

## STUDIES IN SAMUEL

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 4

- Vv. 1- 4 *Mephibosheth introduced.* David had made a covenant with Jonathan that he would not destroy his descendants. In this passage of scripture we are introduced to one heir of Jonathan. He has sometimes been called the "little lame prince." The reader of the scripture is informed as to the manner in which he became lame and the man is properly introduced.
- Vv. 5-12 *Ish-bosheth slain.* Two wicked servants of Ish-bosheth's thought they would do David a favor by killing Ish-bosheth. They beheaded him and brought his head to David in Hebron. David reminded them of the punishment he had meted out to the man who said he had slain Saul. He could treat them in no better way. Their hands and feet were cut off and they were hanged up over the pool at Hebron as an object lesson to any others who might commit such crimes.

### LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. *Men are of more value than many sparrows* (Matthew 10:31). Mephibosheth does not seem very important to us. He did have some later connection with David. We are impressed with the fact that he was important enough for his name to be mentioned in the sacred scriptures. He was a descendant of an honorable man and his associations with David are worthy of note. All of us count in the sight of God regardless of whether we seem important to men or not.
2. *The principle is more important than the policy.* David was a man of principle. He slew the man who said he had killed Saul, and he killed the men who said they had beheaded Ish-bosheth. God's people should always

be fair in their judgment and act on principle and not on shifty policy.

4. The King in Gilead Slain, 4:1-12.

*Mephibosheth Introduced.* 4:1-4

And when Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands were feeble, and all the Israelites were troubled.

2. And Saul's son had two men *that were* captains of bands: the name of the one *was* Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab, the sons of Rimmon a Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin: (for Beeroth also was reckoned to Benjamin:

3 And the Beerothites fled to Gittaim, and were sojourners there until this day.)

4 And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son *that was* lame of *his* feet. He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name *was* Mephibosheth.

1. *What was the effect of Abner's death on the rest of Israel? 4:1*

When Ish-bosheth heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, he felt weak; his hands were feeble. All the Israelites were troubled by this sudden turn of events. It is doubtful that the Israelites were afraid of what would happen, but they must have been disappointed and afraid that their wish for David's ruling over them might not be fulfilled. Such a tragic event would slow up the negotiations.

2. *Who were the Beerothites? 4:2*

Beeroth was an old Caananite city and one of the four controlled by Gibeon (Joshua 9:17). A modern *El Bireh*, a site with a fine spring of water, has been identified as the probable location. The town was reckoned as belonging to Benjamin (Joshua 18:25). The Beerothites had

fled to Gittim, also a city of Benjamin (Nehemiah 11:33). They, thus, became considered as a part of the Benjamite community, but evidently did not attain full citizenship. Later on, we learn that Saul had tried to exterminate the Gibeonites (II Samuel 21:1-11). This slaying of Saul's son by the Beerothites may be vengeance that they take into their own hands.

### 3. *Who was Mephibosheth?* 4:3

Mephibosheth was the son of Jonathan. In I Chronicles 8:34, his name is Merib-baal. It is the same in I Chronicles 9:40. Merib-baal means "Baal's warrior." Mephibosheth means "one who puffs at a shameful thing." His name was probably changed when he was taken into David's family at a later time (II Samuel 9:1-13). Since he was five years old when his father was killed in the battle with the Philistines, he was about twelve years old at the time when David was made king over all Israel. He is mentioned at the time of Ish-bosheth's death, since he would be the only other survivors and heir apparent to the throne of Saul.

### *Ish-bosheth Slain.* 4:5-12

5 And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went, and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ish-bosheth, who lay on a bed at noon.

6 And they came thither into the midst of the house, *as though* they would have fetched wheat; and they smote him under the fifth *rib*: and Rechab Baanah his brother escaped.

7 For when they came into the house, he lay on his bed in his bedchamber, and they smote him, and slew him, and beheaded him, and took his head, and gat them away through the plain all night.

8 And they brought the head of Ish-bosheth unto David to Hebron, and said to the king, Behold the head of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul thine enemy, which sought thy

life; and the Lord hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his seed.

9 And David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said unto them, As the Lord liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity,

10 When one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead, thinking to have brought good tidings, I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag, who *thought* that I would have given him a reward for his tidings;

11 How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed? shall I not therefore now require his blood of your hand, and take you away from the earth?

12 And David commanded his young men, and they slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged *them* up over the pool in Bebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth, and buried *it* in the sepulcher of Abner in Hebron.

#### 4. *How was Ish-bosheth killed? 4:5-7*

Rimmon and Rechab pretended that they were making deliveries to the king's palace. They chose to enter the place at the heat of the day when the doorkeeper was probably taking a siesta. Ish-bosheth was resting at noon-time in his bed. When the assassins gained access to the interior of the palace, they beheaded Ish-bosheth and took his head with them as a trophy. Such a plot's being successful indicates that Ish-bosheth had a very modest establishment, affording probably only a maidservant as a porter; and she was obliged to do other work while keeping the door.

#### 5. *Why did they take the head to David? 4:8*

These men were like the Amalekite who brought news of Saul's death to David. They all thought that David would be glad to learn of the elimination of rivals to his

throne. They did not realize how much David respected the Lord's anointed, the king of Israel. Rechab and Rimmon had made an all-night trip through the plain of the Jordan, the Arabah, in order to travel from the territory of Israel to the land of Judah.

6. *What was David's reaction? 4:9*

David reminded these Beerothites of the action he took when the Amalekite brought him news of Saul's death. He said that he took hold of him and killed him in Ziklag. Even though the man thought that David would have given him a reward for his tidings, David went on to say that this Amalekite had pretended to do a service for Saul by killing him, when he was already mortally wounded. If David killed the Amalekite for doing what he did, why should the Beerothites think that they would get less punishment for their wicked deed. They had killed a righteous man in his own house while he was lying on his bed.

7. *Why did David cut off the hands and feet of the men? 4:12a*

David commanded his soldiers to fall upon Rimmon and Rechab; they slew them and cut off their hands and feet. They hanged up their bodies over the pool in Hebron. By putting their gibbeted corpses on public display, David was warning anyone else not to commit a similar crime.

The pool of Hebron was probably the larger of two in the lower part of town. Its wall is of very ancient masonry, and it is some 142 feet square and twenty feet deep.

8. *Why did David bury Ish-bosheth in Abner's tomb? 4:12b*

Ish-bosheth was also of the tribe of Benjamin. He was the son of Saul, and thereby a second cousin of Abner. Families were quite often buried together. Jacob said that he had buried his wife, Leah, in the same tomb where

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Abraham had buried Sarah. Jacob wanted to be buried there along with Abraham. In addition to these patriarchs, Isaac and Rebekah were buried in the same cave of Macpelah (Genesis 49:28-33). David had evidently kept Abner's body in Hebron to assure that it was given a proper burial; it was fitting and proper that Ish-bosheth's head should be buried in the same sepulchre.

### CHAPTER 4 IN REVIEW

1. What two men killed Ish-bosheth? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Of what tribe were the men? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What was the name of their native village? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What grandson of Saul was still living? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Whose son was he? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How old was he when his father died? \_\_\_\_\_
7. In whose care was he when he was crippled? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What caused him to be crippled? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Where was Ish-bosheth's head buried? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What punishment did David mete out to Ish-bosheth's murderers? \_\_\_\_\_

### A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 5

- Vv. 1- 5 *David king over all Israel.* After David had reigned for seven years in Hebron all the tribes of Israel came to him and asked him to be king over them. Since Mephibosheth was dead, they needed to unite under one king.
- Vv. 6-16 *David in Jerusalem.* David needed a capital city. Hebron was too far south to be reached easily by all the people of Israel. The Jebusites still held the stronghold of Jerusalem. David took this and made it his capital city.
- Vv. 17-25 *David against the Philistines.* When the Philistines heard that David was anointed king over Israel, they saw his rise to power as a threat to