

The Trouble with Sheba – 2 Samuel 20:1-26

Introduction:

David has successfully put down the rebellion led by his son, Absalom. This rebellion split the nation, and David is trying hard to bring unity and peace to the land. Unfortunately, even his return to Jerusalem produces a rift in the nation, as the men of Judah and the men of Israel start a shouting match about who should be able to claim David as their king.

Division and strife continue in the nation, and David must put his energy into uniting the kingdom. He arrives back in Jerusalem and must address issues that manifest because of the rebellion of Absalom. Will there ever be peace?

A Split Nation – 2 Samuel 20:1-2

1. According to verse 1, who causes trouble for David as he returns to Jerusalem? What do we know about this individual? Why is this important?
2. What is Sheba's slogan for the northern tribes according to verse 1? What is he saying?
3. How do the tribes of Israel and Judah respond to the call of Sheba?

Collateral Damage – 2 Samuel 20:3

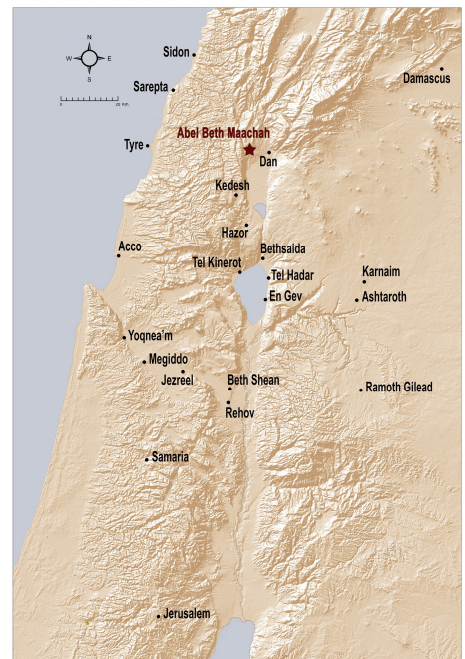
4. "Collateral Damage" is a term used by armies to indicate the price non-combatants have to pay in war. There are those who are not the soldiers yet they pay a heavy price due to the conflict. In verse 3, who are the innocent who pay a high price because of the civil war? What price did they pay?

Joab Disposes of Amasa – 2 Samuel 20:4-13

5. In verse 4 David says to Amasa, the general who led Absalom's army, "Call the men of Judah to gather to me in three days." What is David seeking to do?
6. Does Amasa fulfill the king's command (v. 5)?
7. Who does David now turn to as leader of his troops (v. 6)? What command does David give this general? What does David sense is afoot?
8. Who also took his faithful warriors to help the king's appointed general (v. 7)?
9. Who meets David's army at the great stone in Gibeon (v. 8)?
10. Joab addresses Amasa with these words, "Is it well with you, my brother?" (v. 9) Is he asking about Amasa's health or something else?
11. Does Joab trust Amasa? Without any recorded response from Amasa what does Joab do to him (v. 10)?
12. What is the rallying cry of the young man to the soldiers (v. 11)? What is interesting about the rallying cry?
13. What effect did the mutilated body of Amasa on the side of the road have on the soldiers (v. 12)? What does the young man do to remedy this (v. 12)?
14. What was the response of the men now to the call to capture Sheba (v. 13)?

Sheba at Abel of Beth-Maakah – 2 Samuel 20:14-26

15. In verse 14 it says that Sheba passed through all the tribes of Israel to get to Abel Beth-Maakah, a city at the far northern boundaries of Israel. Why might he have done that? Who is following Sheba's leadership?



16. What does Joab's army do when they discover Sheba holed up in Abel Beth-Maacah (v. 15)?
17. Who, from the city, steps forward to try and deal with this crisis the city is in (v. 16)? What does she request?
18. What message does the woman give to Joab (vss. 17-19)?
19. In verse 20 Joab denies that he is on a mission of destruction. Why is he coming against the city (v. 21)? What does Joab propose?
20. How does the woman (and the people of Abel Beth-Maacah) respond to Joab's proposal (vss. 21-22)?
21. With Sheba dead, what happens to the troops (v. 22)?
22. Verses 23-26 list some of the officials in David's kingdom. What was Adoram's task (v. 24)? What does this tell us about the kingdom?
23. Who is Ira (v. 26)? What is his role? (It appears he has replaced David's sons in this role)

Conclusion:

David is once again faced with opposition to his reign. It appears even God-appointed leaders do not have an easy go of it. Though most of the nation was ready to follow the king, there were still those who had their own agendas.

Why is it that people are so easily divided and communities are torn asunder? No wonder David would write in Psalm 133:1, "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!" (NIV) The twelve tribes may all be related through Jacob but they certainly are not a united family. David's biggest task is trying to unite the tribes as one nation.

What is the cause of this disunity? Why is it that relationships can be so hard to maintain, from family connections to national unity? The Biblical answer says the root problem is sin. That means the solution is a wholesale turning towards God, from the King to the pauper. Revival can save a nation – even today!