

November 20, 2022

Rebellion Re-Run, 2 Samuel 20

By Aaron Shamp

Introduction

- Have you ever watched a TV series that always followed the same pattern?
 - After a while, you start to pick it up and can predict what is going to happen.
 - 2 Samuel 20 is a lot like that. We've seen this before.
- However, in this case, the redundancy isn't due to lack of creativity by a writer; instead, we are reading an intentional theme.

Sheba

- We are introduced to a new rebel Sheba. The text goes through lengths to describe the pursuit of this "scoundrel."
 - What made him so bad?
 - First, he is rebelling against God by attacking Yahweh's anointed.
 - Second, he is breaking the covenant that was to hold the tribes together.
 - David goes from one rebellion to another.
- **Point:** Rebellion is an unfortunate feature and not a bug on this side of heaven.
 - There will always be rebellion in our fallen world, until Christ returns.
 - The sin nature of the lost compels them to do nothing else. And the remaining flesh in the Christian entices them to rebel.
- **APP:** Watch out for rebellion in your heart!
 - Like Sheba, we might rebel against God and break our covenant.
 - There will always be those who desire a church that "takes the Bible seriously" but buck up against biblical authority.

- There will always be those who desire a vibrant community but are unwilling to covenant themselves.

Joab

- David sends his new general Amasa to round up the army of Judah and end Sheba's rebellion.
 - When he takes too long he sends the second in command Abishai. Significantly, these troops are called the "men of Joab."
 - The text zooms in to give a detailed account of what followed. Joab mentally disarmed Amasa by reaching up with his right hand to embrace him.
 - He took a gamble that if he would be successful then David would have no qualms about it. His gamble paid off.
- Here's what is interesting: Joab rebelled against David too.
 - We've seen Joab's insubordination previously be justified but in this case it is simple rebellion.
- **Point:** Rebellion can threaten the kingdom from within and without.
 - There's a double rebellion in David's kingdom... Sheba who wants to dismantle David's kingdom. Joab who doesn't dismantle it but will not be controlled by it.
 - Davis: "Joab is both intensely loyal and completely uncontrollable. He does not raise the standard of revolt against David like Sheba, nor does he seek David's throne like Absalom. Joab is faithful to David. He does not try to become king and yet he acts as his own king. He is extremely loyal to David but essentially unsubmitive to David."¹
- **APP:** Are you holding onto control of your life?
 - We can see spillover principle to the kingdom of God. Some might acknowledge the King's sovereignty and yet disregard his will.
 - "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven" ([Matt. 7:21](#)).
 - Many of us might withhold control of certain parts of our lives from God. We close off our heart from the Good Doctor who would renew it.

- Look at Jesus who gave complete control of his life to the Father's will.
 - Perfect obedience in life and perfect obedience in death! His death was for our life, so that when we give control of our lives to God we can know it is for our good.

Conclusion: The Fragile Kingdom

- This story closes the section of chapters 9-20 in the book.
 - The kingdom of David is fragile but it is still intact. It's fragile due to the sin of the king and rebellions. Despite all of the damage from within and without, it is still standing.
- **Point:** The Lord sustains his fragile kingdom against the threats it faces.
 - Therefore, do not despair! Do you feel weak? Are you concerned for the kingdom? Do you hold onto anxieties about the church?
 - Just as David's kingdom was sustained by the power of God, so Christ's Kingdom is sustained by resurrection power.
 - Such is the same with the kingdom of God in the church. We find it often fragile—battered by corruptions from within and attacks from without. However, it continues to stand. As Luther's hymn closes, "His kingdom is forever."

End Notes

¹ Dale Ralph Davis, *2 Samuel: Out of Every Adversity, Focus on the Bible Commentary* (Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 2002), 255.