



Joab's Way or Jesus' Way?

38: Joab's Way or Jesus' Way? (2 Samuel 20)

Civil war, betrayal, murder, and a wise woman who saves an entire city—2 Samuel 20 is one of the Bible's most gripping chapters, revealing the devastating consequences of selfish ambition. Discover how this story points beyond Joab and David to Jesus Christ, the true Servant King Who gave His life so the guilty could be saved.

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* All Scripture is from the Christian Standard Bible (CSB) unless otherwise noted.

2 Samuel 20:1-3

Now **a wicked man**, a Benjaminite named **Sheba** son of Bichri, happened to be there. He blew the trumpet and shouted: We have no portion in David, no inheritance in Jesse's son. Each man to his tent, Israel! So **all the men of Israel deserted David and followed Sheba** son of Bichri, but **the men of Judah** from the Jordan all the way to Jerusalem **remained loyal to their king**. When David came to his palace in Jerusalem, he took the ten concubines he had left to take care of the palace and placed them under guard. **He provided for them**, but he was not intimate with them. They were confined until the day of their death, living as widows.

Sheba. David's kingdom is still fractured and is still in danger of escalating civil war as **Sheba**, from King Saul's family tribe of Benjamin, calls on the northern tribes of Israel to stand against David.

10 Concubines. If David had not taken these **concubines** in the first place, this would never have been an issue. David no longer treats this women as his, but continues to take care of their living expenses until their dying day. As we have noted several times in this teaching series, **forgiven sin restores relationships, but forgiven sin might still leave scars**. David's sin against Uriah and Bathsheba has left a long and painful trail of consequences, including these ladies who now live like unmarried widows the rest of their lives.

2 Samuel 20:4-6

The king said to **Amasa**, "Summon the men of Judah to me within three days and be here yourself." Amasa went to summon Judah, but he took longer than the time allotted him. So David said to **Abishai**, "Sheba son of Bichri will do more harm to us than Absalom. Take your lord's soldiers and **pursue him**, or he will find fortified cities and elude us."

Amasa had been the general of Absalom's troops who fought against David. He is also David's nephew, whom David later put in charge of his troops in an attempt to unite Israel & Judah under his kingship. But when **Amasa** didn't complete his task **within three days**, David handed the reins over to **Abishai**, the brother of David's former top general, Joab. Both these men were David's nephews as well. (David had two sisters: Zeruiah, whose sons were Joab, Abishai, and Asahel; and Abigail, whose son was Amasa.)

Sheba the rebel, needed to be stopped before he could reach a fortified city and assemble an army.

2 Samuel 20:7-9

So Joab's men, the Cherethites, the Pelethites, and all the warriors marched out **under Abishai's command**; they left Jerusalem **to pursue Sheba** son of Bichri. They were at the great stone in Gibeon when Amasa joined them. Joab was wearing his uniform and over it was a belt around his waist with a sword in its sheath. As he approached, the sword fell out. Joab asked Amasa, **"Are you well, my brother?"** Then with his right hand Joab grabbed Amasa by the beard to kiss him.

Remember, Joab *had been* the top general of David's army. Now Joab been demoted beneath Amasa, and his own brother (Abishai) has been given command over **Joab's men**.

Joab acts as if he cares for the well-being of **Amasa** (*his 1st cousin*) - whom he calls **"my brother."** Joab seems to cause his sword to fall out in full view of Amasa. When Joab picks it up with his left hand it is not seen as a threat (most men were right-handed). So it looks like he is simply picking up his sword that fell out *rather than drawing his sword to strike*. Then Joab welcomes Amasa **to kiss him** on the face before he betrays him.

2 Samuel 20:10

Amasa was not on guard against the sword in Joab's hand, and **Joab stabbed him in the stomach** with it and spilled his intestines out on the ground. Joab did not stab him again, and **Amasa died**. Joab and his brother Abishai pursued Sheba son of Bichri.

Joab was a conniving, brutal man. He had killed anyone who stood in his way.

- **Abner** was the opposing general who made peace with David. Joab lured him for a private chat and *stabbed him in the stomach* (2 Sam 3:22-30),
- **Absalom** - even though David commanded that no one harm him - *Joab stabbed him in the chest* and had his men finish him off (2 Sam 18:14-15).
- And now Joab kills **Amasa**, the man David had replaced in *HIS* position.

2 Samuel 20:11-13

One of Joab's young men had stood over Amasa saying, "Whoever favors Joab and whoever is for David, **follow Joab!**" Now Amasa had been writhing in his blood in the middle of the highway, and the man had seen that all the troops stopped. So he moved Amasa from the highway to the field and threw a garment over him because he realized that all those who encountered Amasa were stopping. When he was removed from the highway, all the men passed by and **followed Joab to pursue Sheba** son of Bichri.

Can you imagine the scene? Troops who had briefly served under Amasa **STOP**, shocked to see their general gutted and writhing in pain as his life oozes out. There is no mourning for Amasa here. No one pauses to honor him. No one stops the mission to care for him. Instead, they drag him off the road like trash and cover him in a field to die...and keep marching. And now the troops turn back to Joab - the murderer who takes out his rivals - as their leader.

🔍 One of sin's greatest dangers is not merely that it leads us to do evil, but that it causes us to march right past it, without pain or pause, with no care unless it affects US.

2 Samuel 20:14-17

Sheba passed through all the tribes of Israel to Abel of Beth-maacah. All the Berites came together and followed him. Joab's troops came and **besieged Sheba** in Abel of Beth-maacah. **They built a siege ramp against the outer wall of the city**. While all the troops with Joab were battering the wall to make it collapse, a **wise woman** called out from the city, "Listen! Listen! Please tell Joab to come here and let me speak with him." When he had come near her, the woman asked, "Are you Joab?" "I am," he replied. **"Listen to the words of your servant,"** she said to him. He answered, "I'm listening."

Now the entire city will suffer because of 1 man - Sheba. No one will go IN or come OUT (besiegement). Whatever food/water is inside the city wall is all that they will have, until all this is over. Now **a wise woman** attempts to keep Joab's army from destroying an entire city because of one rebel hiding inside it.

❓ *Do you remember when **Abigail**, the wife of Nabal, talked sense into David when he became enraged at her husband?* **David gathered four hundred of his men and was on the way to kill Nabal and all his men.** (1 Samuel 25:13, 21-22). Abigail intercepted David without telling her husband. She loaded donkeys with bread, wine, sheep, grain, raisins, and figs and rode out to meet David (1 Samuel 25:18-20). David recognized that God used her actions to keep David from killing in rage & revenge (1 Sam 25:32-34).

2 Samuel 20:18-22

She said, "In the past they used to say, '**Seek counsel in Abel,**' and that's how they settled disputes. I am one of the peaceful and faithful in Israel, but you're trying to destroy a city that is like a mother in Israel. Why would you devour the Lord's inheritance? Joab protested: "Never! I would never devour or demolish! There is a man named **Sheba** son of Bichri, from the hill country of Ephraim, who has rebelled against King David. **Deliver this one man**, and I will withdraw from the city." The woman replied to Joab, "Watch! **His head will be thrown over the wall to you.**" The woman went to all the people with **her wise counsel**, and they cut off the head of Sheba son of Bichri and threw it to Joab. So **he blew the trumpet, and they dispersed from the city**, each to his own tent. Joab returned to the king in Jerusalem.

Abel has been a town that helped **settle disputes**, like a mother would do for her children. WHY is Joab coming to kill **a "mother" in Israel**? Joab is quick to respond to this emotional imagery from this wise woman, saying that this is not his intent. And then he shares who he is really after - **Sheba**. This woman's wisdom is about to spare the city. Killing **Sheba** and throwing his **head** over the wall stopped the revolt and sent David's men back to **Jerusalem**.

2 Samuel 20:23-26

Joab commanded the whole army of Israel; Benaiah son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and Pelethites; Adoram was over forced labor; Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was court historian; Sheva was court secretary; Zadok and Abiathar were priests; and in addition, Ira the Jairite was David's priest.

Joab is back in charge of David's army. *HOW could this happen?* The text doesn't explain exactly why David permitted this, but Joab had the loyalty of the army, had assumed command, and had successfully ended the rebellion. David may have believed that removing him immediately would create yet another crisis. David needed Joab more than he wanted Joab. Joab got things done. Ironically, Joab often accomplished David's goals while repeatedly violating David's heart. That explains why David waits until Solomon's reign to finally deal with Joab for the murder of Abner & Amasa (1 Kings 2:5-6).

† **Followers of Jesus are expected to *COMPLEMENT* each other, *not COMPETE* with each other.**

We are called to serve Jesus together & to celebrate together.

✗ Joab eliminated competitors.

✓ **Jesus developed servants.** When they jockeyed for position he taught them and showed them what He expected.

Mark 10:42-45

Jesus called them over and said to them, "You know that those who are regarded as **rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them**, and those in high positions act as tyrants over them. But it is not so among you. On the contrary, **whoever wants to become great among you will be your servant**, and whoever wants to be first among you will be a slave to all. For even **the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.**"

The wise woman lobbied to have Sheba, the one guilty of treason, killed to protect the innocent in the city.

The GUILTY one died to deliver the INNOCENT from judgment.

† **In the New Covenant, the INNOCENT ONE dies to deliver the GUILTY ONES from judgment.**

Joab preserved his position by taking the lives of others. **Jesus established His kingdom by giving His life for others.**

② Which way will you follow - **JOAB'S WAY or JESUS' WAY?**



▶ **Be GRATEFUL for JESUS.**

Give your life to Him. Practice the Presence of Jesus. Talk, think, & act like Jesus is NEAR & WORTHY of your life!

▶ **Be GRACIOUS to brothers & sisters by looking for ways to serve & encourage them this week.**

heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

* Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), **Caleb** (864-315-8015), **Gary** (850-673-2507), **Betty** (850-973-3266), or another follower of Jesus soon!

* Or call our **deacons & wives: Alan & Christy Androski** (850-464-1428), **Noel & Patricia Barnes** (813-767-2881), **Derek & Emily Beaty** (813-763-4421), or **Chris & Caitlin Day** (850-673-7920), **Glen & Margie Peacock** (850-464-1484).

Discussion questions

These questions are designed to help you LIVE what you LEARN with your family, friends, or small group.

1. What evidence of division and unresolved conflict do you see at the beginning of 2 Samuel 20?
2. How did David's earlier sins continue to affect other people, particularly the ten concubines? What does this teach us about the lasting consequences of sin?
3. What do Joab's treatment of Amasa and the soldiers' response reveal about ambition, power, and becoming desensitized to evil?
4. How did the wise woman of Abel prevent the destruction of her city? What can we learn from her courage, wisdom, and willingness to speak?
5. Where are Christians tempted to compete for recognition, influence, or control rather than serving one another?
6. How does Jesus' teaching in Mark 10:42-45 contrast with Joab's approach to leadership?
7. At Abel, one guilty man died so that the innocent city could be spared. How does the gospel reverse that picture?
8. What is one specific way you can serve or encourage another believer this week without seeking recognition?
9. Share prayer needs and pray for one another.