

Message #7**II Samuel 4:1-12**

When we read through the Scriptures, it becomes very clear that God controls all political leadership. In fact, in many passages of Scripture, God says that He raises up one political power and uses it for His purposes and then He puts that one down and raises up another to accomplish His purposes.

Now if a power He raises up purposes to obey Him and His word, He will bless that power and use it; but if it doesn't, He will topple it. Now typically, when God decides to remove one power and replace it with another power, the people who were actually involved in the process eventually pay a price for it.

Let us illustrate the point. When Israel became so corrupt that God decided to drive her out of her land, He used the Babylonians to do it. But when the Babylonians did that to His people, God eventually used the Medes and Persians to remove them. Then God used the Greeks to remove the Medes and the Persians and then God used Rome to remove the Greeks.

A few years ago, there was a man who wanted power in a church and he wanted the minister removed who was standing in the way and he got his wish. He was responsible for getting the minister removed. A couple of years after he did this, he ended up dead. He was in his early 60's.

God does this kind of thing. He does it in Israel, He does it in the United States and He does it in the church. Godless powers are eventually toppled but the one who does the toppling ends up paying a price.

IN THE END, GOD WILL DESTROY A GODLESS LEADER BUT THOSE WHO ACTUALLY DO THE DESTROYING WILL THEMSELVES BE DESTROYED.

After Saul's death, Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul, had been made king by Abner, Saul's military commander (II Sam. 2:8-9). He was 40-years-old when this happened. Two years had gone by when this event happened (II Sam. 2:10).

He knew that Abner was very upset with him for his false accusation that he had made against Abner, saying he had gone into his father's concubine (II Sam. 3:7-8). In fact, it was that allegation that made Abner to want to make an alliance with David.

If you do something negative and sinful against someone, you have to live with yourself and that is not easy.

According to **verse 1**, when Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, heard that Abner had died in Hebron, he was scared. He lost any courage he had and "all Israel was disturbed." If Abner was killed, who wanted to make an alliance with David, now Ish-bosheth is paranoid. Abner was no longer there to protect him. This left Ish-bosheth in an emotional panic mode.

This was a critical moment in the program of God. Abner was a key leader for Israel and when he died, it was a major loss. Ish-bosheth was now at a loss. There were many questions as to what to do. There was a lot of confusion and speculation about many things. One thing is for sure, with Abner dead, Ish-bosheth's reign was over.

OBSERVATION #1 – Two new military commanders surface. **4:2-3**

It is right at this moment, when Ish-bosheth is vulnerable that these two guys surface. To this point, we have not heard of these guys and we don't know one thing about them. This is a point to observe because when things get chaotic there are those who are opportunistic looking for the right moment to rise up. Their names were Baanah and Rechab.

They were commanders of some sort of "bands" or group of raiding and fighting parties. Dr. Warren Wiersbe speculated they may have been "minor officers in Abner's army" (*Be Restored*, p. 39).

In these two verses we get a very detailed account of their names, family, tribe and background. They were considered to be Benjamites that meant they were considered to be from the same tribe as Saul and Ish-bosheth.

They were from Beeroth, which is located about four miles NW of Jerusalem. Now these people of Beeroth were the same group that tricked Joshua into making a covenant with them (Josh. 9:17).

Apparently they had fled to Gittim because Saul was out to kill them (II Sam. 21:2). So now that Saul was dead and now that Abner was dead, these two leaders feel emboldened and surface.

They don't feel so threatened.

OBSERVATION #2 – Jonathan's crippled son surfaces. **4:4**

Now after we are introduced to these two guys, we are also introduced to a son of Jonathan. Probably the reason for us getting this information is to show that when Ish-bosheth is dead, there is still a family member of Saul still alive and it was Saul's grandson.

This son of Jonathan was a crippled boy, who had crippled feet. When he was five-years-old, a nurse took him and fled and he fell and he became lame. His name was Mephibosheth.

We do not know exactly where he had been living. However, when the people learned that Saul and Jonathan were dead, a woman, who was his nurse, who cared for Mephibosheth, took off running.

Now everyone knew that Saul and Jonathan lived in Gibeah, which was about 50 miles south of Gilboah, where Saul and Jonathan were killed. So we may assume that the nurse felt they might come for all of Saul and Jonathan's family next so she fled with Mephibosheth.

Since he was 5-years-old, it is probable that she was not carrying him, although it is possible. But regardless, the boy fell and was crippled in both legs for life.

Now this occurred about seven years before Abner's death. We base this on the fact that David reigned in Hebron 7 ½ years (2:11) and he is nearing moving to Jerusalem (5:6).

So Mephibosheth would now be about twelve-years-old. He was too young to reign and he was too young to fight and he was crippled, so no one viewed him as a threat to reign.

OBSERVATION #3 – Two military commanders kill Ish-bosheth. **4:5-8**

This is a very detailed account of what happened. There are five specific facts brought out:

Fact #1 - They came to Ish-bosheth's house in the heat of the day while he was taking a nap.
4:5

Ish-bosheth lived in a house in Mahanaim. It was siesta time, and these two knew that. The genealogy is again mentioned to stress the fact that these were Beerothites, who were considered to be part of the Benjamite family.

The Septuagint says that the doorkeeper had fallen asleep and these two went right in unnoticed.

Fact #2 - They pretended to come to the inner part of the house to get some wheat. **4:6a**

Once they were inside, they pretended they were there for a legitimate reason. Apparently somewhere within the house complex, there was a supply of wheat so they pretended to be going there for this purpose. They obviously had great knowledge of the house and by doing this they would not be suspicious.

No one would suspect that their real motive is to assassinate Ish-bosheth.

Fact #3 - They stabbed Ish-bosheth in the stomach and fled. **4:6b**

This was a well thought out and well planned deliberate assassination. These are two "brother assassins."

Now the one thing we don't know is their motive. When Joab and Abishai killed Abner, their motive was he had killed their brother Asahel. But we have no clue as to why these two decided to kill Ish-bosheth.

Perhaps they did not like the fact that he had made false allegations against Abner. Or perhaps they thought it would put them in good standing with David. Who knows?

Fact #4 - The details of the assassination are given. **4:7**

There are five specific details given about this assassination:

(Detail #1) - When they went into the house of Ish-bosheth. **4:7a**

If there is one place in the world where most people feel safe, it is in their house. Ish-bosheth's only crime was he was the son of Saul.

(Detail #2) - They attacked him while he was lying on the bed. **4:7a**

He was not prepared to fight, he was taking a nap in bed. He has no chance to defend himself.

(Detail #3) - They struck him in the belly and killed him. **4:7b**

They stabbed him in the stomach, while he was in his bed. He is not out on a battlefield. He is in his own home in his own bed.

(Detail #4) - They cut off his head and took it with them. **4:7c**

Just as Saul and his sons had been beheaded, so Saul's son, Ish-bosheth, was too. These two had no respect for his body, they just cut off his head and they took off with their "grisly trophy."

(Detail #5) - They traveled all night to escape by way of the Arabah. **4:7d**

Now to this point we don't know where they are going, but we will learn in the next verse.

Fact #5 - They brought his head to David at Hebron. **4:8**

They were not sorry for this action; they were proud of it and wanted to march in before David. After all, David had cut off the head of the Philistine Goliath.

Now they were thinking that this would put them in good standing with David. They really believe that by killing Ish-bosheth by cold-blooded murder, it will please David.

They try to present this to David by putting a real syllogistic spin on it:

- 1) Here is Ish-bosheth's head.
- 2) He is the son of Saul;
- 3) Saul was your enemy;
- 4) Saul wanted to kill you.
- 5) Ish-bosheth's death is a gift to you from God.

They claim “the LORD has given David the King vengeance on the house of Saul and his descendants.”

Do you see what they are claiming? They are claiming their actions are the leading of God. They are claiming that their evil is God-sanctioned. They have done something sinful and they are blaming God.

Any who blame God for their evil will pay a very severe price.

OBSERVATION #4 – David responds to Ish-bosheth’s assassination. **4:9-11**

David’s response to these two brothers did not quite go as they expected.

Response #1 - God has redeemed my life from all distress. **4:9a**

David basically says I never sought Saul’s life because God was taking care of me. David says I never relied on assassination tactics for deliverance. David does not need conspiracy assassins to get promoted. God was in control of his life.

Response #2 - When someone brought me news that Saul was dead, the reward I gave him was I killed him. **4:9b-10**

In fact, David says I killed one just for bringing me the news that Saul and his sons were dead. David said he thought he was bringing me good news. His reward is I killed him.

Had the Amalekite just reported they were dead, David may not have killed him. But when he lied and said he helped him die, David killed him.

Response #3 - When wicked men sneak into a righteous man’s home and kill him, I will destroy them. **4:11**

These were not godly men seeking to do God’s will. They were evil, wicked men and they did evil.

There are people who think God will just overlook their evil. They will get before God and He will just be as “pleased as punch” to see them. God will hold us accountable for what we did and what we said.

Response #4 - David killed the two men and hung up their hands and feet. **4:12a**

David hung them beside the pool of Hebron, where everyone could see it. When some crime is committed for political gain, it must be punished severely.

Response #5 - David buried the head of Ish-bosheth and buried it in the grave of Abner. **4:12b**

There are many churches today who think the way to advance the program of God is by godless, worldly, disgraceful and unworthy methods. They claim they are being led by God.

Those who do this are going to get before the King one day and they will lose.

We must not ever make the mistake of assuming that our unrighteous actions will be viewed by God as good.