

Title: Justice in Christ's Kingdom
Scripture: 2 Samuel 4
Series: The Promise of the Messianic Kingdom

1. Introduction:
 - a. Our chapter today shares the fall of Saul's kingdom and the rise of the long-awaited messianic kingdom.
 - b. Our main idea today is that the messianic kingdom is righteous, a kingdom where justice will prevail.

2. Verse 1 and 4 - The Downfall of Saul's Kingdom: When Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, heard that Abner had died at Hebron, his courage failed, and all Israel was dismayed... (4) Jonathan, the son of Saul, had a son who was crippled in his feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled, and as she fled in her haste, he fell and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth.
 - a. Verse 1 - When the news of Abner's death came, Ishbosheth was overcome with fear.
 - i. Abner's death signaled the fall of Saul's kingdom and the certainty of David's reign over all of Israel. Abner was the strong presence behind the monarchy; without him, the weakened Ishbosheth could not keep the kingdom together.
 1. The question in the hearts of all Israel was; What would become of the would-be king and those who followed him?
 - a. Remember, in that culture, it was typical for a new king to execute the previous king and punish anyone who opposed him.
 - ii. The Scripture tells us that Ishbosheth's courage **failed him**. Ishbosheth was well aware of the prophecies, the promise of the Davidic reign, yet he had opposed it through human effort. Ishbosheth finds himself in a losing proposition, and he knows it.
 - b. As we jump to verse 4, we read about Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth would also be an heir to the kingdom, but when Saul and Jonathan had died in battle, Mephibosheth's nurse wrongly assumed that either David or someone else would come to kill the line

of Saul. As she fled to hide the child, she dropped him, and he was injured. Mephibosheth would be a cripple all his life.

- i. As you can see, this verse interrupts the flow of our passage. The information about Mephibosheth is put here to show why there was no move to make him king after Ishbosheth's death—he was still a child and disabled.
 - ii. In other words, the scripture speaks about the total weakness of Saul's house. Saul's son lacked the courage or influence to continue resisting David, and the only other heir, Jonathan's son, lacked the ability since he was completely dependent.
 - c. These two verses summarize the utter collapse of Saul's kingdom. Saul had fought God. He tried to overturn God's decree, and yet he failed and brought ruin to himself and his family.
 - d. Beloved, the sovereignty of God is absolute, and men can only fight against it, but they can never prevail.
 - i. **Proverbs 21:30** No wisdom, no understanding, no counsel can avail against the LORD.
 - ii. **Isaiah 14:27** For the LORD of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, and who will turn it back?
 - iii. **Isaiah 46:9-10** remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, (10) declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,'
3. Verses 2-3 and 5-7 - Man's ways are not God's Ways: Now Saul's son had two men who were captains of raiding bands; the name of the one was Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab, sons of Rimmon a man of Benjamin from Beeroth (for Beeroth also is counted part of Benjamin; (3) the Beerothites fled to Gittaim and have been sojourners there to this day)...(5) Now the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, set out, and about the heat of the day they came to the house of Ish-bosheth as he was taking his noonday rest. (6) And they came into the midst of the house as if to get wheat, and they stabbed him in the stomach. Then Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped. (7) When they came into the house, as he lay on his bed in his bedroom, they struck him and put him to death and

beheaded him. They took his head and went by the way of the Arabah all night,

- a. These preceding verses introduce two men, Rechab and Baanah. These men see the death of Abner and the certainty of David's reign as an opportunity to abandon a sinking ship. They decided to seize the moment and kill Ishbosheth to ingratiate themselves with the new king. In their minds, David would reward them for putting an end to the rebellion in the house of Saul.
 - i. Their motives were deeply flawed. They were opportunistic and disloyal men that had no problem killing if it meant that they could advance their cause.
 - ii. Beloved, the action of these men were anything but heroic. Our passage tells us that they killed a helpless man in his sleep, decapitated him, and then ran like cowards.
 - iii. It would have been right for these men to defect to David. After all, David was God's chosen man. However, killing Ishbosheth and using his head as leverage to secure premier positions in David's kingdom was an act of murder.
 1. The unrepentant man is always concerned with power and status. This stems from man's self-idolatry and the desire for elevation.
 - a. **Proverbs 11:2** When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom.
 - b. Therefore God promises in **Isaiah 13:11** I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will put an end to the pomp of the arrogant, and lay low the pompous pride of the ruthless.
4. Verse 8 - The sin of self-justification - and brought the head of Ish-bosheth to David at Hebron. And they said to the king, "Here is the head of Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul, your enemy, who sought your life. The LORD has avenged my lord the king this day on Saul and on his offspring."
 - a. Rechab and Baanah flee from Mahanaim to Hebron on what must have taken at least two days (80 miles). Upon arrival, they display their trophy to David.
 - b. They were claiming to be the means (tools) of God's grace. Their speech and actions imply that David owed them a debt.

- c. Beloved, these men come with blood on their hands but theology on their lips. They expected that their theology would magically erase their sin of murder. They intend to justify their inexcusable actions.
 - i. Sin always seems more pleasant when wrapped in religiosity. The men said, “**Here is the head of Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul, your enemy, who sought your life. The LORD has avenged my lord the king this day on Saul and on his offspring.**”
 - 1. Notice how they say that their actions were God’s doing. It was the **LORD who had avenged** David. Many people try to use theology to cover grievous sins. Consider the following example:
 - a. When confronted with discipline, many church members will speak theologically about how every man is a sinner, but God is compassionate.
 - i. **Matthew 7:1** “Judge not, that you be not judged.
 - b. For people like this, theology is not the truth that causes us to worship God but a technique that enables us to justify our sinfulness.
 - d. Beloved, be careful with those using theology to justify wrong living. For our theology to be sound, it must lead to the appropriate love of God expressed through holy living.
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5. Verse 9 - God is the only redeemer - But David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, “As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my life out of every adversity,
 - a. David faces a great temptation to think in an idolatrous way.
 - i. These men have delivered me. I owe them.
 - b. David's response to this temptation is simple. It was never up to these two men to protect David. David is under the protection of the Lord and does not need wicked men like these.
 - i. **God, who has redeemed my life out of every adversity.**
 - 1. **Psalms 121:1-2** I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? (2) My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.
 - ii. What gratitude we find in the words of David.

- c. Beloved, David remembers how God rescued him from his troubles. He is not deceived into crediting evil men with the deliverance of His gracious God.
 - i. Gratitude nurtures fidelity. Gratitude protects the Christian from sin. A grateful heart cannot sin.
 - 1. **1 Thessalonians 5:18** give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
6. Verses 10-12 - Sin breeds death - when one told me, ‘Behold, Saul is dead,’ and thought he was bringing good news, I seized him and killed him at Ziklag, which was the reward I gave him for his news. (11) How much more, when wicked men have killed a righteous man in his own house on his bed, shall I not now require his blood at your hand and destroy you from the earth?” (12) And David commanded his young men, and they killed them and cut off their hands and feet and hanged them beside the pool at Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth and buried it in the tomb of Abner at Hebron.
- a. David remembers the Amalekite, who was sure David would reward him for the good news of the death of Saul. David had executed that man for touching the Lord’s anointed. How much more when wicked men have killed an innocent man in his house upon his bed?
 - b. The men had unwillingly confessed their crime to David. They assumed that David would see them as great men, but David saw the truth. David only sees wickedness. David gives the order, and the two men are executed, their extremities hacked off, and their handless, feetless bodies hung for public contemplation. Remember, with their hands, they had cut off the head of Ishbosheth, and with their feet, they had run from their crime.
 - i. By executing these men in this manner and then making a public spectacle of them, David was sending a clear message to all of Israel. His kingdom would be a just kingdom. The wicked would suffer the penalty for their sin.
 - ii. This same principle is recorded for us in **Galatians 6:7** Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.
 - c. Beloved, the new kingdom (indicative of the kingdom of Christ to come) must be based upon justice and hatred for sin.

- i. **NICOT**: Every bit of micro-justice enacted under David's regime should be taken as a foregleam of the macro-justice that David's promised Descendant will enforce throughout the earth in his own time. God's people desperately need to hold on to this hope, for the Bible knows what pressure and temptation the prevalence of injustice brings on the church. Whatever the particulars, God's people; must be assured that the time will come when the Davidic King will institute justice throughout the earth.
 - 1. **Revelation 20:15** And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

7. Application - God's Kingdom will come -

- a. After the events in our chapter, David will assume the kingdom God promised him, but this kingdom has been hindered by Satan. However, we find great encouragement looking back over 2 Samuel 2-4. This last section teaches the following:
 - i. No power can overcome the coming kingdom (Abner, Ch. 2)
 - ii. No sin can thwart the kingdom (Joab, Ch. 3)
 - iii. No injustice can establish the kingdom (Baanah and Rechab, Ch.4).
- b. Beloved, no matter how difficult the times are for you and me, the Davidic king is coming to establish the eternally righteous and just kingdom. You and I have a place in that kingdom by the person and work of Christ.
 - i. **Daniel 7:18** But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, forever and ever.'

8. Benediction -

- a. **Romans 14:17** For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Public Reading of Scripture
Psalm 9