

2 Samuel 4 - Thursday, December 4th, 2014

- Two weeks ago, we left David having learned of Joab's cold-blooded murder of Abner, whom he had perceived as being a rival and threat.
- The Israelites were endeared to David when they saw that he didn't rejoice in Abner's death in spite of him making Ishbosheth king instead.
- It's for this reason that as we pick it up here in chapter four, David will finally take his rightful place on the throne as the king over all Israel.

1 When Saul's son heard that Abner had died in Hebron, he lost heart, and all Israel was troubled. 2 Now Saul's son had two men who were captains of troops. The name of one was Baanah and the name of the other Rechab, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin. (For Beeroth also was part of Benjamin, 3 because the Beerothites fled to Gittaim and have been sojourners there until this day.)

4 Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son who was lame in his feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel; and his nurse took him up and fled. And it happened, as she made haste to flee, that he fell and became lame. His name was Mephibosheth.

- Here we're introduced to Mephibosheth a descendant of Saul, who's crippled at age five when his nurse fled at the news of Saul's death.
- This is rather tragic in that, through no fault of his own, he is crippled from the age of five by virtue of the fact that he was Jonathan's son.
- To me this speaks of the reality and even the intensity of children whose father is prominent and important. They become victims of sorts.

- Be that as it may, there's an import lesson for us to learn from what we're told in verse one concerning Ishbosheth losing heart at the news.
- It seems Ishbosheth had realized that his days were numbered now that Abner, who had put him in office so to speak, had been murdered.
- Herein lies the lesson, when we trust in man for anything, we can ultimately, because of man, lose everything, and such is the case here.

Psalm 118:8-9 (NKJV) — 8 It is better to trust in the LORD Than to put confidence in man. 9 It is better to trust in the LORD Than to put confidence in princes.

Psalm 146:3-5 (NKJV) — 3 Do not put your trust in princes, Nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help. 4 His spirit departs, he returns to his earth; In that very day his plans perish. 5 Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, Whose hope is in the LORD his God,

Jeremiah 17:5-9 (NKJV) — 5 Thus says the LORD: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man And makes flesh his strength, Whose heart departs from the LORD. 6 For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, And shall not see when good comes, But shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, In a salt land which is not inhabited. 7 "Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, And whose hope is the LORD. 8 For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit. 9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?"

5 Then the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, set out and came at about the heat of the day to the house of Ishbosheth, who was lying on his bed at noon. 6 And they came there, all the way into the house, as though to get wheat, and they stabbed him in the stomach. Then Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped. 7 For when they came into the house, he was lying on his bed in his bedroom; then they struck him and killed him, beheaded him and took his head, and were all night escaping through the plain.

- I suppose the intrigue that's here in the narrative should come as no surprise given that the house of Saul has been, and still is, in turmoil.
- Sadly, it's because Ishbosheth was weak and vulnerable absent a strong Abner, he is a sitting duck, as it were, for those with evil intent.
- I'll take it a step further and suggest the reason Ishbosheth was like this in the first place was because of his carelessness and laziness.

Of this one commentator wrote, "To sleep at noon, and without a guard, speaketh him both sluggish and secure. He dieth therefore in his sloth, who had lived slothfully all his days."

8 And they brought the head of Ishbosheth to David at Hebron, and said to the king, "Here is the head of Ishbosheth, the son of Saul your enemy, who sought your life; and the LORD has avenged my lord the king this day of Saul and his descendants."

- If you're anything like me and I suspect you are this seems like a Déjà vu of sorts in the sense that we've been in this situation once before.
- Actually, the reason it seems we've been in this situation before is because we've been in this situation before, and it was in 2 Samuel 1.
- Ironically, the same thing happened after the Amalekite told David that he had killed Saul, and in so doing he thought he'd get a reward.

9 But David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said to them, "As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my life from all adversity, 10 when someone told me, saying, 'Look, Saul is dead,' thinking to have brought good news, I arrested him and had him executed in Ziklag—the one who thought I would give him a reward for his news.

- While we know that this happened we might not fully understand why this happened. Why they, like the Amalekite think this is a good thing.
- In other words, why do people do that which is evil under the banner of thinking they're doing something good and even helping God out?
- Perhaps you'll indulge me for just a few moments as I share three reasons as to why it is that I believe we, like them, are prone to do this.

- First, it's because we don't know or go to God's Word, and as such, we make un-Biblical assumptions that are clearly against God's Word.
- This Rechab and Baanah either didn't know, and or didn't go to "The Word" if you will, that David gave to Saul when he spared Saul's life.
- Moreover, if these two men did know about David giving his word to Saul, then they deliberately and willfully went against David's word.

1 Samuel 24:17-22 (NKJV) 17 Then he said to David: "You are more righteous than I; for you have rewarded me with good, whereas I have rewarded you with evil. 18 And you have shown this day how you have dealt well with me; for when the LORD delivered me into your hand, you did not kill me. 19 For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him get away safely? Therefore may the LORD reward you with good for what you have done to me this day. 20 And now I know indeed that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. 21 Therefore swear now to me by the LORD that you will not cut off my descendants after me, and that you will not destroy my name from my father's house." 22 So David swore to Saul. And Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

- The second reason we're prone to do evil thinking it's good is that we are quick to help God out, which thwarts God from doing it His way.
- We might be convinced it's the right thing, however, it's done in the wrong way, or at the wrong time, or even worse, by the wrong person.
- Such was the case with these two men, they did an evil thing being convinced that somehow, good could or would come as a result of it.

G. Campbell Morgan said it best this way, "While it is true that God overrules all the doings of men, and compels them ultimately to serve His high purposes, it is equally true that no servant of His can ever consent to do evil that good may come. It is an arresting truth that our Lord in the days of his earthly life would not accept the testimony of demons."

- The third reason we're prone to do this is because of our selfish motives. These two men we're under the impression that they would gain.
- More specifically, their selfish motive was manifested when it gave way to their evil intent of murdering Ishbosheth for reward and position.
- In other words, they wrongly believed that David would be so delighted that Ishbosheth was dead so he could finally become king of Israel.

James 4:1-3 (NIV) — 1 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? 2 You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. 3 When you ask, you do not receive; because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

11 How much more, when wicked men have killed a righteous person in his own house on his bed? Therefore, shall I not now require his blood at your hand and remove you from the earth?" 12 So David commanded his young men, and they executed them, cut off their hands and feet, and hanged them by the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ishbosheth and buried it in the tomb of Abner in Hebron.

- One can't help but wonder what these two men who were fellow Benjamites of Ishbosheth, must have been thinking as they heard David.
- They went from thinking they would receive a reward and maybe even a position under David's reign to receiving a death sentence instead.
- Lest you think that David's response is disproportionate to the crime as it were, you would do well to consider just one fact in this case.

- Namely, that of the text making it very clear that this was premeditated murder; such that, they conjured up a deceptive plan to murder him.
- This alone was grounds for David meting out the just and swift death sentence that he did. However, one might ask, why be so gruesome.
- In other words, why go as far as severing their hands and feet then hanging them by the pool in Hebron, which certainly seems unjustified.

- I would suggest that David was in fact justified in doing this for a number of reasons not the least of which was he had to send a message.
- This because the jury was still out on whether or not the people would accept David as their king even though God had Samuel anoint him.
- It's for this reason David deemed it necessary to prove beyond any doubt he had nothing to do with the murder of an innocent Ishbosheth.

- I'll take it a step further and suggest that not only did David having nothing to do with this in spite of how it looked he was infuriated by this.
- Chiefly because of the aforementioned vow that David made to Saul not to kill any of his descendants, which they do and in David's name.
- I believe another reason that David was so enraged by this was; Saul, nor his descendants, namely, Ishbosheth, was ever David's enemy.

Adam Clarke said it best this way, "By this act of justice, David showed to all Israel that he was a decided enemy to the destruction of Saul's family; and that none could lift up their hands against any of them without meeting with condign punishment."

One commentator aptly wrote, "The repugnance of the punishment of this crime was matched only by David's abhorrence of the murder of an innocent man upon his bed."

- Before we bring the Bible study to an end, I'd like to point out what I see as the main "take-away" from this bloody chapter in God's Word.
- Simply put, let God do it for you and instead of you. Thankfully, this is exactly what David did. Sadly, this is exactly what these men didn't.
- I can't help but think that these two men could have actually been the recipient of a reward from David had they not tried to help David out.

- Conversely, I can't help but think that David could have actually been disqualified, if you will, had he tried to expedite his becoming king.
- In other words, had David conspired to have Ishbosheth murdered so as to hurry God's plan, Israel would've never accepted him as king.
- However, because he didn't, we'll see next week, Lord willing, in chapter five, that they do in fact come to David and make him their king.

2 Samuel 5:1-3 (NKJV) — 1 Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and spoke, saying, "Indeed we are your bone and your flesh. 2 Also, in time past, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and brought them in; and the LORD said to you, 'You shall shepherd My people Israel, and be ruler over Israel.'" 3 Therefore all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD. And they anointed David king over Israel.

- One last thought; it is possible that had Ishbosheth not been murdered, he may have stepped down for David, after Abner was murdered.
- The reason I say that is because absent Abner, Ishbosheth wasn't strong enough to remain. Also, he would've known about David's vow.
- What's interesting is that in 2 Samuel 9, David seeks out those left of the house of Saul, that, for Jonathan's sake, he may show kindness.

The point being is, as a descendant of Saul, Ishbosheth would have also been the recipient of David's kindness as was Ziba and Mephibosheth, as evidenced by 2 Samuel 9:11:13 --11 Then Ziba said to the king, "According to all that my lord the king has commanded his servant, so will your servant do." "As for Mephibosheth," said the king, "he shall eat at my table like one of the king's sons." 12 Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Micha. And all who dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants of Mephibosheth. 13 So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem, for he ate continually at the king's table. And he was lame in both his feet.