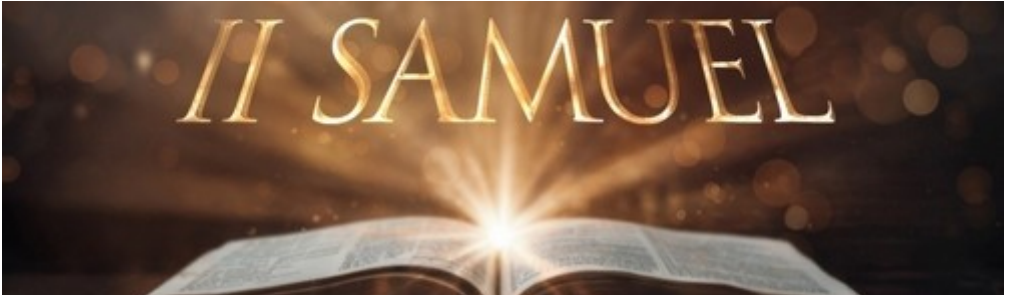


Let's Worship God

10th - 15th August
2 Samuel





Monday - 2 Samuel 19:40-43 - Tension Building

Sometimes you hear of a falling out in a family, or a church. And when you hear what it's about, you're left thinking: 'Wow - is that really what they've fallen out over?' Often, however, the 'issue' isn't really the issue. Often there have been tensions for a long time, and one side is just looking for an issue to fall out over. That certainly seems to be the case at the end of chapter 19. Although the nation of Israel is united as one kingdom at this time, it's still split into different tribes. Way back in chapter 2, Judah had been the first tribe to recognise David as king. That tension between Judah and the other tribes is still on display here, all these years later. Verse 40 tells us that 'all the people of Judah' but only 'half the people of Israel, brought the king on his way'. So there's this Israel-Judah tension. And that breaks out into the open in verse 41 when the men of Israel come to David and ask, 'Why have our brothers stolen you away?' In other words, why did you let the tribe of Judah escort you home. It's an over-the-top reaction. It sounds like the sort of accusation someone makes when they're spoiling for a fight. David doesn't answer, which isn't helpful, leaving the tribes to argue it out among themselves. Judah reacts angrily in verse 42 by pointing out that David is their close relative. Israel say, "well we have ten shares in the king". In other words, they have ten tribes compared to Judah's one. (By the way, the reason that makes a total of 11 and not 12 is because the Levites didn't have a geographic piece of land, but were spread throughout the other tribes.) Israel also point out that they were the first to speak about bringing the king back. And the chapter ends ominously, not with any resolution to the tension, but simply telling us that the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel. It's not that one side backs down - it's simply that one side were fiercer than the other. And so the stage is set for someone to come along and exploit these tensions.

Question

1. What is the tension between the tribes?

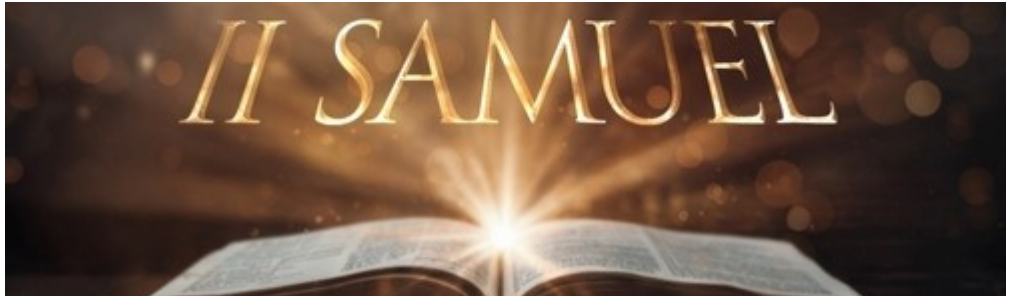
Prayer Points

1. Pray that we would be peacemakers.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

Arise, O God, defend your cause; remember how the foolish scoff at you all the day!
Psalm 74:22

Praise: Psalm 112B - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Tuesday - 2 Samuel 20:1-2 - A Second Rebellion

Sheba's rebellion is different from Absalom's in many ways. Remember how Absalom had planned his rebellion for years. Sheba, on the other hand, is an opportunist. He can see the tensions. The fault lines are clear. And so he tries to exploit them for his own benefit. But at the heart of it, both these rebellions are the same. They both want to make themselves king, instead of submitting to the king that God has chosen. And they both convince many people to follow them.

Sheba could have used some legitimate-sounding excuses for what he was doing. He could have said: 'well the people of Judah were saying nasty things to us'. He could have said: 'David is showing favouritism to people, he's overlooking the sin of others. He's not ruling the way a king should rule.' And those things were true. But none of them alter his crime: He rebelled against God's anointed king, and so rebelled against God himself. There are people we know and love who will give us all sorts of reasons for giving up on church or Christianity, pointing out flaws in the church, flaws in the minister. And everything they point out could be completely true. But none of it justifies their actions.

In the final analysis, Sheba, like Absalom, rebelled against God. And the people following these rival kings picture the heart of the unbeliever, constantly trying to set up another king in place of Jesus Christ. It was John Calvin who said that the human heart is a perpetual factory of idols. You'd think that when one idol was destroyed we might turn to the true God instead. But instead we just set up another idol. We do the same thing again, hoping for a different result. But just like Absalom and Sheba, anything we try and put in place of Jesus Christ will only ever disappoint and ultimately bring death.

Questions

1. How is Sheba's rebellion different from Absalom?
2. What does an unbeliever try to set up in place of Christ?

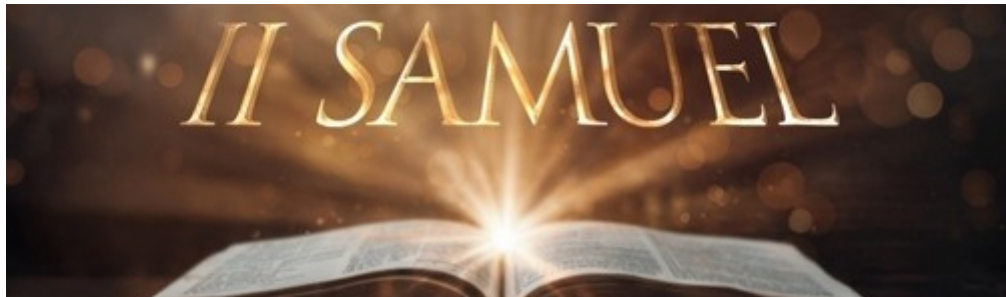
Prayer Points

1. Pray that we would stop making idols, stop putting things in God's place.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

Arise, O God, defend your cause; remember how the foolish scoff at you all the day!
Psalm 74:22

Praise: Psalm 74:1-4 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Wednesday - 2 Samuel 20:1-3 - Suffering Because of the Sin of Others

In verse 3 David comes to his house at Jerusalem. It should have been a glorious moment. But it's not quite a return to how things were before his sin with Bathsheba. On the national level, there are clear tensions, which in the days of David's son Solomon will become even clearer when the nation fractures irreversibly. It's all part of the impact of David's sin.

We also see the personal toll of sin in verse 3. Particularly, those who suffer because of the sin of others. David's concubines are suffering firstly because David has ignored God's blueprint of one man and one woman for life, and that never goes well in the Bible. So even the very existence of concubines is against God's pattern. But now, because Absalom has lain with them while David has been in exile, they can have no ongoing relationship with David. He will provide for them. But they're shut up until the day of their death, living as if in widowhood. What a terribly sad picture. Their hopes and dreams brought to a sudden end. And not because of anything they've done. All because of the sins of others. Like Tamar, back in chapter 13, she was violated, and left asking the question: 'Where can I carry my shame?' Amnon sinned, and Tamar suffered. Here, David sinned, and these women suffered. Some Christians have had their lives take a turn that they would have never chosen, as the direct result of the sin of someone else. I can't answer the 'Why' question. But I can remind you that you are not alone. And I can also point you to the one who Psalm 147 tells us heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds. And also to the one who promises one day to wipe away every tear from your eyes.

Questions

1. What are some of the results of David's sin here?
2. Who can heal the broken hearted?

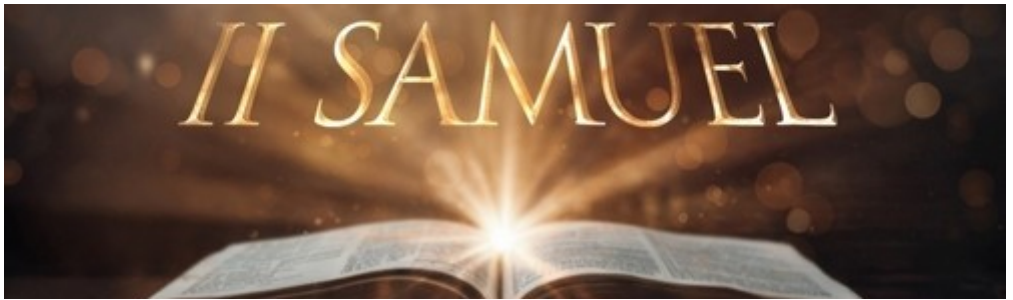
Prayer Points

1. Pray for Christ to comfort His people who are broken hearted.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

Arise, O God, defend your cause; remember how the foolish scoff at you all the day!
Psalm 74:22

Praise: Psalm 74:5-8 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Thursday - 2 Samuel 20:4-19 - Peacable and Faithful

Amidst all the chaos and strife, there is one person who stands out in this chapter. Someone who, when those around her are losing their heads, is in her own words 'peaceable and faithful in Israel'. We're not told her name. Simply in verse 16 that she is a wise woman from the city of Abel. This city is under siege, and if you're in a city under siege, things start to get desperate, and they start to get desperate in the city of Abel.

Why has the city of Abel ended up under siege? Because that's where this rebel king Sheba has ended up. David, you might remember from last week, had appointed Amasa as his army commander - Amasa who had previously been Absalom's army commander. But now that he's on David's side, Amasa fails his first big test. He hesitates. Whatever the reason, Amasa doesn't do what he's meant to fast enough, and David gives control of the army over to Abishai. Both Amasa and Abishai are related to Joab, David's old army commander whom David had stripped of the role after he killed Absalom. Amasa is a distant relative of Joab. But Abishai is his brother. And when Amasa doesn't turn up, David gives control of the army to Abishai, Joab's brother. But it soon becomes clear that Joab is the one calling the shots once again. At the end of verse 10, Joab and Abishai pursue Sheba, until, verse 14, Sheba and those who are with him reach this city of Abel.

In verse 15, Joab and the men who are with him - Abishai isn't even mentioned now! - besiege Sheba. They're in the process of battering the wall to try and knock it down, when a female voice pierces the air. She asks for Joab, and she introduces herself as one of those who is peaceable and faithful in Israel. What a great thing to know that in the midst of all the tumult and rebellion, that there were those who were peaceable and faithful in Israel. Wouldn't it be a great thing if that could be said about any of us - that we were among those who are peaceable and faithful?

Question

1. How does Joab end up back in charge?

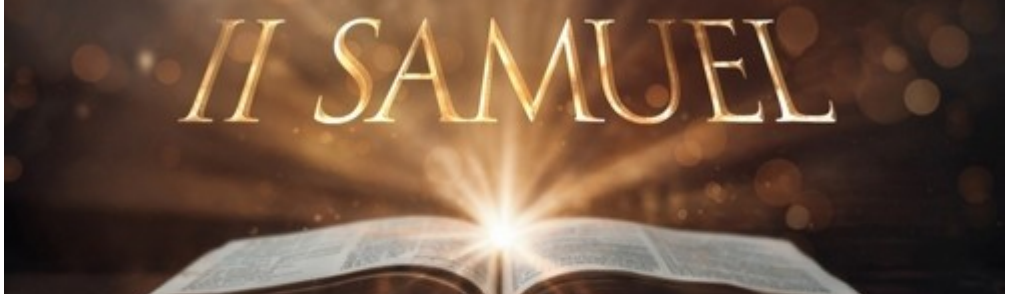
Prayer Points

1. Pray that we would be peaceable and faithful.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

Arise, O God, defend your cause; remember how the foolish scoff at you all the day!
Psalm 74:22

Praise: Psalm 74:9-12 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Friday - 2 Samuel 20:8-22 - Right Side, Wrong Motives

It's possible to be on the right side - but not to be peaceable and faithful. Don't we see that with Joab? Joab exclaims in verse 20: 'Far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy! That is not true.' Yet what has Joab just done? He's just fresh from murdering Amasa. Reaching out and holding his beard with his right hand to kiss him - but having a sword in his left hand. Amasa is someone who had previously sided with Absalom - as well as being a personal rival to Joab. David had given him Joab's job after all. And so without hesitation, without breaking stride almost, Joab strikes him down. Just as, back in chapter 3, Joab had murdered Abner in revenge for Abner killing his other brother, Ashael. Don't be in any doubt as to how serious Joab's actions are. Yes, nothing is said to him about what he's done. Yes, he ends the chapter, in verse 23, as army commander. He gets his old job back. Joab is a man who gets things done. But he's not a saved man. So why does David keep him around? David is in a position of weakness. He's tried to get rid of Joab once, and it hasn't worked. But later on David will charge Solomon, in 1st Kings chapter 2 that Solomon is not to let Joab die peacefully because of what he's done. Joab is on the right side. He's fiercely loyal to God's anointed king. But he lives a life of total rebellion to God himself. It's possible to be on the right side. It's possible to fight for the right causes, but to do so from the completely wrong motivation.

Look at what the wise woman's motivation is. She says in verse 19: 'Why will you swallow up the heritage of the LORD?' For her, it's about God's glory. It's not: 'What are you doing to my city!' But: 'Why will you swallow up the heritage of the LORD?' For Joab, it's about personal revenge. It's about settling scores. It's about making sure he gets his job back. Yes, at the same time he's advancing the LORD's cause, but that's not actually what he cares about. You can be on the right side, but not be among the peaceable and faithful in Israel. But the wise woman is. She reassures Joab that Sheba will be dealt with. And soon his head and his body are separated, and many lives are saved.

Question

1. What are Joab's motives?

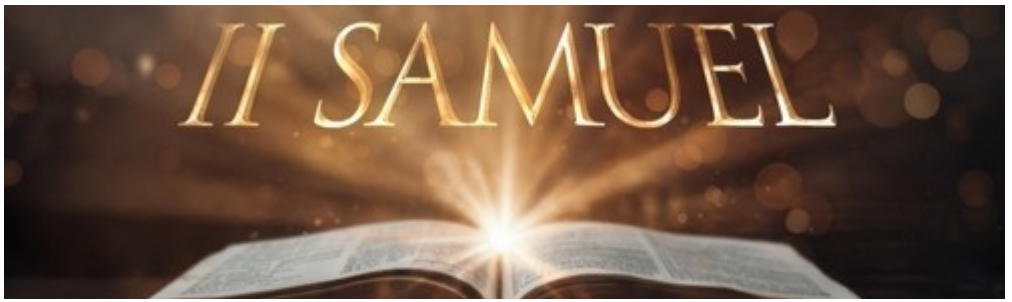
Prayer Points

1. Pray that our goal in all things will be the glory of God.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

Arise, O God, defend your cause; remember how the foolish scoff at you all the day!
Psalm 74:22

Praise: Psalm 74:13-17 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Saturday - 2 Samuel 20:20-26 - Crushing the Serpent's Head

We've seen rebellion, but ultimately peace. God is still holding the kingdom together. And that's a good thing.

It's very interesting to notice that this is the third of three stories in fairly quick succession in the Bible about women inflicting head wounds. The first is in Judges 4. There you have a woman called Jael, who welcomes an enemy, Sisera, into her tent - and drives a tent peg through his head. Then in Judges 9 you have Abimelech besieging a tower. A woman inside the tower throws a millstone onto his head and crushes his skull. And here, we have Sheba's head cut off, because of the actions of a woman. Surely we can't help but hear the echo of the first gospel promise in the Bible. God speaking to the serpent and saying: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." It's a prophecy of what Jesus would do on the cross. His heel would be bruised - as he tread down on the serpent - the seed of the woman inflicting a fatal wound on the serpent. And each time in the Bible a woman inflicts a head wound on an oppressor, it's a little foretaste of the fact that one day, the head of our great enemy is going to be crushed. All rebellion against the true king will be at an end, and we will know perfect peace with him forever.

Question

1. What is the first promise of the Gospel?
2. How does Jesus fulfil this promise?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

Arise, O God, defend your cause; remember how the foolish scoff at you all the day!
Psalm 74:22

Praise: Psalm 74:18-22- See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

**The goal of Let's Worship God is to
encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.**

**God tells us that
Ezra read from
the book of the Law
day after day
and that
the people of God
were filled with joy!**

**Let's Worship God is produced
by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland.**

If you have any queries please contact - rpchurchscotland@gmail.com