

2 Samuel Chapter 04 Commentary

2Sa 4:1 ¶ "And when Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands were feeble, and all the Israelites were troubled. 2 And Saul's son had two men that were captains of bands: the name of the one was Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab, the sons of Rimmon a Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin: (for Beeroth also was reckoned to Benjamin: 3 And the Beerothites fled to Gittaim, and were sojourners there until this day.)"

When Ishbosheth hears that Abner is dead he is afraid. Why? As long as Abner was for him, he was safe. With Abner gone, so is his protecting power. Remember, Ishbosheth was made king over Israel by Abner, seen in: **2Sa 2:8-9; 8** "But Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, took Ishbosheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim; 9 And made him king over Gilead, and over the Ashurites, and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel." This was not a God appointed position, of which Abner had reminded Ishbosheth, when Ishbosheth accused Abner of lying with Saul's concubine in: **2Sa 3:9-10; 9** "So do God to Abner, and more also, except, as the LORD hath sworn to David, even so I do to him; 10 To translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beersheba." Ishbosheth is probably expecting that king David will set out to kill him.

We are told that Israel is troubled. Why? Because of the death of Abner, they are not sure how to proceed to make David their king, to which they had already agreed.

Ishbosheth had two men, Benjaminites as was Saul and Ishbosheth, who were captains of bands. Bands has the definition of *a group of soldiers, or a group of outlaws*, which is sometimes translated as bandits. We are not sure which definition would apply in this case, but the group of outlaws (bandits) is the consensus of most commentators, to which we agree, because the conduct of these two men fit the description.

Beeroth is mentioned as the home of Baanah and Rechab. Why this is pointed out we cannot tell. We do know that this is where the Hivites dwelt that deceived Joshua and the children of Israel, seen in Joshua chapter 9. Beeroth was in a lot of territory that was allotted to the tribe of Benjamin.

One thought is: that as this was, before, a land from which deceit came forth, so it is again, as these two deceivers come from that same place. This would point out to us that even in the church body there are deceivers crept in unawares, who are to be watched out for, and guarded against, as seen in: **Mt 7:15 ¶** "*Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.*" Certainly, Baanah and Rechab would fit this description.

4 "And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was lame of his feet. He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth."

At the news that Saul and Jonathan were dead, Mephibosheth's nurse takes him and starts fleeing. Why? It was customary in these times that the families of fallen kings would be slain by whoever took their place. Sometimes, even when another family member replaced the king, they, through envy and fear, would kill the rest of the family. We remember that Jonathan and David had made a covenant that David would not slay Jonathan's family, when David became king, but treat them with kindness. Wherefore, we shall meet Mephibosheth again later in scripture.

5 "And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went, and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ishbosheth, who lay on a bed at noon. 6 And they came thither into the midst of the house, as though they would have fetched wheat; and they smote him under the fifth rib: and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped. 7 For when they came into the house, he lay on his bed in his bedchamber, and they smote him, and slew him, and beheaded him, and took his head, and gat them away through the plain all night. 8 And they brought the head of Ishbosheth unto David to Hebron, and said to the king, Behold the head of Ishbosheth the son of Saul thine enemy, which sought thy life; and the LORD hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his seed."

It is apparent that these two men were well known to Ishbosheth and his people, for them to have easy access to get to Ishbosheth. They come to the place where Ishbosheth is taking his noon nap and the kill him. They take his head off the body and flee.

This also demonstrates the weakness of Ishbosheth as a king. Where are his guards? Surely, every king knows that he needs people to protect him from such circumstances as this. Matthew Henry points out: **Pr 20:13 ¶ "Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread."** Ishbosheth was given to lazy sleep, when he should have been either at the head of his army, or entreating David to ensue peace between Judah and the rest of Israel.

These men take the head of Ishbosheth to David and tell David that the LORD has avenged David of Saul and his seed. There can be no doubt that these men thought to be given a great reward for their evil deed.

Do not forget these are fellow brethren, of the same tribe in Israel as the one they murder. This reminds us that in the church, people can get out of sorts, and do much harm to their fellowman. Here are a couple of warnings given to us in the New Testament:

- **1Pe 4:15 "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters."** Certainly, we can see that these two men are busybodies in other men's matters, who are trying to attend to God's business by worldly means.
- **1Jo 3:15 "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."** This is a warning that when brethren have hatred toward brethren, it is a sign that they are not children of God. This is a warning to examine our own hearts to know the intent thereof. It is easy for a wounded conscience to commit murder, even among fellow brethren.

9 ¶ "And David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said unto them, As the LORD liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity, 10 When one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead, thinking to have brought good tidings, I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag, who thought that I would have given him a reward for his tidings: 11 How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed? shall I not therefore now require his blood of your hand, and take you away from the earth? 12 And David commanded his young men, and they slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged them up over the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ishbosheth, and buried it in the sepulcher of Abner in Hebron."

Notice the difference in the trains of thought of these two men and king David. They have brought the head of Ishbosheth, who in their minds was the enemy of David, and believe that they will receive great reward for their murderous actions. This confirms that the Amalekite, who falsely claimed to have slain Saul, did it believing he would receive great rewards. It is very apparent these men are not following the Lord, and their actions are just as those who are of the world. It reminds us of the scripture: **1Ti 6:10 "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."** Certainly, these two men fit in this description.

David tells these two men: God has redeemed my soul from all my adversaries. David understands that God is his protector, not these two murderers. David tells them that as the Amalekite, who claimed he killed Saul and thought to receive great rewards when he brought me the news, was condemned by the words of his own mouth, and I functioned as a true magistrate and put him to death. Now, you two come telling me that you have murdered an innocent man lying in his own bed asleep. And you, like the Amalekite, expect me to give you great rewards for a deed of murder of an innocent man. Your own mouths have condemned you. I will, again as a true magistrate, require your blood for your deed of murder. Therefore, David has his young men to kill them, cut off their hands and feet, and hang them up over the pool in Hebron.

Again, as with the way David managed the affair of Abner's death, David's actions demonstrate, to all Israel, that David had nothing to do with the actions of these evil murderers. It also conveys to Israel; David holds no ill against the family of Saul. This will convey to all Israel the message; they can expect fair treatment at the hand of David, because it demonstrates that David is following "**thus saith the Lord,**" as he deals with these different situations that come before him.

Another lesson we can learn from David in this chapter is that he is not covetous, of the rightful office of king over all Israel, to which God has appointed him. As David had believed the words of God, all those years

before he was crowned king over Judah; David is patiently waiting for God to work out his kingship over all Israel, in God's own time and way. Men who are not walking according to "**thus saith the Lord**" are by nature desirous of the applause of men, the power and prestige of high offices, as so regarded by men. Man is a covetous creature by his inherit, fallen, nature of the flesh. Remember, covetousness was the cause of the fall of Adam, in the Garden of Eden.

David has them bury Ishbosheth's head in the same place where Abner is buried.

We can learn, from this chapter, that doing evil for personal gain is not a good thing to do. Just as King David has executed righteous judgment, and conducted the judicial penalty on these murderers, God will exact his judicial vengeance in our own lives, if we forsake the way of the Lord. It teaches us that we should not commit murder nor be covetous.

One lesson we must learn is that we should always be careful to search our hearts and see why we want to do what we want to do. If there is any desire in our motives that are for our own glory, or advancement in the eyes of men, then we know that we should not pursue that path, as it can only lead to destruction.

It should also remind us that we have been called into the service of our King, Jesus the Christ, who knows the hearts of all men. If we have any desire in our hearts that is not to promote the kingship, and lordship, of our Sovereign King Jesus, then we need to fall, in repentance and supplication, before our Sovereign King, and plead that He would forgive our sin, and prepare our hearts to serve him in faithfulness. May God help us to be faithful servants to him in all we say and do, we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen!