

## WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

June 26

### MONDAY

David eulogized General Abner by saying that a prince and a great man had fallen (died) that day. David added that he himself was unable to do anything about Abner's murder: the family of Joab was too strong and perhaps too influential. So, David concluded, he would leave his revenge to the Lord.

#### **READ: II Samuel 3:38-39**

David failed here. He knew that he should have punished Joab for murdering Abner and yet he was afraid to do so: afraid of the consequences of carrying out justice against a powerful family, even though as king, it was his duty to carry out that justice. David was actually playing God. He was predicting the future and then behaving on the basis of that prediction. Obedience should never hinge on our evaluation of what will or will not happen, (We don't know the future!) but only and always on the basis of what the Bible says, and what God wants me to do!

### TUESDAY

When King Ishbosheth heard that his star general (Abner) was dead, he was shaken. His citizens (the eleven tribes of Israel) were uneasy as well. However, King Ishbosheth still had two military leaders under his authority: Baanah and Rechab, brothers from the tribe of Benjamin.

#### **READ: II Samuel 4:1-3**

A weak leader and a troubled nation: does that sound like any other situation you know about? Ishbosheth's own best plans had gone horribly wrong, and his grasp on the kingdom grew weaker. So it is always when God is not in it. Whether a kingdom, or material goods, money or happiness, whatever it is, we cannot hold onto it or keep it unless the Lord be in it. Let us seek first His righteousness today!

### WEDNESDAY

Saul had a grandson and Jonathan a son. His name was Mephibosheth, and he was five years old when his father and grandfather died together in battle. Hearing the news of Saul's death, and of the death of the boy's father, Jonathan, the nurse of Mephibosheth grabbed him and rushed him away to a safe hiding place. In her haste, she dropped the child, and as a result, he was lame the rest of his life.

#### **READ: II Samuel 4:4-5**

Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, is rescued by a speedy but careless nurse. He alone, out of all of Saul's family, survived the war, but he did so as a cripple. God allowed the results of Mephibosheth's past to follow after him. That's the law of cause and effect and it's always been active everywhere in the world. Except on the cross. There, without cause, Jesus died for us. The eternal results of our sin have been forever nailed to the cross, and they are no longer in effect. There's no cause-and-effect at the cross. It's all grace! What wondrous grace is this!

### THURSDAY

Baanah and Rechab make an official visit to see King Ishbosheth. They marched right into the palace pretending to be delivering wheat. Although it was noon, Ishbosheth was still in bed. They killed him where he lay, and then beheaded him. Then they took his head and escaped, traveling through the night. They took the head to David, telling him that this was of

the Lord. Ishbosheth, after all, had tried to kill David as did his father, Saul, before him.

### READ: II Samuel 4:6-8

The men who were commissioned to guard the king's life, are the ones who took it, a reminder of the uncertainty of life. They discovered the king in bed at noon. It was troubling times for the leader of a troubled nation. What in the world was he doing in bed at noon? When troubles and difficulties come to us, they should invigorate us unto greater activity, not laggardness. The idle soul is an easy prey for the Devil. And there is no shortage of work to be done for the Lord. Let us determine to put our hands to the plow, making good use of every opportunity.

### FRIDAY

David's response must have surprised the two men who were undoubtedly expecting some sort of reward. He reminded them that previously someone had brought him news about Saul's death and David had killed him. David asked them if they truly expected a reward for their evil deed: sneaking into the palace and killing the king on his bed? At David's command, some of his guards executed the two, cut off their hands and feet, and hung their limbless corpses by the pool at Hebron: a brutal statement that murderers will be executed. David took the head of Ishbosheth and buried it in the same tomb which Abner was buried in.

#### **READ: II Samuel 4:9-12**

David views the deed of the two brothers as a hideous crime. It mattered not to him that Ishbosheth, when still alive, did not mean him well. To slay him in his own house under false pretenses, and even upon his own bed from where he had no capacity to resist, was unthinkable evil. David enacted his judgment upon the two in the name of the living Lord, *who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity*, he wrote. It was his way of saying that he was depending on the Lord and not the wicked acts of men to keep him on the throne of Judah, and to keep his opponents at bay. I also think David was offended that the brothers would have imagined even for a moment that his thinking was similar to theirs in all this, and imagine that he would rejoice in an assassination. His thinking was most assuredly not the same. Let us determine that we will never rejoice in the evil which comes to another person.

### SATURDAY

Representatives from all the tribes of Israel came before David at Hebron and acknowledged David as their king. They praised him by saying that even when Saul was king, it had been David who led Israel in battle. And they announced that they recognized that it was God who had appointed David to the throne. David served as king for forty years, from the time he was thirty years old until he died. He ruled from Hebron for the first seven years and from Jerusalem for the last thirty-three.

#### **READ: II Samuel 5:1-5**

Although very slow in coming, finally the day arrives when the entire nation declares that it was God's doing that David should rule their nation. One way or another, the day is coming when all people will confess to be true what we now accept by faith: that Jesus Christ is Lord of all and King of kings. Even the slowness or denial of man cannot hold in check God's purposes being fulfilled in His own timing.

#36