

## WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Dec.18

### MONDAY

The old lady convinces the townsfolk that they must sacrifice the one for the good of the many, so they kill Sheba and throw his head down from the wall so that Joab would see it. Joab disperses the army and he heads back to Jerusalem. Other leaders in David's government are listed.

**READ: II Samuel 20:22-26**

Joab got the head of Sheba - a sort of trophy - but it was a trophy of peace rather than victory. Trophies of peace for us today would be those relationships which have been saved or improved through wisdom and right dealing. We are not called upon to win arguments or score points or humiliate an opponent; we are called upon to be peacemakers! And there will be no shortage of opportunities to work on that!

### TUESDAY

When a three-year famine hits the land, David surmises that it's the Lord's doing, and so he asks God why He's the famine? Because of what Saul did to the Gibeonites, God tells him. (Saul had tried to annihilate them!) So David calls the Gibeonites (remember the treaty Joshua made with them in Josh. 9?) and he confers with them.

**READ: II Samuel 21:1-2**

The sin of Saul was somehow the sin of Israel. Perhaps it was their silence or even their tacit agreement and enthusiasm for what Saul was trying to do. To be quiet and to allow sin to continue without a word of rebuke or a gesture of resisting is to be compliant with that sin, is it not? "What good is the salt if that salt has lost its flavor?," Jesus asked. We are the salt of the earth. We must respond to evil around us!

### WEDNESDAY

David asks the representatives from Gibeon what he can do to make things right. (he's thinking money) They reply that they do not want money, but blood. They demand that seven of Saul's descendants be turned over to them to be killed.

**READ: II Samuel 21:3-6**

According to the standards of that day and even the Law of Moses, their request was reasonable and right. To me, what stands out here is David's resolve to correct a wrong. What will it take to make this right? He is asking. If only we would do that more in our lives! The sins of the past must be dealt with rightly. As believers, we know our sins have been forgiven by God, but it still remains with us to deal with the consequences.

### THURSDAY

David consents. He turns over two of Saul's surviving sons and five of his grandchildren to them. They kill them and then display their corpses publicly.

**READ: II Samuel 21:7-9**

The openness of all this strikes me. David did not try to hide it, or his part in it. Rather, there is a sense in which dealing with the sin of Saul, even years later, was good and needful. When we sin and others witness it or become aware of it, we must deal with it in such a way that they observe it. If we lose our temper and scream at a co-worker before others, we need to be certain that we seek the forgiveness of the one we sinned against in such a way that others know it.

### FRIDAY

Rizpah, the mother of Saul's two sons who were executed, sat by the corpses for weeks to keep the birds and beasts away. David was told about her doing that.

**READ: II Samuel 21:10-11**

The picture is one of devotion - the devotion of a mother for her children - and the point is that although she could not do much (for example, she could not keep them from being killed), she could do something. We are not called upon to change the world, but rather to live the life of one who has put Jesus Christ first in all things in our little worlds! (where we live and work)

### SATURDAY

When David sees the way Rizpah guards the dead bodies of her sons, he realizes that he did not regard the bodies of King Saul and Jonathan with that same honor and dignity. So he tracks down their bones and re-buries them properly.

**READ: II Samuel 21:12-14**

The final few words catch our attention: *and after that, God heeded the prayer for the land*. In other words, there were certain things which needed attention before David or others could expect God to hear and answer their prayers. It's folly to think that when God sees a prayer coming His way, He overlooks all else. He does not do that! Before I pray to the King of kings, I must make Him King of my life!

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