will guide us with or by his eye. So, we need it. We should diligently seek it, Scripture says. And God graciously affords that guidance. And, note

here how readily he does it. I don't guess we can go so far as to say that He always guides in the way in which he guided David in this case. It seems to be an obvious quick answer. How often, however, David may have said something about this to the Lord, we are not told. But, at least, it was request and request answered.

And, of course, if we look carefully at this, I think that you will see that the way in which he did it was the way in which we should ask for guidance ourselves. One commentator has said, “If we would possess temporal things with a blessing, we must not eagerly seize upon them, nor be determined by favorable events or carnal counsel, but we must observe the rules of God's word. Pray for his direction using those means and those only which he has appointed or allowed and avoid all evil or appearance of evil in our pursuit of them. And then what ever else we fail in, we shall be directed in the way to the kingdom of the Lord God. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart. Lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him. And then the great promise, he shall direct thy paths.” How, constantly, this lesson is something that we should follow in our daily lives? Nothing could be more significant than that.

At any rate, David goes up. He takes his two wives with him. And, incidentally, the reference to them may be an indication, a kind of hint, of the future weakness of David; for this was a definite weakness in David's life that will flare up from time to time. They go into the cities of Hebron; or, evidently, the area around Hebron. He doesn't forget his companions who have fought with him and suffered with him, in his exile, but he brings them up and he brings their families up with him, as well. Those who have suffered with him will reign with him, just as those in our day who have suffered with our Lord. So Paul tells us we will reign with Him as well.

And there, in Hebron, they anointed him. This is second anointing. They anointed him King of Judah. It's kind of a king in reversion, because he doesn't have anything yet, by possession; but, only Judah. Ultimately, he will have the land of Israel and Judah as well. But they anointed him there, as king. Up to this point, he has been a

king in the mind and purpose of God. But now, partially, it becomes his in possession. It's almost as if our Lord, of whom David is the type, who himself enters into his inheritance in steps. And the New Testament tells us those steps very plainly.

Well, Abner is not keeping idle. Saul has been slain but Abner, his general, desires power. Only one of Saul's sons is left. Jonathan is gone. Others have gone. And Ishbosheth, the name from the Hebrew probably means 'man of shame' but there is some doubt about it, so I don't want to lay any stress on the precise meaning of it. Ishbosheth, evidently, a weak person, but now a strong general wants authority for himself. And the very fact that verse 8 begins, "But Abner" suggests a problem.

David, quietly, offers no resistance to what is happening. He had promised, remember, that he would not do anything against Saul's seed. He had made that promise way back in about the 20<sup>th</sup> chapter of 1 Samuel, extracted from David by Saul himself, you'll remember. And so he is quiet. He does not seize the throne. He waits for God's guidance.

And so Abner taking the weak son of Saul to the east of the river Jordan, there he is crowned, for safety's sake. And, if you read behind the lines, I think that you will immediately note that this is contrary to the will of God because it had already been stated by Samuel, the prophet, and everyone knew this that David was the one to succeed Saul. But Abner in rebellion is anointing Ishbosheth as the successor to Saul, contrary to the prophetic word from Samuel.

There are a few historical and temporal details in verses 10 and 11 that are unimportant for the purpose today and I'd like to say just a few words about the fratricidal strife that results; civil war.

The 12<sup>th</sup> verse, again, begins, "Now Abner the son of Ner." Evidently, there was a kind of stalemate for awhile. David has been anointed king in Hebron. Ishbosheth has been proclaimed king to the east of the Jordan by Abner and the men of Benjamin and

others who had gathered to them. And so, for a time, there is no warfare but Abner decides that the stalemate should come to an end. And so, the stalemate is broken.

And we read, “Now Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim [east of the Jordan] to Gibeon. And Joab, the son of Zeruiah, and the servant of David, went out and met them by the pool of Gibeon.”

Now, I suggest to you that this was of Abner’s determination, it was a coarse challenge that was given to the southern kingdom of David. And so around the pool of Gibeon, there is this savage, reckless brutal butchery. And what we learn from it, of course, is that right is not established by the chance superiority of might, which Abner thought that he had at that point. The custom of having little preludes before the real battle began, as the twenty-four men, twelve on each side, is not unheard of in ancient times. And so, perhaps, it was known that this was a prelude to the battle that would follow. But, at any rate, it does happen. And as a result of it, there is a fierce battle and the men of Saul are defeated.

But Asahel, one of the brothers of Joab, pursues Abner. Now why he pursued Abner, I don’t know. He was fleet of foot. He knew that, perhaps, he could catch him. He was like a Jerry Rice of the 49’ers [Laughter] fleet of foot, and he thought that this is my opportunity to catch Abner and make a name for myself, perhaps. Or, it could be that he was just indignant over the useless slaughter that Abner had brought about by his challenge to the southern kingdom.

At any rate, he learns an important lesson but, unfortunately, doesn’t have an opportunity to learn any further ones. He learns that the race is not always to the swift. That sometimes it’s to the experienced. And, finally, when he catches Abner and Abner turns to him and, in a sense, pleads with him to not try to do what he obviously is trying to do, because he was unequipped to deal with an experienced man like Abner. He persists and so Abner, evidently standing with his spear in the ground, stuck in the ground because spears not only had the sharp point at the end but also on the blunt end,

so it could be stuck in the ground, Asahel forgot about that and, thinking that Abner did not have his weapon out so to speak. Well, Abner takes the spear and plunges the blunt end to the body of Asahel and it not only goes into his body but out the other side. I won't say anything more about that. The ladies look as if they might not be enjoying that part of it.

But, the thing that I want to underline is this. Why is this incident in the word of God? Why is it in the word of God? Well, you would think that something like this doesn't really contribute a whole lot, when you first read it. I'm speaking of myself because I must confess, when I read that, I had much the same idea. Why is this incident recorded in the word of God? As a matter of fact, there are some other things as well. Why are they found in the word of God?

Now, if you look at the writers of Scripture, they are not like ancient writers such as Thucydides or Niebuhr or Macaulay or Freud, great masters of literature who write in such a way as to give praise and high regard to those who are masters of literature. This seems to me to be a perfect illustration of it. This does not seem to say much of anything other than just an incident.

But then, think about it for a moment. Of course, Asahel is the nephew of David and, therefore, there is some significance to that. But that's not the important thing. The important thing is that Asahel is the brother of Joab. Now, if you know anything about the East and, specifically, about biblical times, you know that there is such a thing as a blood feud. And so the redeemer, the *goel*, who in certain cases is the acknowledged individual who has the right to seek the death of another person, who has been responsible for the murder of a brother or sister, so that what this suggests immediately is that this account is included because, as we learn in the next chapter, it's Joab, who in carrying out the place of the redeemer, slays Abner. And in the slaughter of Abner, the way is cleared for David to assume his rule over the whole of the kingdom of Israel.

And so, in other words, this account is given here, not because it's an interesting account of a man fleet of foot, who is slain because of the fact that he had not sufficient intelligence or experience upstairs to handle an experienced man like Abner. No, no. The fact of the matter is that the Holy Spirit, among the many historic incidents that are found in Holy Scripture, selects those that have to do with the overall message of the word of God. And the overall message of the word of God is to point, ultimately, to our Lord Jesus Christ. And since David is the great type of our Lord, the things that happen to David and the things that have to do with David assuming his kingdom and the things that have to do with the kingdom of David are the things that are important for the writers of Scripture.

So it was the guidance of the Holy Spirit, unconsciously perhaps, to the writer of Holy Scripture; or consciously, perhaps he had that in his mind, I'm including those things that seem to be important with reference to David and his kingdom, but at any rate, culled from the vast amount of facts that could have been written in the word of God, we have those incidents from the Hebrew annals that have to do with redemptive history, which is the great message of the word of God. Direct or indirect bearing upon the redemptive purpose of God and Jesus Christ is the criterion of the incorporation of things in the word of God.

You may remember that the Lord Jesus on the Road to Emmaus, spoke to the Disciples, who ought to have better, he called them “O foolish ones, and slow of heart, to believe all that God has spoken in the Scriptures.” He went on to say that, “They are the things that testify of Him.” He also in his ministry earlier had said to others, “You search the Scriptures but they are they which testify of me.” And so, consequently, the Scriptures are the source of knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the things that pertain to his coming and the things that pertain to him after he has come, and the things, also, that will pertain with reference to his Second Coming. That's the key thing in this little incident involving Asahel, which seems to insignificant, has bearing on that.

Everything in Scripture has to do with that great purpose; to present the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. And, consequently, we read it in that way. And even chapters like this that do not seem to be so important may have hidden reasons for importance that you and I, as readers of Scripture, should seek out for ourselves.

Not that everything related to the purpose of God in redemptive history is incorporated into the word of God, but only such as is important is found in the word of God. So remember that. Study the Scriptures as the message of the Lord God that has to do with the Lord Jesus Christ.

I hope some of you will go and read the genealogies; there's a reason for them too. Open up 1 Chronicles and read eight or nine or ten chapters. You'll think you're bored; in some sense you probably will be bored. But you must remember that they are given with a specific purpose; to point us to the redemptive history that is found in Jesus Christ. Those things are important to the Lord God.

Well, the incident ends with a kind of truce between Abner and Joab, and we've referred to it. And Abner offers the excuse or the opinion, “Shall the sword devour forever?” realizing that if there is a battle that constantly goes on between brethren, there'll be blood feuds for generations in Israel. And, finally, speaking out of experiences, suggests that it should come to an end. And Joab agrees.

Now, I'd like to conclude with just a few comments about some things that have come home to me as I have read this. Among the obvious lessons emerging is the conviction that God's men, then, live to fulfill God's purpose. And the fact that they sense that gives moral and spiritual power to their lives. And I'd like to take that out of Holy Scripture and bring it down to Believers Chapel in nineteen hundred and ninety, December the 9<sup>th</sup>. You and I as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, I speak to those of you who are believers only, you and I as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, have a specific part to play in the purpose of God. And so, consequently, you should have the firm conviction that you as God's man or God's woman, live to fulfill the purpose of God.



Now, that means that whatever you do contributes to the overall purpose of God. Paul tells us that when we get to Heaven that we'll have an opportunity to see the riches of his grace and his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. And I imagine that one of the great things that we shall do in Heaven is to listen to each of the saints of God as they explain their lives or else come to understand their lives and the Lord explains his purpose with reference to each one of us. Because, just as David had a purpose in life, a big one, you and I have purpose in life. And the sense that we are fulfilling God's purpose should give spiritual and moral power to our lives. David's life, even these little details, no less than the sparrows which don't fall to the ground except at the knowledge of the Lord, or the hairs on our heads [Laughter]. I still have them. They show that nothing is too insignificant for God's concern. Now, someone has put it, “Firm the step of such men, steady is their eye, when they sense that they are God's men with God's hand upon them for a particular purpose.” This is not for preachers or teachers only. This is for every one of us. You businessmen, you teachers in secular institutions, you housewives, you careerists, all, there is a definite purpose in your life. And if you sense that and live accordingly, it will make you a different kind of person.

Another thing, of course, is one sees the reason the authors of Scripture, well really The Author of Scripture, who moved the authors of Scripture, in the selection, the reason those authors selected the materials that they did select; the events, the discourses, the institutions that they selected from the general history, the guiding principle was their bearing on the line of providence by which Messiah came to reign. Keeping that before you, you'll read Scripture as the Lord Jesus intended us to read it.

I made reference a moment ago to Luke chapter 24 and the words of our Lord, but I think it might be well just to read them fully, on the Emmaus Road, speaking to the men, he said with reference to these facts.

“O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Messiah to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”

And then, later on.

“These are the words which I spoke to you while I was yet with you that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.”

And, finally, one can see again in David’s career, in his anointing, you know the term anointing, “mashach,” is the term from which we get “Mashiyach,” Messiah. So he was anointed in the sense that he was anointed as God’s chosen king in Judah. And his career is the anticipation of our Lord’s career. And, as you know, when our Lord finally begins his ministry, one of the first things that happens is his anointing by the Lord God and the word from heaven, “This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased,” as the coronation formula of our Lord Jesus Christ. So in David’s career, further anticipations of his great son’s career, the true shallow, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the true lion of the tribe of Judah, that David only faintly reminded us of, whose worthiness Heaven and we sing and celebrate freely.

I must confess that I was reading this past week and I came across a stanza from William Cowper. And it’s a stanza I’d never seen before in his writings. I haven’t read everything that he wrote. But this one impressed me greatly. Speaking about David’s career and the way it anticipates our Lord’s career, this stanza from Mr. Cowper beautifully expresses what really is upon my heart and, I hope, upon yours. “Come then,” he writes, “And added to Thy many crowns; receive yet one, the crown of all the earth. Thou who

alone art worthy. It was Thine by ancient covenant ere nature's birth; And Thou hast made it Thine by purchase since, and overpaid its value with Thy blood.” What a marvelous statement of the sufficiency of the atoning work of Christ for every individual, the sufficiency, the infinite value. “And overpaid its value with Thy blood.” “Thy saints proclaim Thee King, and in their hearts Thy title is engraven with a pen,” and listen to this, “Dipped in the fountain of eternal love.”

In the final analysis, all that David was anticipated him, the great son of David, who came as the lion of the tribe of Judah and purchased out of every kindred tribe, tongue and nation, individuals and has made them kings and priests. And they shall rule and reign with him forever, so the last book of the Bible says.

If you are here today and you have never believed in Christ, we invite you to turn to the Scriptures and read them, and read them as God's word concerning your redeemer and my redeemer. And if you have not believed in him, we remind you of the blood that was shed on Calvary's cross, the Great Son of David, who shed his blood that sinners might be saved. Come to Him. Believe in Him. Trust in Him. And there's no better time to do that than right now.

Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father, we give Thee thanks for the Scriptures and for the great message that they unfold for us. What a magnificent wonder and sign that these sixty-six books testify to him and to his saving ministry and that that concerns heaven and us. We give Thee thanks for him, we pray Lord that if there should be someone in this audience who has not yet come to him, that they may within their hearts right now be saying to Thee, “I thank Thee for the Redeemer promised in olden times who has come and shed his blood for me. I receive as a free gift the eternal life he provides.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.

“David: the Shepherd King of Judah” by S. Lewis Johnson  
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