

“Lessons from the Life of David” – Pastor Jim Ruddy

Study # 48 – Sheba’s Rebellion – 2 Samuel 20:1-26

I. THE START OF SHEBA’S UPHEAVAL 20:1-2

- The jealous infighting between Israel and Judah paved the way for another insurrection, one that could cause more damage than the rebellion of Absalom. cf. 2 Sam. 19:40-43

A. SHEBA’S DISPOSITION v1

1. “A rebel” – Heb. Lit. = *The Son of Belial*

- This term is synonymous with “worthlessness, wickedness and ungodliness,” and is used to describe extremely vile and vicious scoundrels. cf. 1 Sam. 1:16; 2:12; 25:17, 25

2. The Son of Bichri

- Sheba’s name is mentioned 8x’s in 2 Sam. 20, each time employing the full description, “*son of Bichri*.”
- Heb. derivative - *Bikrah* = “young-camel,” signifying self-will, rebellion and stubbornness. cf. Jer. 2:23; Is. 60:6

B. SHEBA’S DECLARATION v1

- Offended by the actions of Judah, and being of the tribe of Saul, Sheba called upon the Northern Tribes to secede from David’s kingship. cf. 1 Sam. 9:1; 2 Sam. 19:43
- Sheba’s words declaring tribal independence would be repeated by the next generation! cf. 1 Ki. 12:16; 2 Chr. 10:16

C. JUDAH’S DEDICATION v2

- Instead of joining in rebellion as they had with Absalom, the Southern tribes stayed with David in loyalty and affection, and escorted him from the Jordan to Jerusalem. cf. Ruth 1:14

II. THE STEPS OF DAVID’S REPRISAL 20:3-7

A. SECURING HIS PLACE IN JERUSALEM v3

- Whereas David had earlier left his ten concubines, he now secures them under guard – in seclusion with support, refusing to lie with them, in contrast to Absalom’s actions. cf. 15:16; 16:21-22

B. SUMMONSING THE TROOPS UNDER AMASA v4-5

- Having replaced Joab as commander, Amasa is ordered to ready the troops and to prepare to engage Sheba. cf. 19:13

C. SENDING THE TROOPS UNDER ABISHAI v6-7

- Chafed by the delay of Amasa, David commands Abishai to muster the troops and pursue after Sheba. cf. 1 Sam. 26:6
- Note the reference to “*Joab’s men*.” Although David had replaced Joab as captain, David’s army knew that Joab and Abishai were the real, proven leaders.

III. THE DEMISE OF JOAB'S RIVAL 20:8-13

A. THE SEEMING SUCCESS OF AMASA v8a

- Finally arriving on the scene, Amasa promptly placed himself in command of the army - *"Amasa came before them!"*
- A clueless Amasa, who'd received his appointment through defeat, and had been slow in duty, was now unperceptive of the weapon in another man's hand. cf. 17:25; 20:4-5

B. THE SURE SWORD OF JOAB v8b-13

- Having accompanied the soldiers in a more private manner, Joab pretends to be submissive to the new leadership.
- Joab's zeal to greet the new commander was really a cover for his plan to avenge the dishonor done to him and assassinate the one who had been appointed to displace him.
- Approaching Amasa with warmth, Joab allows his dagger to fall from its sheath, and then, in a most natural motion, picks up and shields the weapon as he moves in for the kill.
- Masking the treacherous act in friendship and peace, Joab takes hold of Amasa's beard and plants a Judas' kiss!
 - cf. 1 Sam. 17:25; Lu. 22:47-48
- As he'd done with Abner and Absalom, Joab plunged the sword into Amasa, disposing of his unsuspecting rival.
 - cf. 3:27; 18:14-17; 1 Sam. 26:8
- Lest it distract the soldiers from the task at hand, Amasa's body is dragged into an adjoining field and covered.
- With Joab now leading, the men set forth in search of Sheba.

IV. THE WORDS OF ONE FROM ABEL 20:14-22

A. THE WRATH OF A HATEFUL MAN v14

- After rallying little support from Israel, Sheba takes shelter in the Town of Abel on the northernmost border of the Land.
- Undaunted, Joab constructs a siege ramp for the purpose of pulling down the city wall. cf. 2 Sam 11:1

B. THE WISDOM OF A PEACEFUL WOMAN v15-22

- A wise, named woman becomes the spokesperson for the city, noting that they are more than willing to cooperate.
- Before long, Sheba's head is thrown from the city-wall, and with that, Joab demobilizes his troops with a trumpet blast. cf. 20:1

V. THE RECORD OF DAVID'S OFFICIALS 20:23-26

- Unsurprisingly, Joab returns to Jerusalem and to power, and unsuspectingly, David appoints Adoram over the revenue (i.e "over the tribute," the levy or forced labor), a man who will soon be prominent in the division of the kingdom. cf. 1 Kings 4:6; 5:14; 12:18