

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF DAVID

PART III

STUDY NUMBER TWENTY-ONE - 2 Samuel 20:1-21:22

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.

The tragedy of the account before us is, once again, we have civil strife and disorder.

We have brothers fighting against brothers; we have needless casualties simply because, the nation is not united under David's leadership.

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 have 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 last week at the end of our study.

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.”

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

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!”

Sheba was calling them to turn in their uniforms and K-rations and return to the farmlands.

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,”
We never hear any complaint from David.**

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.

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 him 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.
It was just the custom of the times.**

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

Do you recall that 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.

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

For some reason or another, Amasa failed to summon the men 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. 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 Pelethites and all the mighty warriors went out under the command of Abishai. They marched out from Jerusalem to pursue Sheba son of Bicri.

Now they got about eight miles north in their chase and rested the first night.

And while they are there who shows up?

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.

Watch out for that kind of greeting!

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**

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 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 serious car accident, you will always find spectators and the gawkers 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 or Ishbosheth.

He would wait for God to work out His perfect plan for his life.

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.

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 this far north.

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, so they might quell the revolt and take care of Sheba.

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

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.”

We don’t know this lady’s name but she is really a smart gal. 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.

Isn’t that just like a man.

v. 18 She continued, “Long ago they used to say, ‘Get your answer at Abel,’ and that settled it.

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 meaning a place of great importance

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."

I mean she carries some clout in that town, she's going to the city counsel and she's going to say, "hey do you want to put this thing down. There's one guy responsible for it. Just take care of Sheba and everything is fine and the troops are going to withdraw,

I have the word from the general.

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 issue was solved as soon as Sheba was taken care of, and so Joab sounded the trumpet and his men dispersed from the city, returning to his home.

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;

Joab is back in his old slot again.

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. So 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 in the first administration.

- 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;**

**Now when David started out, you didn't need
that department because there wasn't anybody
to force to labor.**

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.

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.”

For three years there was a famine in Israel. David is thinking this must be brought about by the Lord for some chastisement.

He 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.

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. 9:3-16 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.

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 representing the whole nation of Israel 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.

David is king now and he doesn't want to see his nation suffer, so he wants to make amends.

He just makes one big mistake, though, he asks the Gibeonites instead of God what should be done.

They demand blood from 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?"

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.”

Now David has to go find seven sons of Saul to give to the Gibeonites for a public execution.

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.

And now at the time of judgment, he escapes once again because of a covenant made between David and Jonathan.

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.

Have they had a barley harvest for three years?

**When you deal with sin in your life;
God always restores and brings instant blessings.**

**As soon as the offense is dealt with,
they are reaping a harvest.**

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.

Whenever you deal with the resistance in your life and the disobedience, God always turns right around and opens the windows of Heaven and showers down blessings.

David dealt with it and there's the harvest and there's the rain.

**Now the scene is terrible to think about.
Rizpah is the mother of two of the men.**

**She goes out where they are hanging,
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,**

David does a nice thing here.

**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.**

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

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 BEHALF 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 if my people, who are called by my name, humble themselves and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then 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."

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.

He finds himself in a situation where there is someone who is getting ready to make good on 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!

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.

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.

David began his fighting career with four sons in Gath,

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.

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 You!”

Lessons Learned In The Life of David

PART III

STUDY NUMBER TWENTY-ONE - 2 Samuel 20:1-21:22

20: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 the Jordan to Jerusalem.

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

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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.

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.

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

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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.

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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.)

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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.

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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.

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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."

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QUESTIONS:

1. **Read 2 Samuel 20:1-21:22 several times and in your own words outline what is happening in the life of David.**
2. **Who is responsible for an uprising against David, according to chapter 20:1?**
3. **What was the result of this rebellion, according to verse 2?**
4. **What did David do with the concubines who remained in Jerusalem while he had been away when he returned, according to verse 3?**
5. **How did Joab get his old job back, according to verses 10-13?**
6. **How is the rebellion stopped, according to verse 22?**

7. **What do the Gibeonites ask of David in revenge against the house of Saul, according to chapter 21:5, 6?**
8. **Who saved David's life against the Philistines in battle at the end of chapter 21?**
9. **Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?**
10. **What lesson have you learned from this study?**

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

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.