

Let's Worship God

13th-18th April 2026

2 Samuel



II SAMUEL



Monday - 2 Samuel 4:1-3 - Rival Kingdoms

What is Jesus like? And what is his kingdom like? Those are the questions that we've asked the last two weeks. And we've seen answers to them from the previous two chapters of 2 Samuel. Not that Jesus and his kingdom are described in these chapters in so many words. But David and his kingdom are meant to point us forward to Jesus and his kingdom.

This chapter also tells us something about Jesus' kingdom - but it does so by way of contrast. This chapter really focuses in on the kingdom of darkness - so that in contrast to it, the kingdom of light might shine forth even more. It opens the cesspool and gives us a glimpse inside - so that we would want to have no part of it. In this chapter we see two rival kingdoms. That's the way it has always been, and always will be until the end of the world. The kingdoms of David and Ishbosheth are a picture of the two kingdoms that are always present and always calling for our loyalty: the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. We see that all the way through the Bible. There are only two categories. There's Cain and Abel. In Noah's day there were those in the Ark, and those who refused to come in. When Abraham comes on the scene, blessing is promised for those who bless him & his descendants - but cursing for those who curse them. And when God sets up David as his king on earth, as his messiah, his anointed, the only two possible responses are to bow the knee to him - or try and fight against him.

There is no part of our lives that Jesus doesn't claim authority over, and that's true whether we acknowledge his authority or not. As Jesus himself said, either we're for him, or we're against him. There's no middle ground. Maybe someone is reading this and you're interested in what the Bible says. You're not opposed to the Christian message the way many around you are. Yet you haven't yet bowed the knee before Jesus Christ. Well my friend, until you do that, you're still outside the kingdom. And to be outside Christ's kingdom is to remain in the kingdom of darkness.

Questions

1. What are the only two kingdoms in this world?

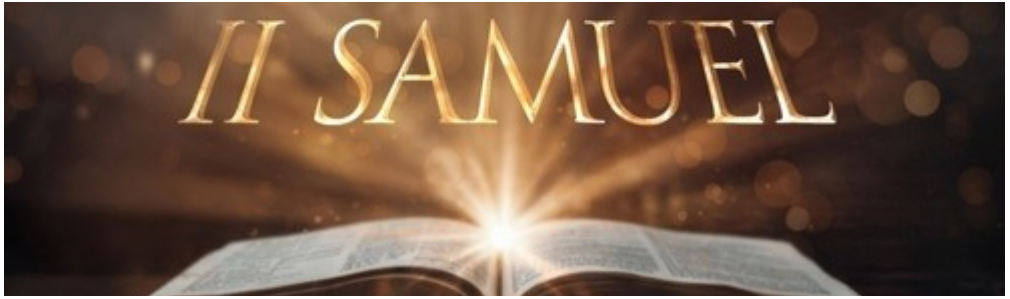
Prayer Points

1. Pray that those around us would bow the knee to King Jesus.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

The LORD reigns; let the peoples tremble! He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake! Psalm 99:1

Praise: Psalm 99A:1-4 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Tuesday - 2 Samuel 4:1-3 - Ish-bosheth

Ish-bosheth was really just a pawn in the hands of Abner, Saul's army commander. Back in chapter 2v8 we're told that after Saul's death, Abner took Ish-bosheth and made him king over all Israel. It doesn't sound like he even has a say in the matter. Abner's the one pulling the strings. Here in chapter 4, when Ish-bosheth hears that Abner has been killed, his courage fails. Even though Abner had switched sides, Ish-bosheth might still have thought of him as a barrier between himself and David. But now Abner's dead, Ish-bosheth thinks that he's next.

Ish-bosheth the puppet king is actually a good illustration of life in the kingdom of darkness. Because people around us believe that they're free - when they're actually slaves. They hold on to the illusion that they have free will, when they're actually doing the work of the devil. They may think that they're calling the shots in their lives. But actually there's someone else pulling the strings and using them for his own wicked purposes. But even though Ish-bosheth was used, even though he was exploited, he was still in the kingdom of darkness. How different from his brother Jonathan. Jonathan was the true successor to Saul, humanly speaking. Yet he symbolically took off his royal robe and gave it to David in acknowledgement that God had chosen his friend instead.

The pathetic picture of Ish-bosheth painted here is meant to arouse our sympathy. Surely we should have a similar feeling towards the unbelievers around us, because at the end of the day the reason they stay in the kingdom of darkness is because the god of this world has blinded their minds to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ. They're not our enemies, as such. And yet they are the king's enemies. They are without excuse. At the end of the day, they're still suppressing the truth. They're refusing to submit to what they know deep down to be true, just as Ish-bosheth was. If he hadn't heard it before, Ish-bosheth heard from Abner how God had promised to give the kingdom to David. So Ish-bosheth knew the truth. But he refused to live in light of it.

Question

1. How does Ish-bosheth react when Abner is killed?

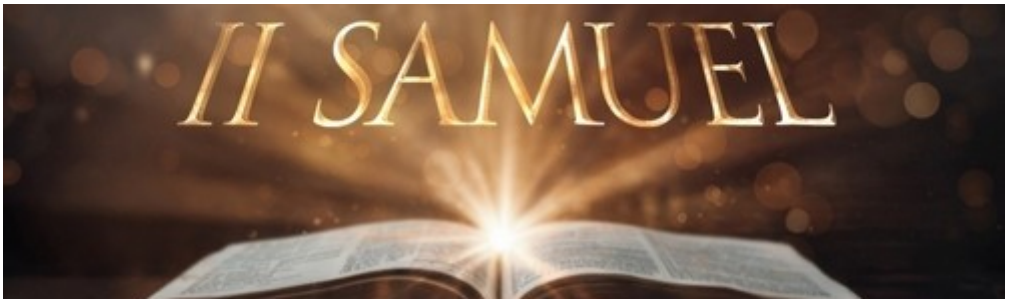
Prayer Points

1. Pray that those around us would see their need of Christ.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

The LORD reigns; let the peoples tremble! He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake! Psalm 99:1

Praise: Psalm 99A:5-8 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Wednesday - 2 Samuel 4:4-8 - No Mercy In The Kingdom of Darkness

It wasn't just Abner who thought that Ish-bosheth was expendable. Two of Abner's own special forces felt the same. They're introduced in the opening verses as Baanah and Rechab. They belong to the tribe of Benjamin - just like Saul and his son. But as we see from v4 onwards, that doesn't stop them executing one of their own in cold blood.

Ish-bosheth, as people tend to do in hot countries, was having a rest in the middle of the day. These two came to the house, pretending to get wheat. They kill him and then behead him as he lies on his bed. Then they take his head to David, thinking that he'll be impressed with them.

Why do they do it? It's pure self-interest. Just like the Amalekite in chapter 1 who claimed to have killed Saul, they doubtless saw the writing on the wall. They realised that David was only going to get stronger, and so they wanted to align themselves with him, and use the fact that they'd killed one of his enemies as leverage to get a good government job. And so Ish-bosheth is murdered in cold blood. The message coming across loud and clear is - don't expect mercy or grace in the kingdom of darkness. Despite all the talk there may be of equality or kindness or generosity or diversity in the world, much of it is just skin deep. At the end of the day, life outside the kingdom of God is cruel, harsh, self-centred and unforgiving. Ish-bosheth had outlived his usefulness. So he's now expendable. The people you'd expect to be there for him - men from his own tribe, his trusted soldiers - literally stick the knife into him. What a contrast to life in the kingdom of God! Or at least to what life should be like in the kingdom of God. Because if in the world you find disloyalty where you'd expect loyalty. In God's kingdom you find kindness and friendship where you'd expect the opposite. I think that contrast is at least hinted at here by the reference to Mephibosheth in v4. David would have been expected to hunt down and kill any remaining members of Saul's family. He does seek out Mephibosheth - but rather than to kill him, it's to show kindness to him.

Question

1. What do these verses tell us about the kingdom of darkness?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks that there is kindness in God's Kingdom.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

The LORD reigns; let the peoples tremble! He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake! Psalm 99:1

Praise: Psalm 103:1-5 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

II SAMUEL

Thursday - 2 Samuel 4:8-12 - True Justice

Bannah and Rechab have a pious sounding, theological explanation for what they've done. Do you see it there in the second half of v8? 'The LORD has avenged my lord the king this day on Saul and on his offspring'. It's very pious sounding, isn't it? We're just the instruments, O King. The LORD is the one who has done it. But David isn't having any of it. Even if it's true that ultimately God had done it - that didn't make them any less guilty of murder.

One of the ways that David is most Christ-like in this chapter is in executing judgement on these two Benjaminites. The real Jesus, not the Jesus of popular imagination, but the real Jesus, loves justice. In fact the very reason he went to the cross wasn't so that justice could be avoided, but so that justice could be done - and his people still saved. So that God could be both 'just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus'. Perhaps we shudder as we read the closing verses. And yet what David is doing is simply cutting through all the pious talk about God and calling out what these men have actually done. 'Wicked men have killed a righteous man in his own house on his bed'. They're portraying themselves as people who've done God's will. But actually they're just murderers.

In the church we need to be able to see past the spiritual sounding language, and theologically true statements applied to the wrong situations, and call a spade a spade. The Baanah's and Rechab's of this world don't really care about God. They just want to be allowed to live however they want. And if they know the right language to use, well-meaning Christians and even church leaders can be taken in. Yet unlike the kingdom of darkness, the kingdom of God is to be a kingdom of mercy, grace - and true justice.

Question

1. How do Bannah and Rechab excuse what they've done?
2. How do people use spiritual sounding words to justify sin?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that we would grow in Scriptural discernment.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

The LORD reigns; let the peoples tremble! He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake! Psalm 99:1

Praise: Psalm 103:6-10 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

II SAMUEL

Friday - 2 Samuel 4:8-11 - Remembering God's Goodness

Baanah and Rechab hope that by talking about God's providence, David will join them in using Christian language as a mask for ambition. Because David actually has a lot to gain if he goes along with their version of events. They're handing him what he has been waiting for, for so many years. All he has to do is go along with their Christiany-sounding explanation. But trying to use readings of God's providence as a way to make decisions is fraught with danger. Especially when providence seems to be backing up what we want to do anyway. So we must stick to God's Word, and base our decisions on the principles contained in it, and not base our decisions on what we think he's doing in any given situation.

So that's one temptation David faces. But another temptation is to shift his utter reliance on God, and place it in human schemes. Do you hear the subtle suggestion behind v8? 'Here is the head of Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul, your enemy, who sought your life'. In other words. Your life was in danger. But now it's not. And that's because of us. The temptation is for David to accept their version of events, and start living like he's indebted to them. But do you see how David counters their claim? The say, v8: 'Saul, your enemy, who sought your life'. David says, v9. 'The LORD, who has redeemed my life out of every adversity'. Remembering God's goodness to you will help stop you wavering. It will help keep you from attributing your success to yourself or others.

Questions

1. What does David have to gain here?
2. What does David say about God?

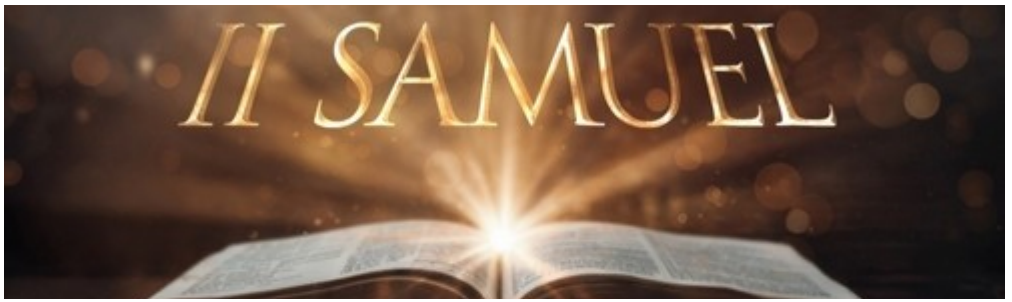
Prayer Points

1. Pray that we would remember the goodness of God.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

The LORD reigns; let the peoples tremble! He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake! Psalm 99:1

Praise: Psalm 103:11-15 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Saturday - 2 Samuel 4:8-9 - Thankfulness

Don't miss that phrase at the end of v9: 'out of every adversity'. Tucked away in 2 Samuel 4 is this great tribute to the goodness and grace of God. Here's a verse we can cling onto in the midst of suffering. He has delivered us out of every adversity - and he's not going to stop now. That sense of gratitude will help us to keep on suffering for him.

In 155AD an elderly man called Polycarp was burned at the stake for refusing to say that Caesar was Lord. He was given the chance to renounce Christ and escape the flames. But he said: 'Eighty and six years I have served Him, and He has done me no wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King and Saviour?'

One of your best protections from giving in to temptation, whether temptation to commit some sin, or temptation to despair, or to self-pity - one of your best protections is living a life of thankfulness. So that in that moment of temptation, you wouldn't simply be thinking 'I shouldn't do this'. But you'd be thinking: 'I've served him however many years and he has done me no wrong. How than can I sin against my king and my Saviour?'

Outside the kingdom of God, people may be thankful from time to time - but their lives aren't marked by it. When they get things, it often doesn't occur to them to be thankful because they think they're entitled to it, they deserve it, or they've worked hard to earn it. That's the world we live in. It's so easy to take on their values. It's easy for us even as Christians to live lives that aren't marked by gratitude.

Idolatry and ingratitude are the two sins that Romans 1 picks up on that explain why the world's in the state that it's in. Romans 1.21: 'For although they knew God, they did not honour him as God (idolatry) or give thanks to him'. (Ingratitude) I wonder if we were to make up a description of a spiritual person, how high up the list would we place gratitude? The citizens of God's kingdom are - or should be - marked by thankfulness. Just like their king. What was it that revealed Jesus to the Emmaus disciples? Breaking bread and giving thanks.

Question

1. How does being thankful help us resist temptation?

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

The LORD reigns; let the peoples tremble! He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake! Psalm 99:1

Praise: Psalm 103:16-21 - 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.

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