



# Rebel Without a Cause

2 Samuel 20

## 2 Samuel 20:1-2

**1** Now a worthless fellow happened to be there whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite; and he blew the trumpet and said, “We have no portion in David, Nor do we have inheritance in the son of Jesse; Every man to his tents, O Israel!” **2** So all the men of Israel withdrew from following David and followed Sheba the son of Bichri; but the men of Judah remained steadfast to their king, from the Jordan even to Jerusalem.



# Disunity Kindles Rebellion

“a worthless fellow...whose name was Sheba”

- After the verbal altercation with Judah, the northern tribes were in no mood to remain with the Judahites.
- Sheba “blew the trumpet” and shouted, “We have no portion in David...”



# Judah Returns David to Jerusalem

- This is a much different rebellion than the one led by Absalom.
- In his rebellion, many in Judah had sided with Absalom.
- The present revolt is much more clearly drawn along the north-south tribal lines, led by a Benjamite.





## 2 Samuel 20:3-5

**3** Then David came to his house at Jerusalem, and the king took the ten women, the concubines whom he had left to keep the house, and placed them under guard and provided them with sustenance, but did not go in to them. So they were shut up until the day of their death, living as widows. **4** Then the king said to Amasa, “Call out the men of Judah for me within three days, and be present here yourself.” **5** So Amasa went to call out the men of Judah, but he delayed longer than the set time which he had appointed him.

# Priority #1: The Concubines

- Recall that David had left behind 10 concubines in his palace, and it was those 10 women who were violated publicly by Absalom.
- These women were humiliated, abused, and in need of attention.
- Accordingly, David “placed them under guard and provided them with sustenance.”





## Nevertheless...

- Because of their previous sexual contact with his son, David prudently does not lie with them (Lev. 18:15; Deut. 24:1-4).
- David's actions may also indicate that his temporary exile drove him back to the Lord and increased his desire to please Him.



But We Can't Ignore The Fact

- The fate of the concubines is not pleasant:

“So they were shut up until the day of their death, living as widows.”





## More Fallout from David's Sin

By damaging one  
woman's life  
(Bathsheba), David ends  
up damaging the lives of  
the ten concubines.



# Two Larger Issues

1. Reunifying the Judahites
2. Putting down Sheba's Revolt

In an effort to deal with both issues simultaneously, David commands Amasa to lead the king's army against Sheba's rebels.





# David Acts Immediately

- After all, it had been Absalom's delay in attacking his father that permitted David to triumph in the previous rebellion.
- **David will not make the same mistake.**
- And notice it is Absalom's former general that is slow-moving:  
    **“but he delayed longer than the set time which he had appointed him.”**



## 2 Samuel 20:6-7

**6** And 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, so that he does not find for himself fortified cities and escape from our sight.” **7** So Joab’s men went out after him, along with the Cherethites and the Pelethites and all the mighty men; and they went out from Jerusalem to pursue Sheba the son of Bichri.





# David Appoints Abishai

- The brother of Joab, and the hot-headed soldier who wanted to cut off the head of Shimei.
- Notice Joab was not appointed, probably because he was “demoted” for his treatment of Absalom.
- Abishai commands a very small but deadly force.



## 2 Samuel 20:8-10

**8** When they were at the large stone which is in Gibeon, Amasa came to meet them. Now Joab was dressed in his military attire, and over it was a belt with a sword in its sheath fastened at his waist; and as he went forward, it fell out. **9** Joab said to Amasa, “Is it well with you, my brother?” And Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him. **10** But Amasa was not on guard against the sword which was in Joab’s hand so he struck him in the belly with it and poured out his inward parts on the ground, and did not strike him again, and he died. Then Joab and Abishai his brother pursued Sheba the son of Bichri.



# First Stop: Gibeon



# “Amasa came to meet them”

- And Joab, for one, is not happy to see him.
- Remember, Amasa is Joab’s cousin.
- Joab, “dressed in his military attire” stepped forward to confront Amasa.
- As he does, his sword “fell out.”





# A Unique Greeting

“Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him.”

- This greeting is unattested elsewhere in Scripture.
- Perhaps using the right hand in this manner would have signaled a lack of hostile intent, since weapons were normally carried in the right hand.







# EHUD



# The Response is Understandable

1. He had just finished fighting a bloody war against troops commanded by Amasa, and Joab considered Amasa guilty of treason against David.
2. Amasa had just been chosen to take over the prestigious job from which Joab had been fired.

That does not mean the act was forgivable...



## 1 Kings 2:5

“Now you also know what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, what he did to the two commanders of the armies of Israel, to Abner the son of Ner, and to Amasa the son of Jether, whom he killed; he also shed the blood of war in peace. And he put the blood of war on his belt about his waist, and on his sandals on his feet.”



## Amasa Lies Dead

So, even though Joab had been replaced as commander of the army, he once again assumes a leadership role over the troops, as:

“Joab and Abishai his brother pursued Sheba the son of Bichri.”





## 2 Samuel 20:11-13

**11** Now there stood by him one of Joab's young men, and said, "Whoever favors Joab and whoever is for David, let him follow Joab." **12** But Amasa lay wallowing in his blood in the middle of the highway. And when the man saw that all the people stood still, he removed Amasa from the highway into the field and threw a garment over him when he saw that everyone who came by him stood still. **13** As soon as he was removed from the highway, all the men passed on after Joab to pursue Sheba the son of Bichri.

# Joab Has Many Supporters

- A young soldier proclaims: “Whoever favors Joab and whoever is for David, let him follow Joab.”
- One, this is potential treason.
- And two, soldiers are shocked at the sight of Amasa “wallowing in his blood in the middle of the highway.”





A man in a grey suit and red tie stands in the foreground with his hands raised in a gesture of surrender or protest. He is looking upwards with a concerned expression. The background is a city in flames, with large buildings on fire and thick smoke rising into the sky. A small aircraft is visible in the upper left. In the lower right, a person in dark clothing is running away from the viewer. The overall scene is one of chaos and destruction.

Nothing to see here.  
Please disperse.

# The Young Soldier

“removed Amasa from the highway into the field and threw a garment over him when he saw that everyone who came by him stood still. As soon as he was removed from the highway, all the men passed on after Joab to pursue Sheba the son of Bichri.”





## 2 Samuel 20:14-17

**14** Now he went through all the tribes of Israel to Abel, even Beth-maacah, and all the Berites; and they were gathered together and also went after him. **15** They came and besieged him in Abel Beth-maacah, and they cast up a siege ramp against the city, and it stood by the rampart; and all the people who were with Joab were wreaking destruction in order to topple the wall. **16** Then a wise woman called from the city, “Hear, hear! Please tell Joab, ‘Come here that I may speak with you.’” **17** So he approached her, and the woman said, “Are you Joab?” And he answered, “I am.” Then she said to him, “Listen to the words of your maidservant.” And he answered, “I am listening.”

# David's Strategy Proves Successful

The northern tribes fail to organize an effective army and were forced to flee northward ahead of the Judahites.

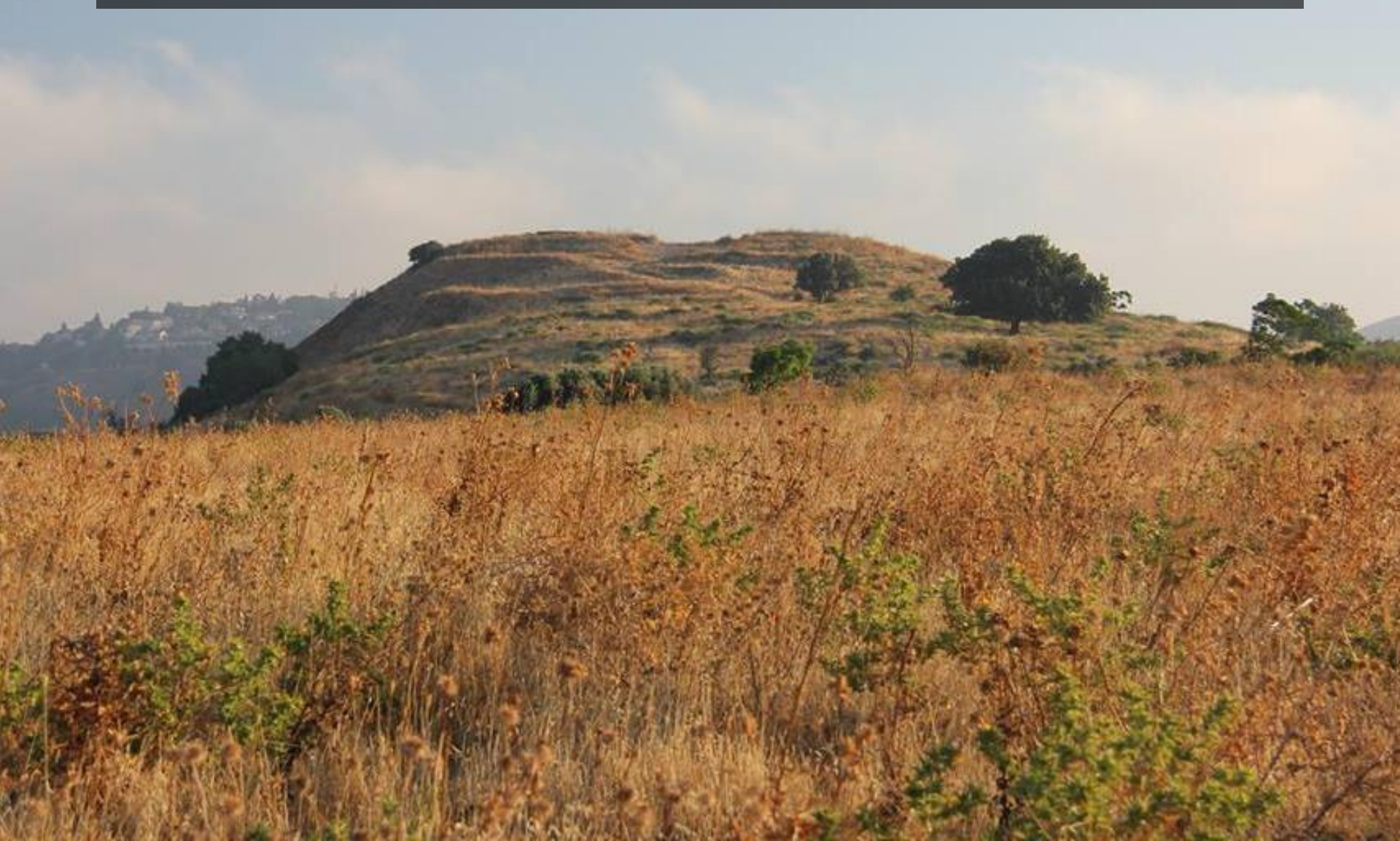


In their retreat they “went through all the tribes of Israel” to “Abel, even Beth-maacah.”





# Joab Sieges the City





# Assyrian Siege Ramp at Lachish





# Siege Ramps & Battering Rams

- Battering rams are mentioned in the Mari letters (18<sup>th</sup> century B.C.), and battering rams and siege mounds are both noted in a Hittite text from the mid to late 17<sup>th</sup> century B.C.).
- **The best depictions are Assyrian:**
  - Ashurnasirpal II at Kalhu (879 B.C.)
  - Sennacherib at Nineveh (701 B.C.)







Ashurnasirpal II at Kalhu  
(9<sup>th</sup> Century B.C.)





“a wise woman called from the city”



## 2 Samuel 20:18-22

**18** Then she spoke, saying, “Formerly they used to say, ‘They will surely ask advice at Abel,’ and thus they ended the dispute. **19** I am of those who are peaceable and faithful in Israel. You are seeking to destroy a city, even a mother in Israel. Why would you swallow up the inheritance of the Lord?” **20** Joab replied, “Far be it, far be it from me that I should swallow up or destroy! **21** Such is not the case. But a man from the hill country of Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, has lifted up his hand against King David. Only hand him over, and I will depart from the city.” And the woman said to Joab, “Behold, his head will be thrown to you over the wall.” **22** Then the woman wisely came to all the people. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri and threw it to Joab. So he blew the trumpet, and they were dispersed from the city, each to his tent. Joab also returned to the king at Jerusalem.

## A Plea for her City

- The city is known for its wisdom.
- She calls the city “a mother in Israel.”
- Why are you destroying “the inheritance of the Lord?”





## Joab States His Objective

“a man from the hill country of Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, has lifted up his hand against King David. Only hand him over, and I will depart from the city.”

Joab doesn't want a siege any more than this wise woman does.



**One Commentator said:**

**“Wisdom was a combination of intelligent insight and bold action. The Old Testament rarely separates the intellectual from the pragmatic: wisdom is not simply knowing but also doing.”**

**And the woman is willing to back up her talk.**





# The Woman Trusts Joab

We don't know what she said to her fellow inhabitants, but clearly it was effective.

“they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri and threw it to Joab.”

The war was over, and true to his word, Joab  
“blew the trumpet” and David's troops  
returned home.



# Who Says the Bible is Anti-Woman?

- **Joshua 2-6:** Rahab's daring protects the Israelites and her family
- **Judges 4:** Jael's initiative defeats Sisera
- **Judges 9:** A woman ends Abimelech's reign of terror
- **1 Samuel 25:** Abigail intercedes to aid David





## 2 Samuel 20:23-26

**23** Now Joab was over the whole army of Israel, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites; **24** and Adoram was over the forced labor, and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was the recorder; **25** and Sheva was scribe, and Zadok and Abiathar were priests; **26** and Ira the Jairite was also a priest to David.

# A Rundown of David's Administration

- Army Commander: Joab
- Cherethites & Pelethites: Benaiah
  - Following Joab's death he will command the army
- Labor Force: Adoram
  - We learn in 1 Kings 9 that this group was 180,000 Hittites, Perizzites, & Jebusites
- Recorder: Jehoshaphat
- Scribe: Sheva
- Priests: Zadok & Abiathar
- Priest: Ira the Jairite



# Closing Observations

1. The social and psychological fallout from David's sin.
  - And no one is exempt.
2. Rebellion against the Lord's anointed cannot succeed.
3. Parallels between David and Jesus.
  - A king, rejected by his own, leaves his city in apparent disgrace, but he returns to rule and reign.

Next Week:  
Paying a Debt

And Let Me Warn  
You, It Is...





