

2 Samuel 20-21  
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## 2 Samuel 20-21

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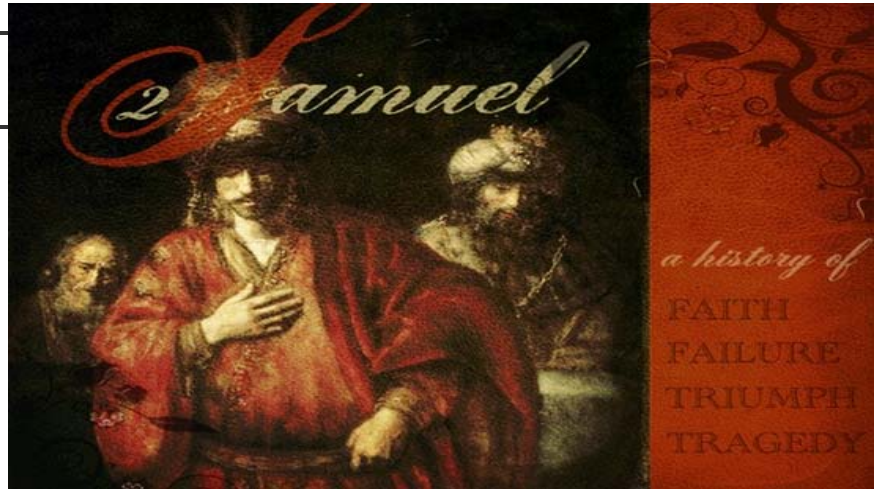
### Related Topics:

David; Joab; Abishai; Amasa; Sheba;  
Rebellion; Ongoing Battle; Gibeonites;  
Philistines

### INTRODUCTION

The Old testament is the living illustration  
of New Testament truth.

Eph. 6:10-13



*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. 11Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. 12For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.*

Stand. Withstand. Having done all withstand. There is no furlough from the fight of faith. There are no breaks from the battle that we are engaged in. This needs to be a settled understanding in the Christian life - that there is no real resting place on this side of eternity.

Tonight, in 2 Samuel 20 we have a great Old Testament Illustration of Ephesians 6.

David has just put down a rebellion led by his son Absalom. He has just put up with a squabble between the 10 Northern Tribes of Israel and the 2 Southern Tribes of Judah over who should escort David back into Jerusalem. In Chapter 20, David is put through another rebellion.

The lesson for us is that we should not be put out when we go through consecutive trials or relentless spiritual attack. Christians, if you don't recognize that this present world is not your home you are going to have a rough go of it.

Heb 11:10;15-16

*10For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God..... 15If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.*

2 Samuel 20:1

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*1Now there happened to be there a worthless man, whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjaminite. And he blew the trumpet and said, "We have no portion in David, and we have no inheritance in the son of Jesse; every man to his tents, O Israel!"*

Note that this is happening while David is still on his way back to Jerusalem after Absalom's rebellion. He is dealing with the petty, pride driven argument between the northern and southern tribes. He hasn't even gotten back to his palace when Sheba rebels.

First, that would be non-stop adversity and conflict.

Second, this happens on the heels of reconciliation between the Northern and Southern Tribes.

#### QUOTE: Matthew Henry

When a reconciliation is newly made, it ought to be handled with great tenderness and caution, lest the peace break again before it be settled. A broken bone, when it is set, must have time to knot.

Third, Sheba takes advantage of the conflict between Judah and Israel; this is another, new crisis during David's reign.

Its crucial to note that Satan love to work in the context of confusion and division. The N.T. tells us (1 Cor. 14:33) that God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.

Satan loves to create a bed of confusion, like a garden box. James tells us the soil that he loves to work in, and the harvest he hopes to produce.

James 3:16-18

*For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.*

Satan uses the chaos as his opportunity to accomplish the most evil of works. To draw people away from the true King who is Jesus.

There are three things behind Sheba's rebellion:

1. Denial of the king's sovereignty – NLT "Down with the dynasty of David!"
2. Devaluation of who the king is – he claimed that there was no inheritance for them in David.
3. Decision to go your own way – each man to his own tent! Every man was king in his own tent!

The same three elements behind the attempts of Satan to keep a man or woman from following Jesus. Denial of the king's sovereignty – "Down with the dynasty of Jesus! You don't want Jesus to be your king. Devaluation of who the goodness Jesus – There is no blessing to be found in Jesus; no life to be found in Jesus; if follow Jesus it means the end of life as you know it.

"Abundant life" is a life that is "blessed with all spiritual blessings ... in Christ. An inheritance, incorruptible, that fades not away reserved for us in heaven".

Decision to go your own way – each man to his own tent! Be your own king!

2 Samuel 20:2

*2So all the men of Israel withdrew from David and followed Sheba the son of Bichri. But the men of Judah followed their king steadfastly from the Jordan to Jerusalem.*

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**QUOTE: Alexandar Maclaren**

“Remember, the more rebels there are, the more need for us to be conspicuously loyal to our King.”

Only 2 of the 12 tribes were steadfastly going to follow David to his throne. Not far from the odds in the average classroom or workplace! 10 against the 2 who would be loyal and steadfast!

2 Samuel 20:3

*3And David came to his house at Jerusalem. And the king took the ten concubines whom he had left to care for the house and put them in a house under guard and provided for them, but did not go in to them. So they were shut up until the day of their death, living as if in widowhood.*

We are woefully indifferent and ignorant to the sinfulness of sin!

Everywhere around us the sinfulness of sin is not only diminished, sin itself is actually glorified. Remember Joseph in the house of Potiphar. Every day the wife of Potiphar tried to get Joseph to have sex with her. Joseph's response:

Genesis 39:8-9

*8But he refused and said to his master's wife..... 9 .... How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"*

The average young man (late teens / early 20's) wouldn't call that "great wickedness". He would call it a great opportunity. There's even a reality TV show called The cougar built around the theme of attractive older women and young men! The world doesn't call the attempts of Potiphar's wife to seduce Joseph great wickedness to be avoided. It condones such sin. It rationalizes such sin. It glorifies such sin. It defines such sin as normal behavior. All which is in absolute and utter contradiction to what God has revealed to us about the nature of sin.

Sin wrecks death and pain in every direction!

1. Vertically. It Grieves God. It Killed Jesus.
2. Personally. It Ruins man's relationship with God. Rots out the heart and conscience of Absalom. Wrecks physical and emotional well being.
3. Horizontally. It ruins families (Look at David's!). It ruins the lives of those who are victimized by our sin.

These ten women would live the rest of their lives as widows and childless. Think of the spouses, children, business associates, churches that have been left desolate by one person's sin!

2 Samuel 20:4-5

*4Then the king said to Amasa, "Call the men of Judah together to me within three days, and be here yourself." 5So Amasa went to summon Judah, but he delayed beyond the set time that had been appointed him.*

Remember that amasa was Absalom's former general. After the rebellion of Absalom was defeated David graciously made Amasa the commander over all of his troops even over Joab!

David was gracious, but not necessarily wise. Amasa was not a completely competent military man. While leading the armies of Absalom, Amasa was soundly beaten by Joab.

## 2 Samuel 20:6-7

*6And David said to Abishai, "Now Sheba the son of Bichri will do us more harm than Absalom. Take your lord's servants and pursue him, lest he get himself to fortified cities and escape from us." 7And there went out after him Joab's men and the Cherethites and the Pelethites, and all the mighty men. They went out from Jerusalem to pursue Sheba the son of Bichri.*

Joab pursues Sheba with the personal troops of David, but the troops are in by David's decree under Abishai's command.

## 2 Samuel 20:8-9

*8When they were at the great stone that is in Gibeon, Amasa came to meet them. Now Joab was wearing a soldier's garment, and over it was a belt with a sword (dagger) in its sheath fastened on his thigh, and as he went forward it fell out. 9And Joab said to Amasa, "Is it well with you, my brother?"*

Joab is one cold and ruthless man. First, he asks first about Amasa's welfare. "Is it well with you" literally means shalom! PEACE! Then he calls his cousin Amasa 'my brother'. We would paraphrase the passage – "Peace Bro! Joab"

"Bro" is the guy he's about to kill! And Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him. Amasa would not have thought this a violent or hostile action. It was a friendly gesture commonly used between men when they were greeting each other.

*10But*

the conjunction is used to let us know that what happens is totally contrary to (most importantly) what Amasa expected or the reader might expect.

## 2 Samuel 20:10

*10But Amasa did not observe the sword that was in Joab's hand.*

The point is not simply that Amasa didn't see the sword. The point is that he should have seen it, but he didn't because he was not being careful as he should have been. It was a conversation with a dear friend who was horribly betrayed by his right hand guy in ministry. Did you ever see it coming? NO!

So Joab struck him with it in the stomach. The coldness and hypocrisy of Joab is uncovered in the way he greeted Amasa: Peace Bro! But the brutality and violence that was in the heart of Joab is understood by the graphic description of what Joab's blow did to Amasa.

## 2 Samuel 20:10b

*and spilled his entrails to the ground without striking a second blow, and he died.*

What an Incredibly violent assault. Joab was a man of war and had no doubt employed these skills and gutted many enemy soldier in defending Israel and defending Israel's king. Now he uses that same skill set to gut a man he greeted as friend and called brother! A man he actually viewed as an adversary. A man who

must be done away with.

Our dear friend in England, Jim King in speaking of personal emotional pain will say “I’m just gutted”. He is so emotionally torn up over what someone else’s is suffering through, or so personally hurt by someone, that he feels like he’s been “gutted.”

I don’t want any show of hands – but I wonder how many here tonight have been gutted relationally or professionally, or even in the ministry. Remember that these things are happening amongst the people that God chose to call his people.

One would hope that being a citizen in the Kingdom of God would make us immune from such hypocrisy and brutality.

In reality, it doesn’t. The fact that it can and does is seen in the fact that the Holy Spirit was careful to warn against it.

Gal. 5:13-16

*13For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” 15But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another. 16But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.*

We can gut one another with our words. Think of this – Joab was using a skill set used to serve the nation of Israel – and in so doing was preserving the lineage for the birth of the Messiah, the Savior of the world. But he used that same skill set to violently slay a man who was about his king’s business.

Some of the most brutal behavior I have ever seen in the church has been by men who used their tongues in proclaiming and explaining the Word of God. They had trained their minds and speech in the cause of the King of the Kingdom. They had learned communication skills on how to get to the hearts and minds of men and women. And at some point when they felt threatened or they became ambitious they used those very skills to destroy lives and ministries!

What a warning. This Joab is to us who would serve the Son of David! That we can use things once useful and fruitful in the service of our king to gut a brother or sister or gut a ministry. This Amasa is to us concerning discernment. We don’t want to be paranoid in our relationships or in ministry. But we ought to be discerning.

Paul tells us that Love believes all things. That does not mean that we should be blind to the dagger in someone’s hand.

**QUOTE: Fausset**

Love Believes ‘All that is not palpably (observably) false, .....all that it can with a good conscience believe to the credit of another’

It does not mean that love is to allow itself to be deceived by the pretences of any dishonest person that comes along.

Joab was infamous for having in much the same way killed Abner. We are called to be a discerning people as well.

2 Samuel 20:10

*10 .... Then Joab and Abishai his brother pursued Sheba the son of Bichri.*

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Wow! How does that work? Gut the man and then just carry on about the kings business. Again, Not unlike a lot of things that happen in churches. Brothers gutting brothers and then just carrying on in the ministry while their “brother” lies on the ground with his guts falling out!

If this seems dark and bloody, that’s because it was. Out of His infinite wisdom the Holy Spirit has left us this record.

2 Samuel 20:11

*11And one of Joab’s young men took his stand by Amasa and said, “Whoever favors Joab, and whoever is for David, let him follow Joab.”*

There are two troubling things here:

1. Here is a striking proof of Joab’s unrivaled influence over the army. He commits this treacherous and violent murder before their eyes and yet they unanimously followed him as their leader in pursuit of Sheba.
2. We see Joab’s name joined with David’s

**QUOTE: Jamieson, Fausset, Brown**

The conjunction of these two names is very significant. It shows that the one could not afford to do without the other-neither Joab to rebel against David, nor David to get rid of Joab, though hating him.

2 Samuel 20:12

*12And Amasa lay wallowing in his blood in the highway. And anyone who came by, seeing him, stopped. And when the man saw that all the people stopped, he carried Amasa out of the highway into the field and threw a garment over him.*

At first look most of us are thinking “Are you kidding me? They couldn’t just pass by without stopping to stare at a man with his bowels spilled out on the ground?”

The evolutionist / humanist says that mankind is essentially good and he is evolving constantly towards the greatest expression of that goodness.

They concede the occasional aberrant person here and there (the Joab’s if-you-would) but every day and every way things are getting better.

Then we come to this passage. It is not a dark page from a dark time in the distant past of man’s social evolution, This is mankind today! Fallen Man has a morbid attraction to blood and gore! People today do the same thing today; only in movie theaters!

- Friday the 13th and it’s 11 sequels (\$1/2 Billion earnings worldwide).
- Halloween and it’s NINE sequels (\$1/3 Billion earnings worldwide)

At the average of \$5.00/ticket that translates into 160 million sets of eyes watching people slashed and hacked to death.

2 Samuel 20:13-22

*13When he was taken out of the highway, all the people went on after Joab to pursue Sheba the son of Bichri. 14 And Sheba passed through all the tribes of Israel to Abel of Beth-maacah, and all the Bichrites assembled and followed him in. 15And all the men who were with Joab came and besieged him in Abel of Beth-maacah. They cast up*

*a mound against the city, and it stood against the rampart, and they were battering the wall to throw it down. 16Then a wise woman called from the city, "Listen! Listen! Tell Joab, 'Come here, that I may speak to you.'" 17And he came near her, and the woman said, "Are you Joab?" He answered, "I am." Then she said to him, "Listen to the words of your servant." And he answered, "I am listening." 18Then she said, "They used to say in former times, 'Let them but ask counsel at Abel,' and so they settled a matter. 19I am one of those who are peaceable and faithful in Israel. You seek to destroy a city that is a mother in Israel. Why will you swallow up the heritage of the Lord?" 20Joab answered, "Far be it from me, far be it, that I should swallow up or destroy! 21That is not true. But a man of the hill country of Ephraim, called Sheba the son of Bichri, has lifted up his hand against King David. Give up him alone, and I will withdraw from the city." And the woman said to Joab, "Behold, his head shall be thrown to you over the wall." 22Then the woman went to all the people in her wisdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri and threw it out to Joab.*

Good grief! So he blew the trumpet, and they dispersed from the city, every man to his home. And Joab returned to Jerusalem to the king.

Let me preface my thoughts here. I am not advocating cutting of heads throwing them over walls! The people of Abel were wise in not tolerating the rebel in their midst and in sparing their city the ravages of a siege.

There comes a point when you – and again, let me be clear – There comes a point when you cut ties (not heads) – with the rebel or rebels because there will always be carnage when rebellion is allowed to grow. It should not matter who they are.

Romans 16:17

*I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them.*

If you deprive them of your ears and they persist in trying to solicit people to their cause there will be collateral damage!

Proverbs 29:22

*A man of wrath stirs up strife, and one given to anger causes much transgression.*

Proverbs 16:28-29

*A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends. 29 A man of violence entices his neighbor and leads him in a way that is not good.*

Not only will people be harmed but Jesus will ultimately deal with it

Proverbs 15:25

*The Lord tears down the house of the proud*

2 Samuel 20:23-26

*23Now Joab was in command of all the army of Israel; and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was in command of the Cherethites and the Pelethites; 24and Adoram was in charge of the forced labor; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was the recorder; 25and Sheva was secretary; and Zadok and Abiathar were priests; 26and Ira the Jairite was also David's priest.*

So there we have it. A traitorous kiss. A man disembowled with a single thrust of a dagger and left in the road to die. A head thrown over a wall.

As dark and twisted as the events are we do close on an amazing note of encouragement and hope! What is so amazing is the fact that despite all of this insanity David was able to do what the rest of the kings of Israel (save Solomon) were unable to do. To keep the 12 tribes united together under one kingdom!

How is that? Despite his failings, David was still a man after God's heart. He had a very intimate relationship with God. He ultimately was a man submitted to the Lord. He never set other gods before him. That's great news for you and me!

Because of our trust in Christ, though we have trial and tribulation, though we fail often, Jesus will never forsake us.

Romans 5:1-2

*Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

Romans 8:33-35; 37-39

*Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. 35Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?... 37No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

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