

2 Samuel 4,5 Chapter Introductions

Chapter 4 is one literary unit that begins and ends with Ish-bosheth (vv.1,12). In verse 1 his rule erodes; in verse 12 it graphically ends: united in burial with Abner. With the removal of Ish-bosheth, as well as Abner, the way is now clear for David's singular accession to the throne (i.e., Fulfilling the will and word of the LORD: 1 Sam. 16:1,12).

2 Samuel 4:1-7a; The death of Abner, Israel's military commander, left Saul's son Ish-bosheth ("*man of shame*") in a weakened and vulnerable position, for "*his courage failed, and all Israel was dismayed*" (v.1, ESV). In the nation's fractured state two *Benjaminites*, Baanah and Rechab both military captains, plotted the assassination of the king, intending to secure for David his rule and reign over all Israel. The historical narrative, however, pauses at verse 4. In verse 4, Scripture introduces Mephibosheth, a son of Jonathan who yet remained to the house of Saul (note: his name means "*he scatters shame*;" in the ancient world to be crippled was a mark of shame, of disgrace. Note: Mephibosheth will reappear in chapters 9,16,19,21, providing a rich source for many spiritual lessons). Why does Mephibosheth appear at this time? Numerous reasons have been suggested. Expositor's Bible Commentary proposes that the physical condition of Mephibosheth emboldened Baanah and Rechab in their plot against the king. For Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the "*Avenger of Death*" in this instance, would have been highly incapable of avenging their murderous deed against Ish-bosheth (EBC, Vol.3, p.844). Then verses 5 -7 detail the assassination of the king by these two military captains. Thus concluded Ish-bosheth's 2-year reign (cf. 2:10).

2 Samuel 4:7b -12; The two assassins Baanah and Rechab - for likely opportunistic purposes - brought the head of king Ish-bosheth to David at Hebron (approx. 25 mile journey from Gibeon of Saul). David's response was swift and for them an unexpected one. Killing Ish-bosheth gained them no favor with David. Instead, they received his wrath and condemnation. David recounted for them a similar incident following the death of Saul; and now for their wickedness the same judgment of execution would fall. Additionally, David commanded that from their corpses both hands and feet should be cut off. The chapter ends: Then "*they took the head of Ish-bosheth and buried it in the tomb of Abner at Hebron.*" (v.12).

2 Samuel 5:1-16; Chapter 5 commences with the third anointing of David as king (1 Sam. 16:12; 2 Sam. 2:4; 5:3). This time his rule included ALL the people of Israel (emphasized in v.1, "*all the tribes*;" v.3, "*all the elders*;" and v.5, "*over all Israel*"). David first locates his capitol city. The location was called Jebus, which became "*the city of David*," also "*Jerusalem*" (ancient Salem), and most glorious of all, "*the City of God!*" (Psalm 48:1; 87:3).

2 Samuel 5:17-25; The Philistines alarmed by the news of David's ascendancy to power and of a revived unity within the nation, attacked preemptively; but were crushed totally.