

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Dec.11

MONDAY

Sheba, the rebel leader, has a following. David acts quickly to stop his rebellion – ordering Amasa to mobilize the army within three days, and then pursue him. But Amasa delays, and so David commissions Abishai, instead, to pursue Sheba.

READ: II Samuel 20:5-7

Joab is an example of a man who knows Godly principles but does not follow them himself. He is the one who argued with David previously, and wisely advised him about his son. But here, he follows his own foolishness and sins greatly.

TUESDAY

Abishai takes his special forces troops (and General Joab) and heads off for battle. About five miles from Jerusalem, they meet Amasa. General Joab had been demoted and replaced by Amasa, and he sees this as an opportunity for revenge. He grabs Amasa by his beard and kills him.

READ: II Samuel 20:8-10

This is an especially heinous crime, because the two were cousins, sons of David's half-sisters. In fact, the violence which the prophet Nathan had predicted for David's family continues. That violence was the result of David's sin of committing adultery and then trying to hide it. Proof again that we reap what we sow. It's an inescapable fact of life.

WEDNESDAY

Abishai and Joab continue after Sheba, but the troops who were commanded by Amasa are so stunned by his murder that they simply stay there at the scene. One of Joab's men throws Joab's body off the road and covers it up with a coat. Later, troops turn away from it and join Abishai in chasing Sheba.

READ: II Samuel 11-13

Tossing an old coat over the body is a picture of man trying to hide his sin. As if we can do that with a coat! But man will try. He will go to great lengths to look good, and will assume that God is as impressed with his goodness as his fellow man might be. It's only the Love of God that can cover the multitude of our sin, and it's that love which we cry out for today!

THURSDAY

Now Abishai and Joab, with all the troops, pursue Sheba across the countryside to a city called Abel, where Sheba has taken refuge. Abishai and Joab besiege the city and begin to batter it into submission.

READ: II Samuel 20:14-15

The rebel Sheba evidently found some kindred spirits in the city of Abel. It is there, after tramping across much of the Promise Land, that he sets up his defense. The 'good citizens' would have done well to resist Sheba from the beginning, as apparently others in other cities had done. That's our story, too, when it comes to Satan and his rebellion: resist him with all effort from the very beginning. Start by resisting him today!

FRIDAY

An older lady in the city speaks privately with Joab. She reminds him of the history and heritage of the city of Abel, and she asks why he is so intent on killing the peaceful and faithful citizens and destroying the city?

READ: II Samuel 20:16-19

The lady argues that the village of Abel is a sort of 'mother' to the rest of Israel, dispensing wisdom, and providing examples of a peaceful and faithful people. Joab, though obviously violent is open to reason. We can be encouraged to know that although we may disagree with a person, a sound argument may win the day. We should be ready to approach difficulties that way when the need arises. Argue gently, but argue well!

SATURDAY

Joab heard an old lady speak of the history and heritage of the city and he responds by saying that he will leave it alone if they will turn the rebel Sheba over to him. She says that they will.

READ: II Samuel 20:20-21

There's a lesson here about how easily we misjudge others. The citizens of the town thought Joab was determined to destroy them, and Joab thought that they were somehow in confederation with the rebel leader Sheba. Both were wrong and the lesson is that we can be wrong, too. Let us be slow to judge the actions of another, and not pretend to know their hearts. Let us stay away from judging others!

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