

Study #21

2 Samuel 20:1-21:22

Text:

- v. 1 Now a troublemaker named Sheba son of Bicri, a Benjamite, happened to be there. He sounded the trumpet and shouted,
“We have no share in David, no part in Jesse’s son! Every man to his tent, O Israel!”
- v. 2 So all the men of Israel deserted David to follow Sheba son of Bicri. But the men of Judah stayed by their king all the way from Jordan to Jerusalem.
- v. 3 When David returned to his palace in Jerusalem, he took the ten concubines he had left to take care of the palace and put them in a house under guard. He provided for them, but did not lie with them. They were kept in confinement till the day of their death, living as widows.
- v. 4 Then the king said to Amasa, “Summon the men of Judah to come to me within three days, and be here yourself.”
- v. 5 But when Amasa went to summon Judah, he took longer than the time the king had set for him.
- v. 6 David said to Abishai, “Now Sheba son of Bicri will do us more harm than Absalom did. Take your master’s men and pursue him, or he will find fortified cities and escape from us.”
- v. 7 So Joab’s men and the Kerethites and the Pelethites and all the mighty warriors went out under the command of Abishai. They marched out from Jerusalem to pursue Sheba son of Bicri.
- v. 8 While they were at the great rock in Gibeon, Amasa came to meet them. Joab was wearing his military tunic, and strapped over it at his waist was a belt with a dagger in its sheath. As he stepped forward, it dropped out of its sheath.
- v. 9 Joab said to Amasa, “How are you, my brother?” Then Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him.
- v. 10 Amasa was not on his guard against the dagger in Joab’s hand, and Joab plunged it into his belly, and his intestines spilled out on the ground. Without being stabbed again, Amasa died. Then Joab and his brother Abishai pursued Sheba son of Bicri.
- v. 11 One of Joab’s men stood beside Amasa and said, “Whoever favors Joab, and whoever is for David, let him follow Joab!”
- v. 12 Amasa lay wallowing in his blood in the middle of the road, and a man saw that all the troops came to a halt there. When he realized that everyone who came up to Amasa stopped, he dragged him from the road into a field and threw a garment over him.

- v. 13 After Amasa had been removed from the road, all the men went on with Joab to pursue Sheba son of Bicri.
- v. 14 Sheba passed through all the tribes of Israel to Abel Beth Maacah and through the entire region of the Berites, who gathered together and followed him.
- v. 15 All the troops with Joab came and besieged Sheba in Abel Beth Maacah. They built a siege ramp up to the city, and it stood against the outer fortifications. While they were battering the wall to bring it down.
- v. 16 a wise woman called from the city, "Listen! Listen! Tell Joab to come here so I can speak to him."
- v. 17 He went toward her, and she asked, "Are you Joab?" "I am," he answered. She said, "Listen to what your servant has to say." "I'm listening," he said.
- v. 18 She continued, "Long ago they used to say, 'Get your answer at Abel,' and that settled it.
- v. 19 We are the peaceful and faithful in Israel. You are trying to destroy a city that is a mother in Israel. Why do you want to swallow up the Lord's inheritance?"
- v. 20 "Far be it from me!" Joab replied, "Far be it from me to swallow up or destroy!
- v. 21 That is not the case. A man named Sheba son of Bicri, from the hill country of Ephraim, has lifted up his hand against the king, against David. Hand over this one man, and I'll withdraw from the city." The woman said to Joab, "His head will be thrown to you from the wall."
- v. 22 Then the woman went to all the people with her wise advice, and they cut off the head of Sheba son of Bicri and threw it to Joab. So he sounded the trumpet, and his men dispersed from the city, each returning to his home. And Joab went back to the king in Jerusalem.
- v. 23 Joab was over Israel's entire army; Benaiah son of Jehoiada was over the Kerethites and Pelethites;
- v. 24 Adoniram was in charge of forced labor; Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was recorder;
- v. 25 Sheva was secretary; Zadok and Abiathar were priests;
- v. 26 and Ira the Jairite was David's priest.
- 21:v. 1 During the reign of David, there was a famine for three successive years; so David sought the face of the Lord. The Lord said, "It is on account of Saul and his blood-stained house; it is because he put the Gibeonites to death."
- v. 2 The king summoned the Gibeonites and spoke to them. (Now the Gibeonites were not a part of Israel but were survivors of the Amorites; the Israelites had sworn to spare them, but Saul in his zeal for Israel and Judah had tried to annihilate them.)

- v. 3 David asked the Gibeonites, “What shall I do for you? How shall I make amends so that you will bless the Lord’s inheritance?”
- v. 4 The Gibeonites answered him, “We have no right to demand silver or gold from Saul or his family, nor do we have the right to put anyone in Israel to death.” “What do you want me to do for you?” David asked.
- v. 5 They answered they king, “As for the man who destroyed us and plotted against us so that we have been decimated and have no place anywhere in Israel,
- v. 6 let seven of his male descendants be given to us to be killed and exposed before the Lord at Gibeah of Saul - - the Lord’s chosen one.” So the king said, “I will give them to you.”
- v. 7 the king spared Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, because of the oath before the Lord between David and Jonathan son of Saul.
- v. 8 But the king took Armoni and Mephibosheth, the two sons of Aiah’s daughter Rizpah, whom she had borne to Saul, together with the five sons of Saul’s daughter Merab, whom she had borne to Adriel son of Barzillai the Meholathite.
- v. 9 He handed them over to the Gibeonites, who killed and exposed them on a hill before the Lord. All seven of them fell together; they were put to death during the first days of the harvest, just as the barley harvest was beginning.
- v. 10 Rizpah daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it out for herself on a rock. From the beginning of the harvest till the rain poured down from the heavens on the bodies, she did not let the birds of the air touch them by day or the wild animals by night.
- V. 11 When David was told what Aiah’s daughter Rizpah, Saul’s concubine had done,
- v. 12 he went and took the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan from the citizens of Jabesh Gilead. (They had taken them secretly from the public square at Bath Shan, where the Philistines had hung them after they struck Saul down on Gilboa.)
- v. 13 David brought the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan from there, and the bones of those who had been killed and exposed were gathered up.
- v. 14 They buried the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan in the tomb of Saul’s father Kish, at Zela in Benjamin, and did everything the king commanded. After that, God answered prayer in behalf of the land.
- v. 15 Once again there was a battle between the Philistines and Israel. David went down with his men to fight against the Philistines, and he became exhausted.
- v. 16 And Ishbi-Benob, one of the descendants of Rapha, whose bronze spearhead weighed three hundred shekels and who was armed with a new sword, said he would kill David.

- v. 17 But Abishai son of Zeruiah came to David's rescue; he struck the Philistine down and killed him. Then David's men swore to him, saying, "Never again will you go out with us to battle, so that the lamp of Israel will not be extinguished."
- v. 18 In the course of time, there was another battle with the Philistines, at Gob. At that time Sibbecai the Hushathite killed Saph, one of the descendants of Rapha.
- v. 19 In another battle with the Philistines at Gob, Elhanan son of Jaare-Oregim the Bethlehemite killed Goliath the Gittite, who had a spear with a shaft like a weaver's rod.
- v. 20 In still another battle, which took place at Gath, there was a huge man with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot - - twenty four in all. He also was descended from Rapha..
- v. 21 When he taunted Israel, Jonathan son of Shimeah, David's brother, killed him.
- v. 22 these four were descendants of Rapha in Gath, and they fell at the hands of David and his men.

Introduction:

Just as David was returning to the city of Jerusalem to be restored as king of the land, Sheba makes a power play and forms a coalition to keep the nation divided.

It takes us back to the days when Abner and Ishbosheth formed a rival kingdom in the north with the eleven tribes while David was king over the tribe of Judah in Hebron.

Psalm 116:1,2

"I love the Lord because he hears my voice and my supplications.
Because he has inclined his ear to me, therefore I shall call upon him
as long as I live."

Psalm 116:5-10

"Gracious is the Lord and righteous;
Yes, our God is compassionate.
The Lord preserves the simple;
I was brought low, and He saved me.
Return to your rest, O my soul,
For the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.
For thou hast rescued my soul from death,
My eyes from tears,

My feet from stumbling.
I shall walk before the Lord
In the land of the living.
I believe when I said,
'I am greatly afflicted.'"

Psalm 138:8

"The Lord will accomplish what concerns me. Thy lovingkindness, O Lord, is everlasting. Do not forsake the works of thy hands."

Ron Lee Davis in his book A Forgiving God in an Unforgiving World says, "When I was younger, still attending seminary, an elderly pastor came to me and asked me a question I've never forgotten. It was during the turbulent activist decade of the 1960's and it was a turbulent activist period of my own life, as well. This wise old pastor was well aware of the shallowness and impetuosity that so often underlie the enthusiastic idealism of youth, so his question to me was, 'Ron, is the church a hospital or an army?' I hardly had to consider the answer, 'Oh, no question about that. The church is an army. We're battling injustice and immorality. We're in a cosmic struggle against the principalities and powers and world rulers of this dark age. 'We're an army.' He nodded thoughtfully and said, 'Well, then, Ron, let me ask you this. What kind of an army leaves its wounded deserted on the battlefield?' Those words have never left me. The church is an army but it is also a hospital. The great tragedy of the church, however, is that many of the wounded that were left on the battlefield have been wounded by other members of their own army, their brothers and sisters in the body of Christ. They have been wounded by anger and malice and gossip and many other unforgiving acts. How long will we go on decimating our own ranks? How long before we realize that the enemy is Satan - - not our brother or sister in Christ?"

3 John 9,10

"I wrote something to the church but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say. For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words, and not satisfied with this, neither does he himself receive the brethren. And he forbids those who desire to do so, and puts them out of the church."

One writer says,

When the TIDE IS OUT, all the CRABS HAVE THEIR OWN
PUDDLES,

When the TIDE COMES IN, all the CRABS ARE TOGETHER IN ONE
BIG, BIG PUDDLE.
IF CHRISTIANS DON'T HANG TOGETHER, THEY'LL HANG
SEPERATELY.

IF CHRISTIANS WOULD BUSY THEMSELVES WITH FIGHTING THE
DEVIL, THEY WOULD HAVE NO TIME TO FIGHT EACH OTHER.

A mule or a horse kicking the boards out of the stall needs to get out of the
barn and into the field.

Joseph Bayly in his book Out of My Mind says,

“The strife is o’er, the battle done
Our church has split and our side won.”

Phillips Brooks says, “You who are letting miserable misunderstandings run
on from year to year, meaning to clear them up some day; you who are
keeping wretched quarrels alive because you cannot quite make up your
mind that now is the day to sacrifice your pride and kill them; you who are
passing me suddenly upon the street, not speaking to them out of some silly
spite; and yet knowing that it would fill you with shame and remorse if you
heard that one of those men were dead tomorrow morning; you who are
letting your neighbor starve, till you hear that he is dying of starvation; pr
letting your friend’s heart ache for a word of appreciation or sympathy, which
you mean to give some day - - if you only could know and see and feel, all of a
sudden that “the time is short,” how it would break the spell! How you would
go instantly and do the thing which you might never have another chance to
do!”

The tragedy of the account before us is, once again, we he civil strife and
disorder. We’ve got brothers fighting against brothers; we have needless
casualties simply because the nation is not one under David’s leadership.

(Shimei, Mephibosheth, Barzillai.)

v. 1 Now a troublemaker named Sheba son of Bicri, a Benjamite, happened
to be there. He sounded the trumpet and shouted.

“We have no share in David, no part in Jesse’s son! Every man
to his tent, O Israel!”

Whereas in chap. 19 we have these beautiful experiences of reconciliation
taking place and the generous forgiveness and love demonstrated on the part
of David now we’ve got a troublemaker who’s going to cause some difficulty.

We saw some preliminary volleys fired in the conflict between Judah and the men of Israel in the last of our episode.

The last words of chap. 19 were:

“Yet the words of the men of Judah were harsher than the words of the men of Israel.”

Sheba is a Benjamite of Saul's tribe, just like Shimei is also from that tribe.

One thing you have to say about the Benjamites: they really had a way with words and could use them to really hurt you badly.

On this occasion Sheba sounds his trumpet and gives his little speech:

“We have no share in David, no part in Jesse's son! Every man to his tent, O Israel!”

Here the king was coming back, and everything should have been going well. But jealousy throws a monkey wrench into the whole works. That is what happens in our own churches. People get so caught up in their own petty jealousies and arguments they don't see what damage they do to the church as a whole. Christ gets pushed into the background and people just square off for rebellion and battle. And believe me, there is always a Sheba around to start the ball rolling.

When tempers run high, people act without thinking. Sheba, a Benjamite, evidently nursed the tribal grudge against David.

His expression “Every man to his tents” is unusual in that Israel had long since left the tent life for a more permanent settled life in Canaan.

Sheba was calling them in to turn in their uniforms and K-rations and return to the farmlands. We'll head up a resistance revolution against the king and come out ahead. How dumb.

His call died quickly, as did the revolt. But here is another revolt. After all the troubles that have come to David, you would think the Lord would let up on him. But remember God's judgment on David: “The sword will not depart from the house of David,” But we never hear any complaint from David.

It is amazing how faithless and undependable the tribes of Israel were but I doubt if it would be any different today. Today the president or any public

official can make some little statement that should not have been said, and if you took a poll, you'd find that their popularity had so fallen that they couldn't get elected to office again for anything. The mob is so fickle.

The end of one trouble is just the beginning of another. And so it is when we live in this world.

Winter asks the question, "Who was Sheba? Sheba is described as being a man of belial, another way of saying that he was a shameful and worthless man. His genealogy is given and he is described as being the son of Bicri, a word meaning 'first-born' in the original language. This is the only reference found to the man's name in the bible. Being a Benjamite, Sheba was the catalytic agent for solidifying the opposition to David as expressed by Shimei when Shimei said that David was ruling in the place of the house of Saul. Although Shimei rescinded his action and asked for David's forgiveness, Sheba was more base and resolute. He championed the cause of all who supported the house of Saul by saying, 'We have no part in David. Neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse.'"

Hebrews 12:15

"See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God, that no root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by it many be defiled."

- v. 2 So all the men of Israel deserted David to follow Sheba, son of Bicri. But the men of Judah stayed by their king all the way from the Jordan to Jerusalem.

Galatians 2:11-13

"But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face because he stood condemned. For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy."

It makes you wonder how Shimei and the 1,000 Benjamites who came down to meet the king and Shimei especially having experienced this gracious forgiveness, handled this present uprising.

- v. 3 When David returned to his palace in Jerusalem, he took the ten concubines he had left to take care of the palace and put them in a house under guard. He provided for them, but did not lie with them.

They were kept in confinement till the day of their death, living as widows.

You will remember when Absalom came into the city of Jerusalem, he followed the counsel of Ahithophel in taking these ten girls unto himself, this creating a breach between he and his father as far as the kingdom was concerned.

Just as soon as David got back home to the palace, he had to put the concubines away because they were defiled by Absalom. It really doesn't seem fair, does it, but remember he could have had them killed. It is just the custom of the times.

Winter raises the question, "Why did David isolate the concubines? David had left them behind to pursue their normal activities of keeping the house. He felt that they had been shamed, and it would not be proper for him to reinstate them to their former positions. He did not turn them out to fend for themselves but put them in separate quarters and ordained that they should be provided for but left to live as widows."

v. 4 Then the king said to Amasa, "Summon the men of Judah to come to me within three days, and be here yourself."

2 Samuel 19:13

"And say to Amasa, 'Are you not my bone and my flesh? May God do so to me and more also if you will not be commander of the army before me continually in the place of Joab.'"

2 Samuel 17:25

"And Absalom set Amasa over the army in place of Joab. Now Amasa was the son of a man whose name was Jethra the Israelite, who went in to Abigail, the daughter of Nahash, sister of Zeruah, Joab's mother."

David is just replacing one nephew with another in this situation.

J. Vernon McGee points out, "Amasa, you may recall, was the captain of the rebel forces under Absalom. According to 2 Samuel 17:25 and 1 Chronicles 2:17, Amasa was the son of Abigail, a sister of David. This would make him a cousin of Absalom. After the defeat of the rebels under Amasa and the defeat of Absalom, David made Amasa captain of his army in the place of Joab."

Isaiah 3:12

“O my people, those who guide you lead you astray and confuse the direction of your paths.”

David had appointed Amasa as head of his army after Absalom's death to win the hearts of Judah again, and probably to punish Joab because he disobeyed the command of David to deal gently with Absalom.

David sends the new commander-in-chief to raise the Judean militia within three days. For some reason or another, Amasa failed to do this within the three days so then David sent Abishai, not Joab, out to pursue Sheba. Joab went along as one of the mighty men.

When the king said three days, he meant three days. And when he said, “Be here yourself at that time,” he meant it.

- v. 5 But when Amasa went to summon Judah, he took longer than the time the king had set for him.

Now we have the price of being late in what is going to take place.

- v. 6 David said to Abishai, “Now Sheba son of Bicri will do us more harm than Absalom did. Take your master's men and pursue him, or he will find fortified cities and escape from us.”

David calls in Abishai and tell him that this revolution or revolt could do more harm than Absalom did in his. “Take your master's men and pursue him, or he will find fortified cities and escape from us.”

- v. 7 So Joab's men and the Kerethites and Pelethites and all the mighty warriors went out under the command of Abishai. They marched out from Jerusalem to pursue Sheba son of Bicri.

As we know, the Kerethites are the ones who carry out capital punishment in the kingdom, and the Pelethites are the couriers who carry the messages of the king to distant points.

- v. 8 While they were at the great rock in Gibeon, Amasa came to meet them. Joab was wearing his military tunic, and strapped over it at his waist was a belt with a dagger in its sheath. As he stepped forward, it dropped out of its sheath.

Amasa finally catches up with them eight miles northwest of Jerusalem at Gibeon.

- v. 9 Joab said to Amasa, “How are you, my brother?” Then Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him.
- v. 10 Amasa was not on his guard against the dagger in Joab’s hand, and Joab plunged it into his belly, and his intestines spilled out on the ground. Without being stabbed again. Amasa died. Then Joab and his brother Abishai pursued Sheba of Bicri.

Well, Joab has made himself a committee of one in carrying out three ASSASSINATIONS:

1. ABNER
2. ABSALOM
3. Now, AMASA

I’m sure as soon as Joab killed Amasa, Abishai his brother said, “Listen, Joab, you go ahead and take over the armed forces and let’s go get Sheba, the son of Bicri.

Amasa joins the army at Gibeon, and here he meets his end. Joab was not about to see another man at the head of the army that he had led for so long.

In killing Absalom, Joab had killed for the state and the king, but now he murdered for the good of Joab himself. He called Amasa “brother” and pretended to go to him to kiss in the name of peace, and then stabs him in the stomach.

Gulston points out, “Joab’s murders have horrible similarity about them. Abner was lured to his death by believing Joab wished to speak with him quietly. Amasa was struck down in the middle of what he thought was a friendly embrace. Both were unaware. Absalom had been an even more helpless victim. There was a total ruthlessness about Joab that was to bring its own retribution, but for a while longer he went unchallenged.”

- v. 11 One of Joab’s men stood beside Amasa and said, “Whoever favors Joab, and whoever is for David, let him follow Joab!”

Abishai graciously steps aside and the whole army is appealed to follow Joab if he is for David’s kingship.

(Just like old times!)

- v. 12 Amasa lay wallowing in his blood in the middle of the road, and the man saw that all the troops came to a halt there. When he realized that everyone who came up to Amasa stopped, he dragged him from the road into a field and threw a garment over him.

Whenever you have a fatal car accident, you will always find spectators and the gawkers and the lookers that want to witness the tragedy.

The man appointed by Joab to stand there at that location realized he needed to do something so he dragged the corpse from the road into a field and threw a garment over it.

- v. 13 After Amasa had been removed from the road, all the men went on with Joab to pursue Sheba son of Bicri.

How different Joab and David are at this particular point. David would not lift his hand against Saul or against Abner of Ishbosheth. He would wait for God to work out His perfect plan for his life. The only time that he violates this principle is when he commands Joab to set up the circumstances on the field of battle that Uriah might die so he could take Bathsheba to be his wife.

Joab is just the opposite. He is going to retaliate. He's going to mow down the opposition. He is going to take matters into his own hands when he has been challenged and set aside. He is going to get the task done no matter what it costs.

- v. 14 Sheba passed through all the tribes of Israel to Abel Beth Maacah and through the entire region of the Berites, who gathered together and followed him.

this city of Abel Beth Maacah is probably 110 miles north of Jerusalem. It is just northwest of Dan, where you have the northern borders of the land of Israel. Sheba actually did pass through all the tribes of Israel in making haste to go north this far.

- v. 15 All the troops with Joab came and besieged Sheba in Abel Beth Maacah. They built a siege ramp up to the city, and it stood against the outer fortifications. While they were battering the wall to bring it down.

As soon as Joab found that Sheba had fled to Abel Beth Maacah, they started to build a siege ramp to take the city and were battering the wall with battering rams to bring it down, that they might quell the revolt and take care of Sheba.

Vos points out, "In his determination to end the insurrection, Joab raised a siege ramp up to the level of the walls. From that height he was now pounding the walls with battering rams to make a breach and enter the city. Such ramps were laboriously constructed by large contingents of men carrying baskets of earth under forced labor conditions. Assyrian and Egyptian inscriptions show that the practice of building such ramps was common. Perhaps the most ambitious siege ramp ever constructed in Palestine was that erected by the Romans at Masadah in A.D. 72."

- v. 16 a wise woman called from the city, "Listen! Listen! Tell Joab to come here so I can speak to him."

One is reminded of David in 1 Samuel 25 when he is on his way to wipe out the house of NABAL and he is met by ABIGAIL. 1 Samuel 25:23ff:

- v. 23 When Abigail saw David, she hurried and dismounted from her donkey, and fell on her face before David, and bowed herself to the ground.
- v. 24 And she fell at his feet and said, "On me alone, my lord, be the blame. And please let your maidservant speak to you, and listen to the words of your maidservant.

David's response is in 1 Samuel 25:32,33

- v. 32 Then David said to Abigail, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me,
- v. 33 And blessed be your discernment, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodshed, and from avenging myself by my own hand.

Over all the noise of men battering the wall, a female voice can be heard saying, "Listen! Listen! Tell Joab to come here so I can speak to him."

This is the story of the WISE WOMAN OF ABEL BETH MAACAH. It would be great if countries could settle their differences this simply. We don't know this lady's name but she is really a smart girl. She and Joab make a simple bargain to avoid so much bloodshed and destruction.

- v. 17 He went toward her, and she asked, "Are you Joab?" "I am," he answered. She said, "Listen to what your servant has to say." "I'm listening," he said.
- v. 18 She continued, "Long ago they used to say, 'Get your answer at Abel,' and that settled it.

Now she is speaking of the town that they are about ready to destroy.

She turns historical on Joab and reminds him that Abel Beth Maacah was a place you could come to get your answer to some of life's great problems.

- v. 19 We are the peaceful and faithful in Israel. You are trying to destroy a city that is a mother in Israel. Why do you want to swallow up the Lord's inheritance?"

She reminds Joab at this point that they are peaceful and faithful and that the city is a mother in Israel.

She then ends her little dissertation with a question: "Why o you wan to swallow up the Lord's inheritance?"

- v. 20 "Far be it from me!" Joab replied, "Far be it from me to swallow up or destroy!

- v. 21 That is not the case. A man named Sheba son of Bicri, from the hill country of Ephraim, has lifted up his hand against the king, against David. Hand over this one man, and I'll withdraw from the city." The woman said to Joab, "His head will be thrown to you from the wall."

Joab says, "The issue is not one of wanting to come and destroy the city. The issue is a man by the name of Sheba who has lifted his hand against the king, against David; and if we can have him and deal with him, we will withdraw from the city."

The woman immediately responds, "His head will be thrown to you from the wall."

Here she acts as peacemaker between Joab and the people in the city, and they end the rebellion as quick as it began with Sheba's head thrown over the wall - - end of rebellion.

- v. 22 Then the woman went to all the people with her wise advice, and they cut off the head of Sheba son of Bicri and threw it to Joab. So he sounded the trumpet, and his men dispersed from the city, each returning to his home. And Joab went back to the king in Jerusalem.

The whole issues was solved as soon as Sheba was taken care of, and so Joab sounded the trumpet and his men dispersed from the city, each returning to his home. Joab went back to the king in Jerusalem.

Hercus says, "Upon this, Joab at once withdrew his troops, and the rebellion being completely quelled, he returned in triumph to Jerusalem. He had proved himself indispensable in military affairs, and in spite of his insubordination and his crimes, David felt himself obliged to confirm him in his supreme command. It was a humiliating position for the king thus to be in, making confessions to his own wicked servant, but he must have regarded it as a phase of the punishment of his sin, and as a constant memorial of the darkest hour of his life, which it was good to keep near him. At the same time, it must be observed that Joab was not only the most influential subject in the whole state, but that with all his ferocity and self-will, he had his lord's interest always at heart and had proved himself a most useful servant. Doubtless it was part of the discipline needed for David's perfection that constrained him to tolerate the presence and tyranny of Joab, but they were a grievous burden to him and crowded all his happiness."

Vos point out, "The factual statement 'Joab returned to the king in Jerusalem' is given without commentary. But the action must have signaled difficult moments. The king had fired Joab as commander of the forces and had appointed Amasa in his place. Joab had murdered Amasa and resumed the leadership of the forces. What went on between the king and his general after Joab's return can only be guessed. The feisty and ambitious general would not be put down easily, and the king as he was trying to restore his badly-shaken authority needed and absolutely loyal commander who could inspire the loyalty and military success of the army. So a way was found to patch things up between the king and his general."

v. 23 Joab was over Israel's entire army; Benaiah son of Jehoiada was over the Kerethites and Pelethites;

It is interesting to compare this administration with this first administration described in 2 Samuel 8.

Joab is back in his old slot again, just like the old time. He is over Israel's entire army.

David can see that he has accomplished his purpose in allowing Amasa to be in the position to win the allegiance of the tribe of Judah, and what has happened to him since then was not David's doing. So now the logical man to bring together the military to insure success in the defense of the country is to put a seasoned veteran where he belongs. Joab was over Israel's entire army.

"Benaiah son of Jehoiada was over the Kerethites and Pelethites;"

This is the same man that had the responsibility for these two groups;

1. The KERETHITES are responsible for capital punishment and to carry out the executions.
2. The PELETHITES were the couriers who carried the messages of the kingdom wherever it was necessary for those mandates to be carried.

v. 24 Adoniram was in charge of forced labor; Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was recorder;

Here in this verse we learn of a new department: the Department of Forced Labor. Because of David's great military success, many of the people who were subservient now because of the conquest have been put in a position of being used in forced labor. David now has placed Adoniram over this particular department.

“Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was recorder”

He was the recorder in the previous administration.

v. 25 Sheva was secretary; Zadok and Abiathar were priests;

Sheva is the new secretary because Seraiah was the secretary of the first administration. Seraiah probably got a better paying job and just resigned his position of secretary, so David has Sheva fill the vacancy.

“Zadok and Abiathar were the priests” and have been for a long time.

v. 26 and Ira the Jairite was David's priest.

This is a new name in the administration. He is David's own personal priest.

There is an interesting phrase that is missing from this passage that is included in 2 Samuel 8:18

“And David's sons were chief ministers”

You see no indication at this point that any of David's immediate family are involved in the administration.

(The king is back! Civil war over | “Lived happily ever after.” | You've got to be kidding!)

chap. 21:v. 1 During the reign of David, there was a famine for three successive years; so David sought the face of the Lord. The Lord said, "It is on account of Saul and his blood-stained house; it is because he put the Gibeonites to death."

(Just got everybody back together again and now this!)

For three years there was a famine in Israel. David, thinking this must be brought about by the Lord for some chastisement, finally inquires of the Lord and is informed that the famine is a chastisement for a sin committed by King Saul in killing the Gibeonites.

(Elijah – 3 yrs. & 6 mo. | 1. Brook 2. Widow at Zarapheth.)

The Bible doesn't record the story of Saul killing the Gibeonites, but evidently he did. Maybe he did this after Samuel denounced him as king when he didn't kill the Amalekites after God had commanded it.

Maybe he thought he could make it up by going after the Gibeonites who were not really Israelites. They were foreigners, a remnant of the Amorites.

Joshua chap. 9 gives us the account of why the Gibeonites have such a privileged position in the land:

- v. 3 When the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai,
- v. 4 they also acted craftily and set out as envoys and took worn-out sacks on their donkeys, and wineskins, worn-out and torn and mended
- v. 5 and worn-out and patched sandals on their feet, and worn-out clothes on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry and had become crumbled.
- v. 6 And they went to Joshua to the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a far country; now therefore make a covenant with us."

- v. 8 But they said to Joshua, "We are your servants." Then Joshua said to them, "Who are you, and where do you come from?"
- v. 9 And they said to him, "Your servants have come from a very far off country because of the fame of the Lord you God; for we have heard the report of Him and all that He did in Egypt,
- v. 10 and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon and to Og king of Bashan who was at Ashtaroth.

- v. 11 “So our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us saying, “Take provisions in your hand for the journey, and go to meet them and say to them, “We are your servants; now then, make a covenant with us.””
- v. 12 “This our bread was warm when we took it for our provisions out of our houses on the day that we left to come to you; but now behold, it is dry and has become crumbled.
- v. 13 “And these wineskins which we filled were new, and behold, they are torn; and these our clothes and our sandals are worn out because of the very long journey.”
- v. 14 So the men of Israel took some of their provisions, and did not ask for the counsel of the Lord.
- v. 15 And Joshua made peace with them and made a covenant with them, to let them live; and the elders of the congregation swore an oath to them.
- v. 16 And it came about at the end of three days after they made a covenant with them, that they heard that they were neighbors and that they were living within their land.

Saul in his act of disobedience has killed these Gibeonites with whom Joshua had made this covenant.

Winter raises the question, “Why had Saul sought to slay them? The Gibeonites were not members of any of the tribes of Israel but were known as Amorites, a name given to the Canaanites in general on occasion, and probably signifying those who dwelt in the hills. They were descendants from Canaan (Genesis 10:16). Joshua’s covenant with them was an unending one and should have been honored by all leaders of Israel who followed Joshua. No historical reference is made to Saul’s effort to exterminate them, but he probably did this in a burst of senseless zeal, after he had failed to exterminate the Amalekites, as if wiping out a Canaanite tribe would atone for his failure to get rid of the Amalekites. Israel had sworn to the men of Gibeon that they would be at peace throughout their days. This was promised at the time Israel conquered the land and an account of this promise is found in Joshua 9. Saul had slain a number of the men of Gibeon. No number is given, but the number was probably larger than the seven lives sought in revenge. Saul had sinned, it is true. And all Israel paid the penalty by a famine because of Saul’s zeal for Israel and the fact that the nation would be held responsible for the acts of her leaders.”

Carl Laney commenting on this verse says, “When Israel experienced three years of famine, David began to recognize it as divine chastening and sought God for the reason. By divine revelation he learned that a sin had been committed by Saul and his bloody house. In his zeal to exterminate the

heathen from Israel, Saul had slain some of the Gibeonites with whom Israel had made a treaty some 400 years earlier. When David asked the Gibeonites what they would accept as settlement for the wrong done, they demanded justice in keeping with principle of Numbers 35:31 'A life demands life.'"

Deut. 28:47,48

"Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joy and a glad heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the Lord shall send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in the lack of all things; and He will put an iron yoke on your neck until he has destroyed you."

v. 2 The king summoned the Gibeonites and spoke to them. (Now the Gibeonites were not a part of Israel but were survivors of the Amorites; the Israelites had sworn to spare them, but Saul in his zeal for Israel and Judah had tried to annihilate them.)

Even though the Gibeonites had tricked Joshua into making this oath, an oath in the Lord's name in those days was not to be broken. Saul, when he was king, was acting in representing the whole nation and broke the oath.

Now for some reason, which we don't know, God waited until now to bring the famine upon the land as his judgment against the nation for breaking the oath.

(The Lord knows just how much we can take at one time!)

David is king now and he doesn't want to see his nation suffer, so he wants to make amends. He just makes one mistake, though, he asks the Gibeonites instead of God what should be done.

They demand blood of Saul's house, and David again without consulting the Lord agrees.

v. 3 David asked the Gibeonites. "What shall I do for you? How shall I make amends so that you will bless the Lord's inheritance?"

As David goes to the Gibeonites with this situation that has been called to his attention, he wants to know how the nation can make amends to them.

v. 4 The Gibeonites answered him, "We have no right to demand silver or gold from Saul or his family, nor do we have the right to put anyone in Israel to death." "What do you want me to do for you?" David asked.

- v. 5 They answered the king, “As for the man who destroyed us and plotted against us so that we have been decimated and have no place anywhere in Israel,
- v. 6 let seven of his male descendants be given to us to be killed and exposed before the Lord at Gibeah of Saul - - the Lord’s chosen one.” So the king said, “I will give them to you.”

Krummacher says, “To this divine purpose David must bend himself and make full account of it, whatever inner conflict it may cost him. The great guilt of the house of Saul, perjury and murder at the same time, demanded blood according to the inviolable law of God’s kingdom. Already indeed that house, laden with sins, had been smitten by many judgments, but yet by none which discovered itself at the first glance to everyone among the people as a requital for that most culpable of all their crimes: the murder of the innocent Gibeonites. This special chastisement must not be omitted.”

- v. 7 The king spared Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, because of the oath before the Lord between David and Jonathan son of Saul.

Once again Mephibosheth is a recipient of grace from the king. He has had the wonderful privilege of eating at the king’s table, treated like the king’s son; and now at the time of judgment, he escapes once again because of a covenant made between David and Jonathan.

(Saw him last week!)

- v. 8 But the king took Armori and Mephibosheth, the two sons of Aiah’s daughter Rizpah, whom she had borne to Saul, together with the five sons of Saul’s daughter Merab, whom she had borne to Adriel son of Barzillai the Meholathite.

You will remember RIZPAH was Saul’s concubine that Ishbosheth accused Abner of sleeping with during the time of civil war. MERAB was technically David’s prize for killing Goliath, but instead Saul had given her as his oldest daughter to Adriel son of Barzillai instead.

- v. 9 He handed them over to the Gibeonites, who killed and exposed them on a hill before the Lord. All seven of them fell together; they were put to death during the first days of the harvest, just as the barley harvest was beginning/

- v. 10 Rizpah daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it out for herself on a rock. From the beginning of the harvest till the rain poured down from the heavens on the bodies, she did not let the birds of the air touch them by day or the wild animals by night.

(Harvest & rain | showers of blessing!)

The scene is terrible to think about. Rizpah is the mother of two of the men. She goes out where they are hanging, spreads sackcloth on a rock (this is her only resting place) and she stays out there, watching over her dead day and night, fighting off the birds and the animals.

- v. 11 When David was told what Aiah's daughter Rizpah, Saul's concubine, had done,
- v. 12 he went and took the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan from the citizens of Jabesh Gilead. (They had taken them secretly from the public square at Beth Shan, where the Philistines had hung them after they struck Saul down on Gilboa.)
- v. 13 David brought the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan from there, and the bones of those who had been killed and exposed were gathered up.
- v. 14 They buried the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan in the tomb of Saul's father Kish, at Zela in Benjamin, and did everything the king commanded. After that, God answered the prayer in behalf of the land.

(Next page – sins & iniquities separated | I Peter 3:7 “Hindered”)

When David hears of it, he is moved to go to and bring the whole house of Saul's bones back to their family burial ground and he tenderly buries all of them together.

Some scholars believe that God sent rain, because Saul's son had been executed.

God did not demand the death of Saul's sons - - the Gibeonites made that demand. Maybe the famine was all the chastisement God meant to give.

There's a very interesting phrase here at the conclusion of verse 14: “AFTER THAT, GOD ANSWERED PRAYER IN BEHLAF OF THE LAND.”

Isaiah 59:1,2

“Behold, the Lord’s hand is not so short that it cannot save; neither is His ear so dull that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you so that He does not hear.”

2 Chronicles 7:14,15

“And is my people, who are called by my name, humble themselves and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, than I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. Now my eyes shall be open, and my ears attentive to the prayer offered in this place.”

I Peter 3:7

“You husbands, likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.”

It behooves us on this occasion to pray:

Psalms 139:23,24

“Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

Psalms 119:9,11

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word. Thy word I have hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.”

- v. 15 Once again there was a battle between the Philistines and Israel. David went down with his men to fight against the Philistines, and he became exhausted.

2 Samuel 18:2-4

“And David sent the people out, one third under the command of Joab, one third under the command of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab’s

brother, and one third under the command of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said to the people, 'I myself will surely go out with you also.' But the people said, 'You should not go out; for if we indeed flee, they will not care about us, even if half of us die, they will not care about us. But you are worth ten thousand of us; therefore now it is better that you be ready to help us from the city.' Then the king said to them, 'Whatever seems best to you I will do.' So the king stood beside the gate, and all the people went out by hundreds and thousands."

(David just does not want to be caught again at home when he should be fighting.)

One of the hardest things in the world to accept is the limitations of our increasing age, not only to accept them but also to acknowledge the fact of them.

Swindall in his book Strike the Original Match says, "By the way, your children will help you remember. One day I was in the car with our youngest daughter Colleen. She was singing a little ditty she learned at school:

'No matter how small a prune may be,
He's always full of wrinkles.
No matter how small a prune may be,
He's always full of wrinkles.

A little prune is like his dad,
But he ain't wrinkled half as bad.
No matter how small a prune may be,
He's always full of wrinkles.'

"As we pulled into the driveway, she finished the chorus. She got out and slammed the door, looked at me and said, 'Don't forget Dad, I'm the little prune. You're the dad.' Off she skipped. I looked in the rear-view mirror and thought, 'Hey, she really ain't wrinkled half as bad.' That's right, that's reality Ugh!"

Physically we begin to show our age. We start to SAG and SLUMP. ERMA BOMBECK said it best when she admitted, "I've got everything I had 25 years ago, but now's it's all four inches lower!"

David is probably having a real problem with retiring from active military duty because of what happened back in 2 Samuel 11 when he did not go out with the forces to fight the Ammonites on that occasion. I'm sure he just

keeps telling himself that he doesn't want to make that mistake again, so he's fighting all the way.

RETIREMENT can be:

DELIGHTFUL OR DEVASTATING
A DREAM COME TRUE or A DREADFULL NIGHTMARE

It all depends on how one prepares for it. If it just happens, watch out. Many a marriage partner puts everything into neutral and rapidly loses touch with life, like the attitude in a little poem you might have read:

“I get up each morning, dust off my wits,
Pick up the paper and read the obits.
If my name is missing, I know I'm not dead,
So I eat a good breakfast and go back to bed.”

Probably one of the most delightful stories of ACKNOWLEDGE AND ACCEPTANCE OF OUR LIMITATION is seen in the book A Touch of Wonder by Arthur Gordon:

“A few years ago, some friends of ours were given the heartbreaking news that their teenage son was going blind, that nothing could be done. Everyone was torn with pity for them, but they remained calm and uncomplaining. One night as we left their house, I tried to express my admiration for their fortitude. I remember how the boy's father looked up at the stars. ‘Well,’ he said, ‘it seems to me that we have three choices.’

1. We can CURSE LIFE for doing this to us and look for some way to express our grief and rage.
2. Or we can grit our teeth and ENDURE IT,
3. Or we can ACCEPT IT.

The first alternative is useless.
The second is sterile and exhausting.
The third is the only way.’

“I knew a man once, and Episcopal minister, who through some hereditary affliction was deaf and almost blind. He went right on preaching, visiting the sick, listening to people with his hearing aid, laughing uproariously at jokes, giving away huge portions of himself and having a marvelous time. One Christmas I went with him to buy some trifle in a crowded drugstore. On the back of the entrance door was a mirror, so placed that as we turned to leave,

my friend's reflection came forward to meet him. Thinking that someone else was approaching, he stepped aside. So, naturally, did the image. He moved forward and once more met himself. Again he retreated. By now, an uneasy hush had fallen on the spectators. No one quite knew what to say or do. But on his third advance, my companion realized that he was facing a mirror. 'Why!' he cried, 'it's only me!' He made a grand bow. 'Good to see you, old boy! Merry Christmas!' The whole store exploded in delighted laughter, and I heard someone murmur, 'That man really has what it takes.' What it was surely was the GIFT OF ACCEPTANCE. Acceptance of limitations that in turn brought the power to transcend them."

v. 16 And Ishbi-Benob, one of the descendants of Rapha, whose bronze spearhead weighed three hundred shekels and who was armed with a new sword, said he would kill David.

David, realizing that he's gotten in over his head and that he is exhausted, he finds himself in a situation where there is someone who is getting ready to make good his claim by killing David. His life is in jeopardy.

v. 17 But Abishai son of Zeruiah came to David's rescue: he struck the Philistine down and killed him. Then David's men swore to him, saying, "Never again will you go out with us to battle, so that the lamp of Israel will not be extinguished."

(Yeah! Abishai to the rescue! This is his time to shine! Get's to do his thing! I love it!)

Now they say the same thing they said back in 2 Samuel 18 and that is:

"No, we will not let you go out again."

Laney says, "The points of the record is that David was delivered from four great foes. That theme of deliverance prepares the reader for the psalm recorded in chap. 22. David's faithful soldier Abishai is noted to have slain the Philistine giant Ishi-Benob, whose spear weighed approximately 7 and (1/2) pounds. The 'lamp of Israel' refers to David, whose life and actions were as a light kindled for Israel."

David was getting old, and his men loved him enough to tell him that they didn't want him personally in battle anymore. They didn't want to lose him.

How different this battle is from the first battle that David had with Goliath back in 1 Samuel 17. Here, if it had not been for the intervention of Abishai, David would have lost his life in this last conflict. In the first, he is so

enthusiastic and excited he jumps onto the field of battle with his sling and with great confidence that the battle is the Lord's, he slays Goliath.

(About 50 yrs later | lot's happened | his youth has got up and went.)

Here it's a miracle that he comes off the field of battle alive.

- v. 18 In the course of time, there was another battle with the Philistines, at Gob. At that time Sibbecai the Hushathite killed Saph, one of the descendants of Rapha.
- v. 19 In another battle with the Philistines at Gob. Elhanan son of Jaare-Oregim the Bethlehemite killed Goliath the Gittite, who had a spear with a shaft like a weaver's rod.

Laney points out, "The Hebrew text of verse 19 attributes the slaying of Goliath to Elhanan, in contradiction with the account of David's victory recorded in 1 Samuel 17:50. There are at least three possible solutions to this problem:

1. There could have been two giants named Goliath.
 2. Elhanan and David may be different names for the same person, just as Solomon had another name in 2 Samuel 12:24,25.
 3. There has been a scribal error in transmission and the text should read, 'Elhanan killed the brother of Goliath.' That third view is supported by the parallel account in 1 Chronicles 20:5.
- v. 20 In still another battle, which took place at Gath, there was a huge man with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot - - twenty-four in all. He also was descended from Rapha.
 - v. 21 When he taunted Israel, Jonathan son of Shimeah, David's brother, killed him.
 - v. 22 these four were descendants of Rapha in Gath, and they fell at the hands of David and his men.

David began his fighting career with a giant, and he ends it with the slaughter by the hands of his servants of the giant's four sons.

Remember when David fought Goliath, and he took five smooth stones out with the slingshot, but he only used one stone. The other four were symbolic of the end of the giant's descendants.

This chapter concludes David's career as a warrior. God had delivered David from all of his enemies.

Matthew Henry writes a very beautiful observation: "The most powerful enemies are often reserved for the last conflict. David began his glory with the conquest of one giant, and here concludes it with the conquest of four. Death is a Christian's last enemy, and a son of Anak, but through him that triumphed for us, we hope to be more than conquerors at last, even that enemy."

Conclusion:

What are some of the lesson that we can learn from this particular study?

Lesson #1: There will always be a troublemaker among the people of God.

Lesson #2: Amasa illustrates the price of being tardy.

Lesson #3: Joab is always trying to make things happen and David is waiting for the Lord to open up the way.

Lesson #4: What a horrible tragedy when brothers fight against brothers.

Lesson #5: The sins of the fathers will be visited upon the children.

Lesson #6: When a covenant is made, God means for it to be kept.

Lesson #7: When the barriers are removed, God answers prayer.

Lesson #8: The acceptance of our limitations is a critical mark of maturity.

Lesson #9: The battle gets bigger and more difficult as we get closer to the goal.

Lesson #10: God has been faithful to deliver David in all of his military exploits.

(What a man! | 50 yrs in the military | what a soldier | battle hymn of the republic!)

Psalm 18:46

"The Lord lives, and blessed be my rock; and exalted be the God of my salvation."

Psalm 54:4

“Behold, God is my helper. The Lord is the sustainer of my soul.”

Psalm 63:6-8

“When I remember thee on my bed, I meditate on thee in the night watches, for Thou hast been my help; and in the shadow of Thy wings I sing for joy. My soul clings to Thee. Thy right hand upholds me.”

Psalm 84:11,12

“For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord gives grace and glory; no good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, how blessed is the man who trusts in Thee!”

(The battle scared warrior marches off the field of conflict the last time with his head held high. He won the first and the last and everyone in between. His string of victories stands unbroken. Yes! God is faithful!)
(Last time for anything is really emotional!)

1. Babe Ruth-
2. George Blanda-
3. Roger Stauback's)

(Don't look so sad I know its over. Let's just be glad for all the good times.)
(I fought a good fight!)

John 13:34,35

“A new commandment I give to you that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

1 Cor. 13:4-7

“Love is patient, love is kind and not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly, it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; leave all things, believe all things, hopes all things endure all things. Love never fails...”

(Where's the beef? | Where's the love!)

Rom. 2:4,5

“But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I’m coming to you, and will remove your lamp stand out of its place – unless you repent.”