

## Trouble • 2 Samuel 20:1-3

### INTRO

1. The Bible is unique among holy books in that it doesn't sanitize the life of its heroes.
2. Even the greatest are shown, warts & all.
3. David's a case in point. His story is told in all its glory & gory detail.
4. As we close in on the end of his tale, we look today at a couple quick lessons.

### Set the Scene

1. Absalom's rebellion we looked at last week has been put down.
2. But the leaders of Israel were **slow** in recalling David to his throne at Jerusalem.
3. When they finally did, they over-compensated & competed with each other over **who** was David's biggest fan.
  - a. Lines were drawn between the tribes.
  - b. David's tribe of Judah was on one side, the 10 northern tribes on the other.
  - c. A shouting match ensued as the 2 sides vied for bragging rights over who was more loyal.
  - d. Judah shouted, "We love David, yes we do, we love David, HOW 'BOUT YOU?"
  - e. Then the other tribes shouted back.
4. One guy standing with the north saw this as his chance to stir up trouble

<sup>1</sup> And there happened to be there a rebel, whose name *was* Sheba the son of Bichri, a Benjamite. And he blew a trumpet, and said: "We have no share in David, nor do we have inheritance in the son of Jesse; Every man to his tents, O Israel!" <sup>2</sup> So every man of Israel deserted David, *and* followed Sheba the son of Bichri. But the men of Judah, from the Jordan as far as Jerusalem, remained loyal to their king.

1. V1 = "There happened to be there a rebel."
  - a. In Hebrew, there's sarcasm on the author's part there.
  - b. This rebel **just happened** to be there.
    - 1) Yeah, he was strolling thru this wilderness area near the Jordan river,
    - 2) Saw a crowd; wandered over. // Oh and look, he just happens to have a trumpet
    - 3) Just in case he wants to blow it so he can get everyone's attention and, you know, announce a rebellion.
    - 4) Because that's what rebels do.
2. No: Sheba was there because he was a **REBEL** & knew there'd be tension btwn the tribes he could exploit.
3. He's a Benjamite; the first king Saul's tribe.
4. Sheba didn't go to bring David back. He went to spark a rebellion & seize the throne.
  - a. Let David reign over Judah.
  - b. The northern tribes can go their own way with Sheba as **their** king.
5. Well, as the story plays out the short of it is: Sheba's rebellion doesn't take.
  - a. He never gathers enough support.
  - b. David's commander Joab chases him north and ends it.
6. The lesson for us is, as Sonny & Cher sang **The Beat Goes On**.
7. Listen: No matter how mature you are, how great the battles won, the lessons learned, as long as we're in these bodies, the battle goes on.
8. David's just survived a failed coup, at the hands of his beloved son, no less.
  - a. People he'd counted dear friends have betrayed him // The civil war that followed left 20K dead.
  - b. David might think, "Glad that's over. Now for some peace and quiet."
  - c. Nope! He's not even back home yet when *another* rebel fires up *another* round of trouble.
  - d. Can't a guy catch a break?
9. Ever feel that way? Like it Just. Never. Ends? // There's a reason it feels that way: **IT DOESN'T!**
10. There's no respite, no let up, no armistice or cease fire in spiritual battle.
11. This side of heaven we never come to a place where the enemy says, "She's too strong. Don't mess with him."
  - a. There may be times of *seeming* peace. // It's just that, a **seeming** peace.
  - b. One more tactic the devil uses to lull us into complacency; inattention.
  - c. '39 Molotoc-Ribbentop Pact Operation Barbarossa 1941
12. We looked at this same lesson a few weeks ago.

- a. Sermon-rules would prohibit me from repeating something we've recently covered.
  - b. But this is too important to let the niceties of pulpit etiquette get in the way.
13. To be at peace with God means to be at war with satan // And trust me on this: He's ALL IN.
14. Over the years, many younger believers have told me how trying & tiring the battle is.
- a. With a wistful look, they say how they **long** for the day when battle is behind them.
  - b. Listen: If the battle is behind you, YOU'RE FACING THE WRONG WAY!!!!
  - c. There's no point you reach in your walk with God when the devil backs off. // Only heaven holds that.
  - d. Till then, it time to rumble.
15. Christian: Don't let your longing for an end to battle blunt your edge; to lull you into inattention.
16. Jesus **repeatedly** called His followers to a life of **vigilant watchfulness**.
- a. In Gethsemane, He urged them to stay awake & on guard.
  - b. They ran when the mob came because they didn't.

17. Peter wrote, **1 Pet 5:8**

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

- 1. Sheba's trumpet reminded David he wasn't in heaven yet. He was just on the way back to Jrz.
  - 2. Until heaven, it would be a fight.
  - 3. And so for us. There will always be some Sheba that **just happens** to be hanging around to trouble you.
  - 4. Stand guard & Fight on!
- <sup>3</sup>Now David came to his house at Jerusalem. And the king took the 10 women, his concubines whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in seclusion and supported them, but did not go in to them. So they were shut up to the day of their death, living in widowhood.

- 1. Don't worry, he didn't imprison them. They weren't shipped off to some island in the Med.
- 2. When David fled Jrz in the face of Absalom's coup, he left these 10 women behind to take care of the palace.
- 3. They were his **harem**, a custom of ancient Middle Eastern kings.
  - a. The women of a harem were called **concubines** and were technically, wives.
  - b. Kings sealed alliances with other rulers by marrying on of their daughters.
  - c. And kings **had** lots of daughters because they had a harem.
  - d. This was one of the ways David secured Israel place among the surrounding kingdoms; thru alliances.
  - e. Also, the size and splendor of a harem was a mark of a monarch's majesty.
- 4. David, who in his younger years had a weakness with the ladies, had a harem of 10 concubines.
- 5. But all the trouble that came of his sin with Bathsheba had **broken** David of his youthful lust.
  - a. He regarded Absalom's coup as God's discipline.
  - b. So as he fled Jrz, it was the perfect time to make some much-needed changes.
  - c. His harem was a symptom of a brokenness needing healing. So he left his concubines behind.
- 6. When Absalom arrived, following the custom of ancient kings, he assumed David's harem.
  - a. It was a way to let his supporters know he'd never be reconciled to his father.
  - b. And cemented his ascension to the throne.
- 7. When David **returned**, one of the first things he did was close the harem.
  - a. He provided for their needs, but never again visited them.
  - b. These women were sent into retirement.
  - c. No one else could marry them because to do so would be to signal a desire for the throne.
- 8. By closing his harem David demonstrated his repentance.

Compromise

- 1. We know from the Psalms, David was a deep thinker. // He spent time pondering things.
- 2. He'd turned that keen intellect on his situation with Absalom's rebellion.
  - a. He realized the problem went back years, long before Absalom was born. It was lust.
  - b. But his wild success in so many other areas seemed to compensate for it
  - c. People around him didn't say anything because they didn't want to endanger their relationship with him.

- d. They turned a blind eye to his weakness with women.
  - e. He married several, though he *knew* God's plan was for one wife.
  - f. When he became king, he did the king-thing and took on a harem, *knowing* it was wrong.
  - g. Having a bevy of beauties at his beck and call, it was easy to see one more in a neighbor's yard and summons Bathsheba to his bed.
  - h. That proved the turning point in David's domestic life.
    - 1) His family fell apart.
    - 2) Jealousy. Envy. Rape. Murder.
    - 3) Rebellion & a Civil War.
3. Now back in Jrz, sitting once more on that throne, David could see the line of increasing compromise stretching all the way back across the years.
  4. So he closed the harem and took no more wives.
  5. BTW: David's story has been replayed countless times down the years.
    - a. We've heard of it in the scandals of more recent time.
    - b. Where some rich and powerful man is outted for sexual misconduct.
    - c. Turns out he'd been a bad actor for years, but no one said anything.
    - d. They knew he was a creep. But for fear of alienating him and the perks he brought, they remained silent.
  6. If David were here today, here's what he'd say to us: "**Don't compromise with sin.**"
  7. Well: He IS here with us today, right here. Let's heed his message: "Don't compromise with sin."
  8. It's not the size of the compromise that matters; it's *any* at all.
    - a. Satan is good at temptation. He has a lot of experience.
      - b. He's knows *gradualism* is most often the way to go.
    - c. He starts with some small thing, a seemingly *harmless* compromise.
      - d. Once that step is taken, the next is easier, & so on, till we're *running* after sin.
  9. Moral compromise is deadly. A Russian parable illustrates that.
    - a. The Russian winter was approaching and a hunter needed a new fur coat.
    - b. He took aim at a large bear & was about to pull the trigger when the bear said in a low, gentle voice, "Come now, why shoot? What do you want? I'm sure we can compromise."
    - c. The man said, "I need a fur coat."
    - d. The bear said, "That's reasonable. I need something to eat. Let's see if we make a deal."
    - e. An hour later, the bear walked away alone.
    - f. He had a full belly and the hunter had a fur coat.
  5. Never negotiate with satan; never strike a deal with him.
  6. Remember, we're ALWAYS at war and there's no compromise.
- a. A family from NY bought a ranch out West where they intended to raise cattle.
  - b. Friends visited and asked if the ranch had a name.
    - c. The would-be cattleman said, "I wanted to name it the Bar-J. My wife favored Suzy-Q, one son liked the Flying-W, the other wanted the Lazy-Y. So we're calling it the Bar-J / Suzy-Q / Flying-W / Lazy-Y."
    - d. The friend asked, "Where are all your cattle?"
    - e. The rancher replied, "None survived the branding."