

2 Samuel Chapter 20 Commentary

2Sa 20:1 ¶ "And there happened to be there a man of Belial, whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite: and he blew a trumpet, and said, We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel. 2 So every man of Israel went up from after David, and followed Sheba the son of Bichri: but the men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan even to Jerusalem."

David has not even gotten to his Jerusalem home from the insurrection of Absalom before Sheba begins another insurrection. Do notice that the man Sheba was called a man of Belial. Belial means ***without profit, worthlessness, destruction, wickedness, evil, naughty, ungodly (men), wicked***. Belial is capitalized which tells us that this is the name of Satan or an Antichrist. Wherefore, Sheba is a son of the devil and is an ungodly man. Sheba is a Judas Iscariot.

There is a lesson here: King David's troubles are not coming from other nations but from the very people God has appointed him to rule over. Thinking of who Sheba is, is a reminder that there are sons of the devil that have infiltrated into organized religion. This is very apparent when church organizations begin to support and condone things that God declares are an abomination in his sight.

Sheba, and Shimei, are both descendants of the house of Saul, and are acting in their bitterness of God taking the kingdom from Saul and giving it to David. We have scriptural evidence of this in: **Ps 2:1-4; 1 ¶** "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, 3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. 4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." God has not decreed that Sheba is to be king in the place of David. His insurrection will be futile and lead to his death.

Israel at large does not love their king any longer, which is the one source of the continued troubles of King David. The root source of these troubles is the fulfilling of God's pronounced judicial judgement against King David, because King David sinned and gave occasion for the enemies of God to blaspheme the name of God, seen in: **2Sa 12:10-11; 10** "Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. 11 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house,"

It is fit to note that in the previous chapter Israel had stated we have ten parts in the king, thus we see the beginning of the division of Israel into two parts, the northern and southern kingdoms. For forty years they have cried hosannah to their king and now they are crying crucify him, just as Israel did to their King Jesus.

David's brethren, the tribe of Judah from which his lineage comes, cling to King David. They escort the king from Gilgal, where they are, to Jerusalem. Once again, we point out how good it is to have true friends. A reminder that, even amid organized religion gone and going astray, there are those who are true and faithful to God and Christ. What a great joy, in the life of the children of God, to know that they have a friend in Jesus Christ, as stated in: **Pr 18:24 ¶** "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." This is a prophetic picture of Jesus Christ and his relationship to God's people.

There is the picture here of the tribe of Judah who is sticking to the truth of God and his commandment. They believe the word of God that David is King over all Israel. They also believe in the prophesy of Issac of his children before he died, seen in: **Ge 49:8-12; 8 ¶** "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. 9 Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? 10 The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. 11 Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: 12 His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk." We, likewise, must believe that Jesus the Christ is the God appointed King over all of God's chosen people. In other words, we, like the tribe of Judah, must recognize our kinship to our King Jesus and be true in our discipleship to him.

We point out also, Israel at large is now acting by their natural instincts of doubt in King David's ability to be king over Israel. They are not standing upon the promise of God that David is king over all Israel. This is often the source of troubles in our own lives as Christians. We let doubt turn our thoughts back to our sin nature and trust

in that, rather than seeking to remember the truths and promises of God and standing fast therein. After all: who is the author of doubt? Let us consider a couple of scriptures to demonstrate the definition we are projecting of Israel, seen in:

De 28:63-66; 63 And it shall come to pass, that as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the LORD will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. 64 And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone. 65 And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind: 66 And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life:" This text points out plainly that if we do not trust fully and walk faithfully in the truths and faith in God, doubt will come into our lives and we will have confusion of mind about the truth. In other words, when we forget God, God allows Satan to come in and cause confusion in our minds and instability in our lives. This is what we see happening in King David's life, because Israel, because of King David's actions, has lost sight of the truth that David is Israel's God appointed king. Therefore, they are easily persuaded to desert David their king and go with the mind of men.

1Jo 2:18-21; 18 ¶ Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. 20 ¶ But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. 21 I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth." This clearly demonstrates where Israel is. They have forsaken King David because of their doubt, which doubt makes them believe that David is not their God given king and therefore they rebel against him. Judah, however, believes in their God appointed King and cling to him. So, it should with us, our belief in our God appointed King, Jesus Christ, should have no doubt, lest we be found among those who are of the antichrist.

3 "And David came to his house at Jerusalem; and the king took the ten women his concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in ward, and fed them, but went not in unto them. So, they were shut up unto the day of their death, living in widowhood."

Again, we see a merciful King David. How? According to the law ordinances, these women should have been put to death, as well as Absalom who defiled them, seen in: **Le 20:11 "And the man that lieth with his father's wife hath uncovered his father's nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.**" These women are called concubines, which in Israel was a secondary wife. She was a wife but did not have the legal bindings of the true wife to become an inheritor of property or possessions.

One of the reasons for putting them in ward was to keep the story of what Absalom had done from being repeated when people saw them. If they were out in public view, every time someone saw them the story of Absalom's incestuous action with them would be revived and repeated. They being shut away in privacy would allow the actions of Absalom to die out eventually.

Secondly, because they were the wife, even though secondary, of the king, divorcing them, or sending them away, and allowing them to marry another would give cause to sharing a part to the throne, in the group of people who could lay claim to the throne. We see this demonstrated in the life of Adonijah, when he asked his mother to ask of King Solomon that Abishag, one of the wives of King David, be given to him to wife, seen in: **1Ki 2:21-24; 21 "And she said, Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah thy brother to wife. 22 And king Solomon answered and said unto his mother, And why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? ask for him the kingdom also; for he is mine elder brother; even for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah. 23 Then king Solomon sware by the LORD, saying, God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life. 24 Now therefore, as the LORD liveth, which hath established me, and set me on the throne of David my father, and who hath made me an house, as he promised, Adonijah shall be put to death this day.**" We see in this text that King Solomon, in the wisdom that God bestowed upon him, saw that Adonijah was seeking, by having Abishag to wife, to overthrow the kingship

of Solomon. Through this marriage it would give him a right to appeal to Israel for the kingship, because he was older than Solomon. This death sentence of Solomon was carried out.

"**but went not in unto them.**" King David could no longer have conjugal relations with these concubines because they had been defiled by his son's actions. There is an example, that confirms this sordid action has not ceased to exist in the nature of men, in the New Testament in: **1Co 5:1 ¶ "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife."** Here we see that men in nature have no regard for the laws of God and godliness. This scene is in the church, and we are told that even those, the Gentiles, who were not a part of the church did not practice this sordid sin against God.

In the New Testament, the reinstatement of marriage, being one man married to one woman, was restored and is the practice of the church that Jesus established. Having concubines was eliminated by the words of our Saviour as seen in: **Mt 19:3-9; 3 ¶ "The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? 4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, 5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. 7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorce, and to put her away? 8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."** And is further corroborated by the word of God in: **1Co 7:2 "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband."** God's purpose has and is to have one man married to one woman forever. This is a picture of the Church being betrothed to Jesus. God does not want an adulteress, or spoiled, bride. Through the atonement of Jesus, and the redemption from our sins, in the resurrection of the dead in Christ, Jesus will have a virgin bride.

4 ¶ "Then said the king to Amasa, Assemble me the men of Judah within three days, and be thou here present. 5 So Amasa went to assemble the men of Judah: but he tarried longer than the set time which he had appointed him. 6 And David said to Abishai, Now shall Sheba the son of Bichri do us more harm than did Absalom: take thou thy lord's servants, and pursue after him, lest he get him fenced cities, and escape us. 7 And there went out after him Joab's men, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and all the mighty men: and they went out of Jerusalem, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri."

We see now that playing politics to gain the favor of people is not a good thing. Remember that King David made Amasa captain over the Israelites in the place of Joab, which was a political move to win the favor of the people. However, we suspect that King David also used this appointment as an act of discipline against Joab for disobeying his orders and killing Absalom.

King David sends Amasa to assemble the armies of Israel and be present before him in three days. Amasa, who is not loyal to the king, does not do as he is told. When Amasa does not fulfill the command of the king, David commands Abishai to take David's men to pursue after Sheba and put down the insurrection he has started. Although the orders are given to Abishai, Joab joins the group even though he has been displaced as general over the armies of Israel. Did you notice that Joab's men are mentioned. These were men who were loyal to and served Joab, not the king. They may be loyal subjects to the crown, but their first allegiance is to Joab.

8 "When they were at the great stone which is in Gibeon, Amasa went before them. And Joab's garment that he had put on was girded unto him, and upon it a girdle with a sword fastened upon his loins in the sheath thereof; and as he went forth it fell out. 9 And Joab said to Amasa, Art thou in health, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him. 10 But Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's hand: so he smote him therewith in the fifth rib, and shed out his bowels to the ground, and struck him not again; and he died. So, Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba the son of Bichri. 11 And one of Joab's men stood by him, and said, He that favoureth Joab, and he that is for David, let him go after Joab. 12

And Amasa wallowed in blood in the midst of the highway. And when the man saw that all the people stood still, he removed Amasa out of the highway into the field, and cast a cloth upon him, when he saw that every one that came by him stood still. 13 When he was removed out of the highway, all the people went on after Joab, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri."

When Abishai and his forces were at the great stone in Gibeon, they meet Amasa and his forces, who acts as if he is still general over Israel and goes before them. Next, we have a description of Joab and his dress and his weapons, which seem to indicate that Joab has deliberated a way to kill Amasa, so that Amasa would not be suspicious of Joab's intentions. All the commentators that I have read say that when Joab got near to Amasa, he deliberately stumbled so that his sword fell out on the ground. He then picks up the sword in his left hand, so he does not raise suspicions from Amasa. Joab takes Amasa by the beard with his right hand, as if he would kiss him in greeting, and with the sword in his left hand he splits open Amasa's guts. Joab, who has long been David's general, in his jealousy of being removed from his office, kills Amasa, which puts Joab back in charge. How do we know this? King David sent his men out under Abishai. Notice the scripture and what it says. After Joab kills Amasa, Joab leads off in pursuit of Sheba and Abishai follows, as he has done all these many years.

One blow with the sword, from which Amasa shall die, but not immediately, as we see in the text that he is wallowing in his own blood. Everyone who sees Amasa stops their pursuit of Sheba. One of Joab's faithful followers tells everyone who stops: he that is for Joab and King David are to continue the pursuit of Sheba. When the man saw that everyone was stopping, he dragged Amasa out of the highway and covered him, so that no one could see who it was that had died. Thus, everyone continued following Joab in pursuit of Sheba.

14 ¶ "And he went through all the tribes of Israel unto Abel, and to Bethmaachah, and all the Berites: and they were gathered together, and went also after him. 15 And they came and besieged him in Abel of Bethmaachah, and they cast up a bank against the city, and it stood in the trench: and all the people that were with Joab battered the wall, to throw it down. 16 Then cried a wise woman out of the city, Hear, hear; say, I pray you, unto Joab, Come near hither, that I may speak with thee. 17 And when he was come near unto her, the woman said, Art thou Joab? And he answered, I am he. Then she said unto him, Hear the words of thine handmaid. And he answered, I do hear. 18 Then she spake, saying, They were wont to speak in old time, saying, They shall surely ask counsel at Abel: and so they ended the matter. 19 I am one of them that are peaceable and faithful in Israel: thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel: why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the LORD? 20 And Joab answered and said, Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy. 21 The matter is not so: but a man of mount Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, hath lifted up his hand against the king, even against David: deliver him only, and I will depart from the city. And the woman said unto Joab, Behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall. 22 Then the woman went unto all the people in her wisdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and cast it out to Joab. And he blew a trumpet, and they retired from the city, every man to his tent. And Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king."

Sheba went through all the tribes of Israel unto Abel and takes refuge there. Joab and the armies of Israel lay siege against the city and begin to beat down the wall of the city. A wise woman calls for Joab to come near. When he arrives, she tells him "**They were wont to speak in old time, saying, They shall surely ask counsel at Abel: and so they ended the matter.**" We find no reference for this saying in the scripture, nor do we need one, since God has included it this one time in the scripture, we believe it to be true.

We do have a reference to: **De 20:10-11; 10 ¶ "When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. 11 And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee."** We believe that this wise woman knew of the referenced text and used it as a tool to save the city. As Matthew Henry points out: We believe that this wise woman used this Proverb to rebuke Joab for not first requesting peaceful settlement of the matter.

We point out that none of the men of the city came to try and make peace for the city. This reminds us that though God has given men headship, it does not mean they have all the brains or that women are stupid. Many a man has a wife that is very wise, and he listens to her counsel to his great advantage.

Joab explains that they seek only Sheba, the insurrectionist, who has taken refuge in the city. The woman tells Joab to just wait a bit, and his head shall be thrown over the wall to him. After consulting with the people of the city, they cut off Sheba's head and throw it down to Joab. Joab blows the trumpet signaling that the battle is over. The Israelites return to their homes, and Joab returns to Jerusalem and King David. Notice, Joab is acting as if David had never demoted him, and Abishai lets him take the position as he has always done.

The concept, of the reference text in **De 20:10-11**, brings to remembrance the commandment from Jesus of how to deal with Christian brethren today, seen in: **Mt 18:15-17; 15 ¶ "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. 17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."** We should always seek the way of peace first, and only resort to force if it is completely necessary.

23 ¶ "Now Joab was over all the host of Israel: and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and over the Pelethites: 24 And Adoram was over the tribute: and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder: 25 And Sheva was scribe: and Zadok and Abiathar were the priests: 26 And Ira also the Jairite was a chief ruler about David."

In these verses we are given King David's appointed leaders, and see that Joab is once again established as general over all Israel. There has not been much change in positions of office from early in David's kingship, seen in: **2Sa 8:15-18; 15 ¶ "And David reigned over all Israel; and David executed judgment and justice unto all his people. 16 And Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the host; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder; 17 And Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, were the priests; and Seraiah was the scribe; 18 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over both the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were chief rulers."** There are two differences seen: One: now there is the office of tax collector over which Adoram is appointed the head. Wherefore, we understand that somewhere along the way King David began taxing the nation for funding. Two: is the addition of Ira the Jairite as a chief ruler in place of David's sons.

God's judicial judgments against King David are not completely fulfilled; and we shall see continuing distress for King David as we go forward. We shall see King David make some more bad decisions. These are reminders to us: we too are sinners, and we will continue to make bad decisions from time to time in life, except for the grace of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

It is also a reminder that though God continues his punishment of King David, God is a forgiving God and does not remove his love, nor forgiveness, from King David, which is a picture of the eternal remission of the sins of all of God's people. What a precious promise for us to hold onto: understanding that the life we have in Christ is eternal life, and God will never withdraw that from us, even if he does punish us sometimes for our errors. Therefore, we thank you, King Jesus, for providing to us eternal remission of sins, and eternal life in yourself, Hallelujah! Amen!