

The following is a rough transcript, not in its final form and may be updated.

You Thought Wrong II Samuel 4

Intro: With Abner out of the way, you would think the mechanism for the reunification of all Israel under David's rule would now be a breeze. If you think that – you would be wrong! Since the day **YHWH** promised the kingdom to David there have been an array of hindrances & frustrations that have gotten in the way of its final fruition. From Saul's determined resistance & attempted murder of David to David's own foolishness; it seems that everything's happened **but** what **YHWH** had promised. And now, as **YHWH**'s anointed king is beginning to rule, we have Abner's **stubborn rebellion & armed opposition** against **YHWH**'s king, followed by the **self-seeking & murderous** actions of David's own general (**Joab**), both of which had the potential of bringing down the fledgling kingdom. Even here, in ch4, another heinous crime will be committed in the name of God's kingdom but will only serve as fodder for David's enemies.

It seems at every turn, there was something cropping up that could lead to the complete destruction of **YHWH**'s promised kingdom and yet, David still persisted in believing. Why? How? B/c **YHWH** had promised it! If David had learned 1 thing in life, it's that **YHWH** always keeps His promises. What David didn't know was that not only had **YHWH** promised the kingdom to David, He had decreed the kingdom to Jesus Christ Himself (**Ps 2:8-9**). The Father has great plans for David's greatest Descendant and He will take all the time He needs to work out that perfect plan.

1- *lost heart*- As you might expect, it was **not** business-as-usual over in Mahanaim. When news of Abner's death in Hebron reached the king, Ishbosheth "**lost heart**" (lit. **his hands dropped**) & all Israel was terrified. Let's look at the situation: you have the kingdom of David in the south and the kingdom of Saul in the north. David was a great warrior and a gifted leader in his own right; while Ishbosheth's only claim to fame was that he was the only surviving son of Saul. We don't know if he was great or gifted in any way whatsoever. In truth, Ishbosheth was merely a puppet ruler in the hands of Abner and now the puppet-master was dead so now what is he going to do? What could he do?

Of course, the common folk knew nothing of David's true intentions or of his recent meeting with Abner. All they knew was that it was Abner's abilities as a general that prevented David from invading from the south and forcibly setting up his kingdom over all Israel. Now that Abner and his army no longer stood between them and the Judean army, David's henchmen now had free reign to work their way north & institute a program of systematic butchery. Who knew what to do? We're about to meet 2 guys who thought they knew the right action that needed to be taken.

2-7- I once read a story about an English professor who was reiterating to his class of young collegians that the rule of grammar states that a double negative equates to a positive but a double positive never equates to a negative. Suddenly, from the back of the class came this 2-word response that shattered this long-held grammatical doctrine: "**Yeah, right!**" Clearly, if used alone, both of these are positive responses. As a matter-of-fact, when used together, they don't automatically equate to a negative but they will always carry a negative connotation when 1 small ingredient is included: **sarcasm!** Sarcasm is a **useful, entertaining** & often **annoying** form of humor. You can use it pick on people with out offending them (or sometimes w/o them knowing) It can also be a humorous way to reveal your true feelings about a person or a situation without being excessively rude **Mark Twain** once quipped about the death of an acquaintance "**I refused to attend his funeral. But I wrote a very nice letter explaining that I approved of it.**" I only mention it b/c it appears this is what the writer's doing for these 2 knuckleheads & he does it subtly in 2 ways...

1st) In his **introduction** of them. The writer gives a pretty basic intro: they belong to the tribe of Benjamin (Saul's tribe) and they come from Beeroth. But, it's not so much **how** the writer introduces them but rather **where** he puts their introduction. Right away, he **insinuates** a negative connotation on these 2 by wedging his bare-bones intro of them between pictures of a powerless puppet king & a helpless cripple. This is the 1st mention of Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, in the Bible. He was, after Ishbosheth, the last male descendant of Saul with a strong legal claim to the throne of Saul. But, at this point in time, he was only 12 yrs old and he is lame in both feet.

So, Ishbosheth is seen as weak b/c he trusted in man (Abner) and since Abner was gone, he knew his position would be gone soon as well. Mephibosheth is also seen as weak but it's b/c of circumstances beyond his

control. He was weak b/c of his age (12) and he was weak b/c of an injury that came at the hand of another. It may seem harsh to emphasize all this here but, that's the whole point: the writer wants to impress us with the total weakness of the house of Saul – the son who lacks the courage to continue the resistance and the grand-son that lacks the ability. In this negative light, whatever **Baanah & Rechab** do will be **far from** heroic. It will be more along the lines of a middle school bully that only picks on 1st graders (punk). Sarcasm is already starting to drip from the text.

2nd) In his **explanation** of their actions. Tho it may seem like there are 2 accounts here this is actually normal Hebrew narrative where often a fact or situation is described and then repeated with additional detail that expands the 1st statement. But, not only does the writer add the detail about Izzy losing his head, he also repeats the part about him resting in his bedroom. You can almost hear him saying, “**These punks are so brave, they can kill a man in his sleep! What tough guys they are!**” The writer will give us David's assessment of their actions but he's already given us his own. He tells us about them and mocks them at the same time.

So, **Baanah & Rechab** may seem to be bold and daring but step back and take another look from God's perspective. They're not strong, they're weak; they're not courageous, they're cowardly; they're not manly, they're mercenaries. All of this just goes to show how badly we need godly discernment in our lives & how prone we are to not have it. We as God's people need to have the ability to see the spiritual reality that hides beneath the surface of what is visible. How do we acquire spiritual discernment? Know God, know His Word, know His Spirit & know His people.

8- avenged- Know what they're doing? They're theologizing! It's taken them 2 days 2 go from Mahanaim to Hebron so they've had some time to get their stories straight & this is what they came up with: basically, they're saying, “**We are servants of God, defeating your enemies as instruments of God.**” Was this an act of God's judgment on Saul and his family? Were they the servants of the Lord executing His justice by killing David's rival & strengthening David's kingship? I mean, since we've done you such a big favor, surely you can reciprocate by giving us posh govt. jobs! Here's the problem: they show up with blood on their hands and theology on their lips thinking that the 1 will cancel out the other. Murder always seems more pleasant when it is packaged in religious consideration.

Not much has changed. There are still plenty of folk who are willing to use theology to cover their sin & foolishness both inside & outside the church. I've had so-called believers come to me and declare that everything their spouse is doing in leaving them is unbiblical and I need to help them stop it from happening. "Wait up, in the last few years, you had zero interest in what the Bible said while you were destroying your marriage. It's a little late for that now." Or, anytime church discipline must be pursued, what will you hear? Theology! How we're all sinners & God is a God of love & who gave you the right 2 judge me anyway, etc. eat shellfish".

Here's the danger: if our knee-jerk reaction to any disapproval is to quote some Biblical justification then we may just be **using** God, not trusting Him; using Him as an argument for our sin, manipulating Him for our convenience to keep from having to fully submit to His grace or to His commandments. Just b/c you may know some of the Bible doesn't mean you know the God of the Bible.

9- redeemed- David faces a hidden **temptation** here. These guys show up and make some interesting claims. They're not claiming to be God, they're just saying that by their actions they single-handedly wiped out the entire threat of Saul's house against David. They're not trying to claim too much, they're just putting the right spin on their treachery to imply that David owes them for this last straw that makes his kingdom secure. But, that's exactly the **temptation**: they're ever so slightly **pretending to be David's redeemers** to whom he now owes something for defecting to his kingdom. But David's not having any of it! These 2 show up with a head & a tall tale but he's able **recognize** them for what they are & **repudiate** their subtle implications b/c he remembers who his true and only Redeemer is! Note the parallels between the statements: "**Saul, your enemy, who sought your life**" & "**the Lord, who has redeemed my life out of every adversity**" What causes David to reply so profoundly? **Gratitude, memory**; the **ability** to itemize the benefits received and the favors granted to him by the Lord (**Ps 103:2-5**)! B/c David remembers how **YHWH** delivered him from all of his troubles he's not fooled into crediting evil men with the deliverance of a gracious God.

"**Count your blessing, name them 1 by 1; count your blessings, see what God has done.**" A little gratitude goes a long way in keeping us in the right frame of mind. We're not so app to complain or jump ship at every

opportunity.

9-12- executed- David's declaration (9) precedes his judicial decision (10-11). He brings up the story of the Amalekite & all the good news he brought about Saul's death. The result: "**I had him executed.**" Then he goes on to say, "**How much more...**" David couldn't have known they killed him in his sleep unless they'd gone over the scene in detail. They **thought** it was a **smart move** but David said it was **wicked**. They **thought** David would be pleased to see the severed head of Ishbosheth, they **thought** wrong! They sorely underestimated David's loyalty to God & the house of Saul. David was loyal to his pledge to honor and preserve Saul's family and descendants. As such, David made sure these 2 could never hurt Saul's family again. Hebron was a kingdom w/ **dissection & justice for all!**

As gory as it is, this small sampling of justice in Hebron should be encouraging to us b/c in it we see God's anointed king justly addressing wrong. Sure, it's only a single instance in a tiny kingdom but like the new growth of Samson's hair – it's a sign of greater things to come! Every piece of mini-justice accomplished under David's rule is a foreshadowing of the perfect justice Jesus will enforce thru-out the earth during His own millennial reign. In the coming days when the prevalence of **injustice** will bring untold **pressure & temptations** on the church, God's people will desperately need to hold on to this hope: that the time will come when the Davidic King will institute Hebron-style justice thru-out the whole earth. What a day that will be!

What stands out to me is the fact that these 2 guys thought they were helping David out, they thought they were doing a good thing, they thought David would be happy & they thought they would be rewarded for their efforts but – they thought wrong – **dead** wrong. Today, I see so many people who live their lives thinking they're OK, that God doesn't care, that everything gonna be alright in the end. How do you know? What facts do you base that on? Like the 2 characters in our text, they underestimate God's loyalty to His own holiness & justice. They underestimate the Father's love & loyalty to the Son. "Oh, but God is love." Yes He is & He demonstrated that love when He sent His Son to die on the cross. If you stubbornly refuse to accept the salvation that Jesus purchased for you on that cross, the Father will be highly offended. Baanah & Rechab eventually saw the error of their ways but by then it was way too late. Don't wait until

it's too late to realize you've thought wrong about sin & salvation all your life. Today is the day to get it right. If you get it right with God now, you will never have to face His judgment in the future! 😊