

David begins this chapter by seeking the Lord's will, presumably by having the priest Abiathar consult the Urim and Thummim. It's a two-step process. First, he asks the Lord if he should go into the cities of Judah. Upon receiving an affirmative response, he then asks exactly *which* city. The answer is Hebron.

How often do we skip ahead to the second step and ignore the first? Many years ago, some of us were meeting at Trott Brook to pray for guidance about the year end Young People's Conference. We had many questions: What would the theme be? How about class topics? Who would speak at different meetings. As we were about to begin, Ron Canner asked (with a faint look of mischief on his face), "Hadn't we ought to begin by asking if we should even hold the conference?" And, as usual, he was quite right.

Our prayers can be hindered by assumptions bordering on presumptions. As an example, a young person might pray for guidance as to *who* they are to marry, without first asking *whether* they are to marry. Asking that question in sincerity will make it more likely to receive an answer to the next one.

David once again stands in contrast to Saul. You may remember in 1 Samuel 14 that Saul used the Urim and Thummim to disclose the man who had violated his vow to fast on the day of the battle. The lot fell on Jonathan. Saul

Questions for study and discussion:

1. David's move from Ziklag to Hebron brings him closer to his next capital. What is it?
2. Why might David have sent his words of gratitude to the citizens of Jabesh Gilead?

did spare his son's life but it was all a dreadful mess. And one reason is that Saul did not seek to know the Lord's will whether he should have even made the reckless vow.

So when we sense that God is not answering a question in our prayers, it is well to ponder if there is a more fundamental question we have neglected to ask.

Notes

2:1 Hebron, to be David's capital for the next seven years, is in the hill country south of Jerusalem. It has previously appeared in accounts of Abraham, Isaac, Joshua, and others.

2:8 Ish-Bosheth means son of shame. It may not, however, refer to his character. Hebrew scribes often substituted Bosheth (shame) for the name of Baal, so his given name may have been Ish-Baal, or Man of the Lord.

2:8 Ish-Bosheth's rival capital is east of the Jordan at Mahanaim, just south of Jabesh Gilead.

2:12 As a reminder, Abner is Saul's cousin and Joab is David's nephew.

2:13 Archaeologists have found what may be the pool of Gibeon: A remarkable well or cistern, 36 feet in diameter and over 35 feet deep, cut in solid rock with a spiral staircase leading to another tunnel beneath.

2:29 The Arabah is the O.T. name for the rift valley from the sea of Galilee to the Gulf of Aqaba in the Red Sea, including the Jordan river and the arid valley south of the Dead Sea.



3. We see the people of the Lord split into a northern territory Israel loyal to Saul and a southern faction Judah loyal to David. Will this division heal in the future?
4. This is the first we know of Ish-Bosheth, Saul's surviving son. What might be the reason he was not killed on Mount Gilboa?
5. Joab's military advance in verse 13 appears to be done with no command from David. (Also recall his brother Abishai's aggression in 1 Samuel 26.) If David is a type of Christ, how might the servants of Christ be like Joab?
6. Verses 14 -16 appear to describe representative combat. Where have we seen that before? Does it settle the issue here?
7. Abner acts as peacemaker in verse 26. Is that his sincere intent?