



“REASONS TO REJOICE”

*“Your Words were found, and I ate them,
and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.” Jeremiah 15:16*

I and II SAMUEL Lesson 23

In our lesson last week, we read about an interesting situation concerning a man named Sheba. (Actually, interesting may not be the best word for it!) Just when all of Israel and Judah were possibly going to come together in support of David, Sheba decided to stir up trouble. Dissension arises again within the tribes, and David orders Amasa, who had taken over for Joab, to kill this troublemaker. Well, Joab, who may have been bitter because he lost his position as commander, kills Amasa before he can get to Sheba. Joab now pursues Sheba, and finds him hiding in a city. A wise woman steps in and stops Joab from destroying the entire place. The people of the city grab Sheba, cut off his head, and throw it over the wall. (What word would you use to describe this event?)

The next four chapters are considered an “appendix.” The appendix is additional material at the end, which supplements the book. They are not necessarily in chronological order, but simply describe David’s exploits at various times during his reign. (i.e.; In the days of David, verse 1) Keep this in mind as you read the next few chapters.

First Day

- 1. Let’s begin by reading II Samuel 21:1-14. List the facts that you find. What’s happening? When? Why? How?*

- 2. When does famine occur, according to verse 1?*

3. *What is the reason and the purpose for the famine?*

4. *How did David know the reason?*

Although Scripture doesn't give an account of Saul killing the Gibeonites, he obviously broke a treaty that was previously made with them. This would line up with what we know about the character of Saul.

5. *Read Joshua 9:1-27. Who made the treaty with the Gibeonites? Why did he do it? Did he do it knowingly or was he tricked?*

6. *Did Joshua feel that they had to honor the treaty? Why? Read Numbers 30:1-2.*

7. *Back to II Samuel 21:1-14, what did the Gibeonites ask for in return for this treaty being broken?*

8. *Does David honor their request? Do you think he had to?*

9. *Whom did David spare? Why?*

A great national sin had been committed, and God was judging the nation for the sins of its leader. (Scary thought!) The Gibeonites felt that the only thing that would atone for the blood of their people was the blood of Saul's family. This seemed to be in accordance with the spirit of the law that gave a murdered man's nearest of kin a right to exact justice of the murder. The Gibeonites wanted the punishment to be as near as possible to

the offender. They asked that the bodies be hung “before the Lord,” as if this would appease the Lord’s displeasure. Most likely the crime was committed in Gibeah, so they wanted the punishment to be done in the same place, so it could be witnessed by the inhabitants of the land. The Gibeonites also point out that it was the Lord who “chose” Saul. Blaikie says, “For Jehovah was intimately connected with Saul’s call to the throne; He was in some sense publicly identified with Him; and unless something were done to disconnect Him with this crime, the reproach of it would, in measure, rest upon Him.”

Some believe that David should not have granted their request, and he should have asked the Lord what to do instead of asking the Gibeonites. Some feel that he was doing exactly what he was supposed to do. It is thought that if he would have acted like any other Eastern king, he would have killed every heir to Saul’s throne when he took over as king, but he didn’t.

You might be wondering if it’s fair for children to pay the price for the iniquity of their father. We find this takes place often in Scripture. May I offer what William Blaikie says regarding this issue: “The law that identified children and parents in Old Testament times was carried out to consequences which would not be tolerated now. Not only were the children often punished because of their physical connection with their fathers, but they were regarded as judicially one with them, and so liable to share in their punishment. The Old Testament was in some respects an imperfect economy; the rights of the individual were not so clearly acknowledged as they are under the New; the family was sort of a moral unit, and the father was the responsible agent for the whole. When Achan sinned, his whole household shared his punishment. However strange it may seem to us, it did not appear at all strange in David’s time that this rule should be applied in the case of Saul. On the contrary, it would probably be thought that it showed considerable moderation of feeling not to demand the death of the whole living posterity of Saul, but to limit the demand to the number of seven. Doubtless the Gibeonites had suffered to an enormous extent. Thousands upon thousands of them had probably been slain. Although justice was hard, here was a nation that had already experienced three years of famine for the sin of Saul, and may experience even more if no public expiation should take place; and seven men were not very many to die for a nation.”

10. *What application do you see for yourself in this section?*

We'll end here for today. Tomorrow we'll see what David does, again, out of respect for Saul's family. I don't know about you, but I am going to pray more diligently for our nation. God definitely judges the individual, but His judgment also comes upon the nations. Lord, help us.

Memory Verse of the Week: *“As for God, His way is perfect; the Word of the Lord is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.” II Samuel 22:31*

Second Day

What's your memory verse? Do you believe that God is perfect?

- 1. Read II Samuel 21:1-14 again. What does Rizpah do for the men who were hanged? Why?*
- 2. When David heard what she was doing, what did he do? Why?*

Rizpah guarded the bodies during the entire harvest season, which was from late April through October. (Although some believe that God may have sent an unseasonable rain so she wouldn't have to stay there until October.) This was a very tender and courageous thing to do. Out of respect for her and the family of Saul, David collects the bones and gives them an honorable burial. We still see David's great respect for God's anointed.

The Mephibosheth that was hung was obviously not Jonathan's son. Saul must have had a son by that name. Verse 8 tells us that Michal's five sons were taken, which would come against II Samuel 6:23 that says she remains barren the rest of her life. There are some who think that she simply reared, or “brought up” these boys, but some Hebrew manuscripts say Merab, (instead of Michal), who was the wife of Adriel, according to I Samuel 18:19. Perhaps Michal raised Merab's sons?

For some, this story doesn't sit very well. The Laymen's Bible Commentary says that, “This story of revenge has no justification before the living God. It can be accepted only as conforming to the custom of the time.”

Now this chapter gives another situation during the reign of David. We know it must be close to the end of David's life, because he grows weary and faints, and his lamp is close to burning out!

3. *Read II Samuel 21:15-22. Also read I Chronicles 20:4-8. List the facts you find in this section. What would you title it? What do you find interesting?*

4. *How many "sons of the giant" were there? What are their names, or how are they distinguished?*

5. *Do you remember how many stones David brought with him when he faced the giant in I Samuel 17:40? Do you think there may be any significance in this?*

6. *Who killed all the giants in this section?*

7. *Why didn't they want David to go to battle with them anymore?*

8. *Did David ever have to stop facing giants in his life? List some other "giants" that David faced during his reign.*

9. *Does our knowledge of the Lord, or the amount of time we've known Him, stop us from having to face "giants"? Why or why not?*

10. Are you facing the same “giants” you were facing when we studied David and Goliath, or are they new ones? What happened to your previous Goliath?

11. How are we supposed to fight the “giants” in our life?

David is told to refrain from the usual kingly practice of leading his troops in battle. In the Old Testament, when a man dies, it is said that his lamp is extinguished (Job 18:6, Proverbs 13:9). Robert Gordon says, “David’s death would be tantamount to the extinction of the life of the community. The figure of the lamp, which came to symbolize the Davidic dynasty as maintained by Yahweh (1 Kings 15:4; Psalm 132:17), possibly derives from the world of the sanctuary, in which a lamp was kept burning continually. The sanctuary lamp was a royal emblem in Jerusalem, and its maintenance symbolized the preservation of the community.”

12. Should we stop serving the Lord when our lamp “begins to dim”? What are some ways we can continue serving passionately, no matter how old we are?

Although David had to step off the front lines, he still offered support to those doing the battle. Although our energy changes as we get older, and we may not be able to continue to “lead the pack,” we can, and should, continue to love the Lord and serve Him with all our heart. I pray that we never grow weary of serving our King.

Third Day

Are you practicing your memory verse? Is He your shield?

Today we will look at chapter 22, which is David's Psalm of thanksgiving. As David approached the end of his life, he stopped and took a look at all the things God had done for him. As he reflected on his life, he could see God's hand of protection and love through the years. He takes time out to give God the thanks and praise due His name. This song is almost identical to Psalm 18.

- 1. Read II Samuel 22. (Yes, the whole chapter!) As you read, mark the verses or phrases that specifically jump out at you.*
- 2. Name some of the general themes you see in this song.*
- 3. According to verse 1, what was David's purpose in writing this?*
- 4. Read Psalm 18. Note any differences that you find.*
- 5. From all we've learned about David's life, can you think of any events that may have caused him to write certain thoughts? (For instance, Why would David say God delivered him from violence, in verse 3?) This question might take some time.*

6. *When you stop and look back to the events in your life, can you see God's hand? Take a few minutes and reflect on God's hand in your past, and in your present. Write a song of thanksgiving to the Lord, thanking Him for what He's done for you. Be specific, like David did. Note specific events and how God ministered to you, protected you, or strengthened you. Offer it to the Lord as a sacrifice of praise.*

That's it for today. May you be encouraged today as you remind yourself how faithful God has been to you. He truly is our Rock and our Strength!

Fourth Day

Practice your verse.

Remember that David was a skilled musician. He played the harp, wrote many psalms, and instituted the music program in the temple (1 Chronicles 25). David had a song in his heart for the Lord!

1. *Read II Samuel 22:1-4. How does David express his faith and confidence in the Lord in these verses?*

2. *Why does he refer to God as a "Rock"?*

3. *What would you say is the theme of verses 1-4?*

4. *How does this section speak to your heart? How does it encourage you? Challenge you?*

5. *Have you been leaning on the “Rock of your Salvation”? Where have you been getting your strength from?*

6. *Read verses 5-20. What would you say is the theme of this section?*

7. *Describe what David is saying in your own words. What point is he making? What is he thanking the Lord for?*

8. *How does the picture that David paints of the Lord make you feel? (Does it encourage you? Frighten you?)*

9. *Read the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 33:26-29. Have you ever felt like God “rode the Heavens” to help you? Can you explain?*

10. *What are the key words in verses 19-20 that sum up David's thoughts in this section?*

See you tomorrow, ladies. Keep looking up! God might be riding those clouds! He delights in you! That's a "Reason to Rejoice!"

Fifth Day

Write out your verse from memory.

1. *In verses 5-20, David concentrates on the fact that God has delivered him. Now he changes the focus a little. Read verses 21-31. What's the theme of this section?*
2. *According to David, what is God rewarding him for?*
3. *In verse 24, David says he kept himself from his iniquity. How do we do that?*
4. *Restate verse 30 in your own words. How does this minister to you?*
5. *David says that God is our "shield" in verse 31. What does that mean?*

6. *Have you been allowing God to be your shield? If not, what have you been using for a shield? Is it working? What are some things that people use for shields other than the Lord?*

7. *If God is perfect, what does that say about your present situation?*

8. *Read verses 32-46. We have another theme change. Can you tell what it is?*

9. *David was a man of war. What does he mean when he says, "Your gentleness has made me great" in verse 36?*

10. *To whom is David attributing everything? Which verses support your answer?*

11. *Which verses in this section speak to your heart? Why?*

12. *Read verses 47-51. How would you describe this section?*

13. How did God show His anointed mercy? (vs 51)

14. Looking back on this whole song, what impressed you the most?

15. This is one of David's lists of "Reasons to Rejoice!" Make a list of reasons that you have to rejoice in the Lord. Spend some time doing just that!

See you next week, ladies! We only have one more lesson together. Make time this week to get your lesson done so you'll have many things to discuss. Have a wonderful week praising the Lord for being your Deliverer, your Rewarder, and the One who gives you power!

***The Lord lives! Blessed be my Rock! Let God be exalted,
the Rock of my salvation!***

II Samuel 22:47