I. **INTRO:**

   A. **Prayer:** *Thy kingdom come, my kingdom go!* Jesus You & You alone are the rightful heir to the throne of my life!

   B. He who chooses the **beginning** of a road chooses the place it **leads** to. It is the **means** that determine the **end**. - H.E. Fosdick

II. **ABNER THE NEGOTIATOR! (1-21)**

   A. **DAVID’S TRIBE INCREASES!** (1-5)

   B. (1) David’s government was growing **stronger & stronger**!

   C. *Ps. 84:5-8* (Overview of Ps.: Dwelling w/God 1-4; Desiring God 5-8; Depending on God 9-12)

   D. Often whole towns would travel on pilgrimage to Jerusalem together.

      1. **As they would go they would sing & look 3 ways:**

         2. [1] **Look Within:** heart set on pilgrimage.

            a) Everyone has a *roadmap in his heart* that takes him where he really wants to go.

            b) Look w/in yourself today What kind of road map do you have? *Where does it lead?*

            c) What is **in your heart** is what counts!

      3. [2] **Look Back:** They passed through a valley of Baca/weeping.

            a) Baca has not been located. It is related *in sound* to the word “to weep”.

            b) As they went through, they **left behind a blessing** for someone else.

            c) The pilgrims *anticipation* of the Temple experience transforms the **desert** for them into a **place of springs**.

            d) Do you **leave behind a blessing** for someone else? Or expect others to **give you a blessing**?

      4. [3] **Look ahead:** They go from **strength to strength**.

            a) Strength? - yes, because sometimes pilgrimage is very difficult.

            b) Each one makes it! - You may look around & think “I can’t make it!” **But you will!**

            c) Some come with the problem, “I don’t desire the Lord right now & it bugs me!”

            Well, no, “*since it bugs you, you do desire Him still!*”

      5. **We each need to look 3 ways!** (look Within; Back; Ahead)

            a) When Life **disappoints** you, be sure your **heart’s desires** are **pleasing to God**!
E. ABNER DEFECTS TO DAVID! (6-11)

F. (6-11) Abner was a pragmatic politician as well as a shrewd general.¹
   1. His basic principle was, “Always join the winning side.”
      a) When he perceived the throne of Ishbosheth had no future, he decided to switch loyalties to guarantee his own security.

G. We aren’t told that Abner actually slept w/Saul’s concubine Rizpah, & he firmly denied it; but if he did, he committed a very serious offense. (a deceased king’s harem belonged to his successor)

H. ABNER NEGOTIATES FOR DAVID! (12-21)
I. (12-16) Here’s how it plays out:
   1. Abner sends messengers to David to offer to bring all Israel under his rule(13)
   2. David sends messengers to Abner accepting his offer, provided Abner 1st sent Michal to him. [Michal = David’s 1st wife that Saul took away, Ishbosheth’s sister]
   3. Abner told Ishbosheth to honor David’s request.
   4. Abner conferred w/the elders of Israel(17,18); & then Benjamin(19).
   5. Abner & 20 representatives from the tribes came to Hebron, bringing Michal w/them.
      a) Why did David make Michal a condition? [5 reasons]
         (1) She was his wife, that was taken away by Saul/dad;
         (2) We have reason to believe David still loved her;
         (3) Good diplomacy to have the “queen” w/him, & the fact that she came from the house of Saul would strengthen the bonds of unity;
         (4) By claiming the daughter of Saul he was claiming all the kingdom;
         (5) It was a public announcement that Abner had broken from the house of Saul & now allied w/David.
   6. Abner & David agreed on how to transfer the kingdom, & they shared a feast & made a covenant.

III. ABNER THE VICTIM! (22-39)
A. JOAB REPROACHES DAVID! (22-25)
B. It looked as though everything was in good order for a peaceful transition, but there were hidden land mines in the diplomatic field & they were about to explode. (Warren Wiersbe)

¹ Warren Wiersbe, Be Restored, pg.26
C. Joab can’t believe David could forgive Abner.
   1. How could you throw a feast for him?(20) [like older brother in story of Prodigal]
   2. He killed my brother(Asahel)! - You can't trust him, its a set up.
D. (25) Abner came to Deceive you - It takes one to know one!
   1. Joab accused Abner of being a liar but practiced deception himself.
      a) We’re often guilty of the sins we say others commit!
E. JOAB DECEIVES ABNER & KILLS HIM! (26,27)
F. (27) Everything about the death of Abner was wrong.
   1. The 2 brothers knew exactly what their king wanted, but deliberately put their own interests ahead of that of the kingdom.
   2. Asahel was a causality of war/self defense (& Abner did not want to kill him);
      Abner’s death was cold blooded murder/pure revenge.
   3. Hebron was a city of refuge, a sanctuary where an accused murderer could get a fair trial.
   4. Asahel was killed in the open in broad daylight;
      Abner in the shadows, off to the side, privately.
G. DAVID HONORS ABNER! (28-39)
H. (28-30) David immediately disclaimed any part in what his 2 nephews had done.
   1. He went so far as to call down a curse on the house of Joab. (he names some of the plagues that Moses warned about).
I. David issues a royal edict that commanded Joab & his army to mourn over Abner & to attend his funeral.
J. David follows the coffin to the place of interment (31).
K. He writes an official elegy to honor the dead general (33,34).
   1. He made it clear that Abner didn’t die because of some foolish act on his part.
   2. He was never a prisoner during any part of his military career.
   3. He fell before wicked men who deceived him.
L. Then David further honored him by burying him in the royal city of Hebron(32).
M. David said, Abner was “a prince & a great man” (38).
N. (39) Weak - or restrained & gentle; as opposed to his nephews who were too harsh.
   1. David had experienced God’s gentleness, & he tried to deal w/others as God dealt w/him.
ABNER’S 4 WORD SERMON! - *Now Then Do It!* (17,18)

P. There are many today like those people in Israel to whom Abner spoke!

1. (17b) You were seeking for David to be king over you.
2. (i.e.) You have sought for David’s greater Son (Jesus) to be king over you.
   a) You thought...How great to experience the sovereignty of Jesus Christ.
   b) How wonderful to be led of God & live a heaven-directed life.
   c) What a difference it would make in my life!

3. You have thought about it...but hesitated.
   a) This commitment would change so many things in my life; I might lose friends.
   b) I’d really have to change my mouth, my behavior, my habits, my whole lifestyle.
   c) The consequences too serious; The complications too much interference in my life.

4. Yet, like David, Jesus takes only what we offer him.
   a) David never moved one inch until the invitation came.
   b) Jesus only helps Himself to what we have offered of our lives.
      1) Some here this morning have offered nothing! (living in open rebellion against the king!) :
      2) Some have offered, so to speak, only Hebron! (you have given Him a little part, that wouldn’t interfere too much w/your own monopoly)
         a) I just want you to be king over a little territory only!
         b) You only want an insurance policy to get to heaven, & thats it.
         c) But if you give him so much & no more...you will have no peace!
      3) Some continue to struggle with an internal civil war!
         a) The Flesh (the kingdom of Saul), struggles with The Spirit (the kingdom of David). And its an ugly conflict!
         b) You’re doing all it takes to hang onto the tottering kingdom of self, so that it might exist just a little bit longer.
         i) If I could just keep some rights;
            If I could just keep part of my own way;
            If I could only keep this or that at any cost;
            If I could do it w/o dying to self, w/o crucifying myself w/Christ!
         c) Oh how we love that life, that God wants to crucify!
5. Now is the time for action!
   a) Now is the time to say, “down with my flesh & up w/my Redeemer!”
   b) “Off the throne w/sin & self, on the throne w/my wonderful Lord!”
   c) If you have sought in the past for Jesus to be King over you. Now then do it!
   d) Don’t waste a minute make Him King! Be reconciled to God.
      Behold now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation. (2Cor.6:2b)

6. You have already seen & experienced what has happened in your life because you didn’t carry it through.
   a) You have become entangled in: circumstances, friendships, sin, failure, breakdown, cares, & worries - a thousand & one things!
   b) Yes, for a while sins fascination grows. The glamour, the thrill of doing something you know your not supposed to do; the pleasure, the wine & song are fun for a time.
      (1) But it passes...Somehow you lose your taste for those things & life becomes stale & empty.

7. For David to secure his right to the crown & lead them to victory, civil war had to stop. [He must be their ruler, their master, their lord]
   a) Jesus must be our Ruler, our Master, our Lord.
   b) If Jesus is not the undisputed King in your life, then Satan or sin or self is still sitting on the throne!
   c) If Jesus is the undisputed King in your life, then His will must be your will; His commands must be your law; His example must be your model!

8. You will not be able to master even one sin in your own strength.
   a) God doesn’t expect you to! You cannot chop off the head of this habit & that, because if you do, you only drive it in so that it comes out in worse form.
      (1) Example: my Aptasia in my salt water aquarium. (rock anenome/hitchhiker)
   b) He will help you.

9. Now read 5:1-3. (You were the one...you shall shepherd & be ruler...and they anointed him king over all Israel)
   a) Now then, do it!
   b) Crown Him King of all! - Now then, do it!