

2 Samuel Chapter 20

2 Samuel 20 King James Version (KJV)

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 just puts down one problem when another one pops up. It happens like that sometimes.

Vere 1 – Belial translates to worthlessness. An unbeliever. So this guy Sheba from the tribe of Benjamin (Saul's tribe) must have been put off by the words and tone from the men of Judah. This argument is being carried over from the previous chapter. Pride and jealousy are involved and feelings are hurt.

Sheba calls for a rebellion against following the true King. His declaration is that they don't have a part or a claim or a future with David as king. He calls for every person to return to their own tents rather than follow David.

One commentary I read referenced [Proverbs 15:1](#). Perhaps if Judah had a softer response in the previous chapter, the conflict and anger here might have been avoided.

Question: At the end of the previous chapter, Judah was probably at a higher maturity level. They had accepted David's return as King and were escorting him. They were in right standing with the King. The foolish and carnal argument of the people/tribes of Israel instigated a harsh response from Judah. So the question is, what level do you think Judah was when they gave Israel the harsh response? When I asked this question of my classes, the response is Judah probably fell off the seven-step map.

- **Application for Today:** Don't let foolish words from other people, knock you out of right standing with the King. It doesn't take much. You can be rolling with the King one minute and tripping because of someone else's behavior the next minute.

Observation: Here is the problem in rebellion against following Christ. It is based on feelings and emotions rather than the Spirit. The trick of the enemy is to convince you that you have no future or part with the King. This is so far from the truth, when God adopts us as His children and promises us an inheritance. The enemy wants to you to doubt the promises. Next, the intent is for you to stop following the true King (Jesus Christ) and instead go your own way. So you can have a part with the King and still go off in the wrong direction.



It is real easy to determine what level of maturity (Feast level) Sheba is at. He clearly isn't on the maturity map. He is not humble, in fact, it is just the opposite. It is emotion and pride driving these decisions. As a result, Sheba is acting outside of the will of God. In fact, he is fighting against God's plan. We should be very careful not to fall into the same trap.

Another issue is his actions and intent leads other people to not trust in the King nor the great inheritance that God will bless through. He tells everyone to do this on their own...go to their own tents like they didn't need David.

Verse 2 – Israel responds in rebellion by not following David and instead following Sheba. Israel seems to have a pattern of listening to the wrong person. However, Judah clings to David. They continue to support and follow the true King. There will be a reward for this. This answers the question from the previous argument of who should have the honor of bringing in the King. It will be Judah.

Application for Today: Don't stop following the King for the reason they did based on a lie. In fact, just don't stop following the King period. The answers to life doesn't lie in your tent or doing your own thing.

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.

David's first task is to take care of the wives he left in charge. They have been defiled by Absalom so David cannot be with them as before but he takes care of them.

Note: David Guzik points out that these women suffered from the result of the sins of others (David and Absalom). The same applies to us today. Our sins are never just about us, others can be adversely impacted.

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.

David's next action is to handle the rebellion of Sheba. He orders his new commander and relative to assemble an army from the men of his tribe (Judah). Verse 4 - Amasa = a burden. Told to be ready and assemble troops in three days.

Amasa couldn't deliver in the time set by David. So David turns to Abishai (not his brother Joab) to track down Sheba and take him out. David's fear is if Sheba escapes, it will split the kingdom and allow the enemy to establish a stronghold and escape.

David's mighty men go after Sheba. There is a time when you have achieved a victory that you may still have to fight and pursue after the enemy so that a stronghold is not established against you. Just because you have experienced a victory or overcome a problem in life, doesn't mean you won't need to ensure safety and peace in your life by putting down any other areas of resistance. You may need to pursue or go after these areas or they could be a larger problem for you later.

Interesting that David considers letting an enemy escape and establish a stronghold a worse situation than when Absalom was attacking while David was in the wilderness.

- Perhaps the open rebellion and conflict that you have to deal with immediately as bad as that may be, might pose a lesser danger than a bad and unsupportive attitude that is hidden away. Perhaps this is an application for parents and children to consider in their relationships.

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.

Verse 9 – Joab allows his sword to fall out. He approaches Amasa as a brother, like he did with Abner. He asks about his health, but really didn't care. He appeared to be concerned about him, but he really wasn't. He approached him to greet him, but now Amasa's guard is down so he doesn't notice the sword.

- The sword falling out could have been a distraction. It could appear to be an accident or look like one.
- Joab uses this "accident" as an opportunity to murder Amasa. He also hides his true motives by acting like a friend.
- There are several thoughts as to why Joab kills Amasa. It is fairly clear though from Joab's nature that being the commander of the troops is a position he has always coveted. Therefore, jealousy and position are probably the primary reason. Other commentaries may point out it could have been in reaction to Amasa's failure to deliver on time.
- **Application for Today:** Not everyone who acts friendly toward you is for you. Being friendly may be a way to get you to let your guard down. Also, have you ever planned something to look

like an accident to throw someone else off or deceive them for your own purposes? I can recall a time in my life where clearly I arranged a scenario so it would appear an accident but it placed me exactly where I wanted to be in order to fulfill (and cover up) my own evil intentions. Don't ask me about the South Dakota snow storm accident.

Verse 10 – Joab uses his signature move under the 5th rib and kills Amasa. Joab and his brother continue the pursuit of Sheba. This is not the first time Joab has performed this attack. He killed Abner this same way. This could be expected since he had never repented from his previous murders.

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. 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.

Verse 11 – One of Joab's men calls to the others to follow after Joab for the sake of David. Interesting, after the killing, there is an appeal to encourage the people to support the murderer. One way of doing that was to connect the person to the King. Folks still do this. People will sometimes justify following or supporting someone by saying supporting that person equates to supporting the Kingdom. They place God into the mix.

The problem is they should be going after David and the Kingdom and not Joab. It should be about the Kingdom and not the person.

Verse 12 – The appeal didn't work. He realized just talking to them wasn't going to get them moving. The man decides that Amasa lying in the road was an obstacle that cause the people to stand still and not follow after Joab. So he removed the obstacle they were looking at. Notice the steps he took. He moved Amasa out of the way and covered him up so they could no longer observe him. This is perhaps like driving by a car accident and slowing down to observe.

What did he move out of the way and cover up? Joab's sin. The result of what Joab did. A fallen leader.

Verse 13 – Only when the dead person was removed out of the highway, did all the people go after Joab to pursue after Sheba. Application...what do we need to drag out of the way to get you to move?

There seems to be a principle involved. We often see this method in politics. People will attempt to cover up and steer people away from the mistakes or sins of political leaders in order to solicit people to

follow that leader. It can be employed in any secular issue. It can also have a spiritual application. Certainly a person cannot focus on past sins and mistakes when trying to recover and move forward. To bury the past and put it behind you is an application point for the second Feast (Unleavened Bread).

Note, people can still take a spiritual principle and apply for secular means. The principle remains, the difference is how and where it is applied. Obviously it works since when the man moved Amasa out of sight, the people rallied to Joab. Moving him allowed the people to shift their focus to Joab.

Personal example: About the time of the teaching of this lesson, my Mom found several decades' old letters from my youth from several former admirers. As I read through a few of the letters, I began reliving the mistakes I had made as a young man and the poor job of relationship management. I caused some hurt and disappointment for others. Now decades later, I was experiencing much regret...once again. The more I focused on the past errors, the greater the condemnation and I felt at a standstill. Several things happened to help me recover my joy. First, I acknowledged my continual need for God. Second, I remembered that these mistakes were already taken care of years ago when I became a Christian. The power of the Blood of Jesus washes us still. Third, I had new hope and my mind shifted from focusing on the mistakes and instead on the new life and freedom I have in Christ. Fourth, I moved back into place of doing those things which bring God glory. When my sins are covered by the blood and moved out of the way, I can proceed.

Verse 14 – He (Joab) recruited from all the tribes and was successful in getting others to follow after him. Note, just because he is working for the Kingdom, doesn't mean he is doing it the right way. In 2 Kings Chapter 2, we find that justice will catch up to Joab's sins soon enough.

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?

Verse 15 – Joab's army find Sheba in a city and they start to attack the wall. Bethmaachah = house of pressure.

Verse 16-17 – A wise woman calls out to speak to Joab. She ensures that she is speaking to the correct person. She wants him to draw closer to be sure that Joab is listening.

Verse 18 – She describes the city of Abel as a place of old where people sought counsel. It was a peaceful city. It was a place where issues were solved through dialog and peaceful resolutions were found.

Verse 19 – She describes her faithfulness and peaceable nature and asks a question as to why he is destroying a historic city and an inheritance from God? Another key point is she makes sure that Joab is listening.

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.

Verse 20-21 - Joab explains that the intent was not to destroy the city. That is not the main problem. Instead, the city is under attack because Sheba has raised a rebellion against the King.

The woman responds that Sheba's head will be thrown over the wall to him. What do you need to throw over the wall to protect your inheritance?

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.

This wise woman speaks to all of the people in the city and convince them to cut off the head of the rebel and throw it out to Joab. They follow the words of the wise woman and the city is saved and the battle/siege ends.

Question: Why do you think the woman is considered wise? What does she do in her wisdom that we should take note of?

- The city, her home and her people, her future are all under attack. The fine reputation they had is also in jeopardy.
- The source of the problem was the rebellion. The source of the rebellion was Sheba.
- She discovers the root cause of the problem was Sheba by asking the right questions of the right person. Often you can arrive at the root cause of an issue by asking the right questions.
- She directs the actions of the people toward the specific problem which is Sheba.
- Note: The longer they allow Sheba to stay in the city, the more at risk they are to defeat and judgment.
- She knew that the problem wasn't what was happening outside the walls, the true cause of the outward attack was because of what they were hiding on the inside. I can see the significant wisdom of this woman. She saves the city from the inside out.
- Application for Today: What key questions do you need to ask to determine the root cause of your problems? Sometimes, you must deal with the key issue, or disobedience in order to have



peace. Some things need to be thrown over the wall. What type of disobedience or rebellion exists in your life that is the source of your troubles that you need to throw over the wall? We should perhaps investigate what's on the inside before dealing with the attacks from the outside.

- What is your Sheba? What is that issue or condition that you need to deal with on the inside to make your outside problem and pressures go away?

Refer to Psalm 139:23-24.

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.