

JUNE 3

2 Samuel 20:14-22:20

2 Samuel 20:14-26

Vs. 14-22 This story wraps up the civil war. The hero isn't Joab, but a wise woman who rescued her town.

Vs. 23-26 is the return to order. Benaiah will come into the story again later. He apparently led an elite group of fighters who may have had Philistine ties. Ira wasn't a priest. Remember that David's sons were called priests, but the word really meant "official." Ira was David's personal administrator, or administrative assistant.

2 Samuel 21

Vs. 1-14 Chronologically, this must have come after the country was at peace again. It is interesting how this plays out, because during the civil war there must have been questions of Saul's family coming to the throne again. What happens here will put that hope to rest. Also, in this story there is another lesson about the long legacy of sin and wandering from God. Saul did this with religious and patriotic zeal, but in disobedience to God. Now it will hurt his family. I think we all get the point.

Sometime while Saul was chasing David, moved by some kind of patriotism or "god thoughts," but not by God, Saul decided to try to exterminate the Gibeonites. These are the people who had tricked Joshua about 300 years earlier. As a result of their trick and the ensuing covenant, they were saved and became a part of Israel, doing servant work for the tabernacle. After 300 years they were as good as being Israelites. Who knows where Saul got the idea to do this.

V. 1 It is interesting that it took David three years of famine to figure out to ask God.

V. 3 When the Gibeonites felt that justice had been done, they would ask God to bless Israel. Even today, if someone is really seeking forgiveness, they should ask the offended party what restitution would look like.

V. 7 David spared Mephibosheth because of his oath to Jonathan. Notice that there was another guy named Mephibosheth. It must have been a popular name.

V. 8 This is sad and interesting because Merab should have been given to David to be his wife. She was a part of the reward package for killing Goliath. I wonder how David felt having to take five of her sons.

Vs. 9-10 The bodies hung out until the rain came, meaning the curse was lifted. Normally you couldn't leave a body hanging on a tree overnight, but God must have allowed it because of the aspect of having violated a covenant Joshua made with these people. When the rain came, everyone knew the curse was over. I feel sorry for this concubine of Saul's, Rizpah. Apparently so did David. Remember, he knew all of these people.

Vs. 12-14 This literally and figuratively lays the house of Saul to rest in David's reign and in the history of Israel. Except for Mephibosheth, there were no other heirs to vie for the throne of Saul.

Vs. 15-22 This story lays to rest the conflict with the Philistines. I don't think we'll ever hear of them again as a threat to Israel. Also, David hung up his sword and it seems that the giants were exterminated from the land.

You can see how this chapter is sort of "tidying up" the history of David.

2 Samuel 22:1-20

What we have here is almost identical to Psalm 18. This psalm will continue into tomorrow and will be complementary to 2 Samuel 23:1-7; in that, chapter 22 celebrates God's deliverance that

brought David to the throne and chapter 23 celebrates God's preservation of his kingdom. In chapter 22 we might have David's first words of worship as a king, while chapter 23 holds some of David's final words.

Vs. 1-6 This seems to sum up David's thoughts of his ten years of running from Saul.

Vs. 7-16 But when David cried to the Lord, God came to his aid, with lots of visual and sound effects.

Vs. 17-20 This is God rescuing David.

We're not through with the record of David's life yet, but with all the lessons God has given us, the good, the bad, and lots of ugly, David was still a man of God. We all fall. We all fail. What we learn in seeing God's grace to David is that, in spite of our failings, we can still get up and serve Him if we truly love Him and will follow Him as disciples.

Acts 1

Whoa! This means you've read all four Gospels. When's the last time you did that in the same year? Now we're into the adventures of the Holy Spirit leading the disciples.

Vs. 1-3 This gives us some good information. Apparently, Theophilus enjoyed the first installment.

Note that Luke talks about what Jesus began to do and teach. That means that what we'll be reading, and what we are doing as His disciples, is the continuation of what He began. The mission is to be the focus of our following.

V. 2 Some wonder if Acts 1:8 is a command. I think that Acts 1:8 and the Great Commission are the commands referred to here.

V. 3 Immediately after the Passover, came a weeklong Feast of the Firstfruits. Then you had 49 days and on the 50th day (Pentecost) you had the "Feast of Weeks" or "Feast of the Harvest." The name for this feast that began at Pentecost is really the Feast of the Harvest. It is called the Feast of Weeks because it was seven weeks from the last feast. Isn't it interesting that the feast that began on Pentecost is called the Feast of the Harvest?

This feast also lasted for a week. For both the Passover and the Feast of Harvest, all males in Israel were required to attend. This will make Jerusalem a very crowded place.

I mention all of this, because in the time between His resurrection and Pentecost, there were 57 days. Forty of those were taken up with Jesus teaching His disciples about the kingdom of God. This would mean that after Jesus left and told them to wait for the Spirit, they would have to wait at least two weeks. Interesting. It just seems to me, that the Lord expects His disciples to do a lot of seeking and praying and waiting.

Vs. 4-5 Apparently, after Jesus met with the apostles and other disciples in Galilee, He went with them or met them in Jerusalem. This was the reason He gave them the command to stay in Jerusalem, in spite of what had just happened there.

Vs. 6-11 So on one particular day, when they were on the other side of the valley on the Mount of Olives, boom, He was gone.

V. 6 The time of the establishment of His earthly kingdom was a logical question to ask, since Jesus had been telling them about the Kingdom of God for the past 40 days. Even though that earthly kingdom still hasn't happened as it will in the Millennium, Jesus taught them to have it anchored in their minds that it was coming. They had the sense of expectation and now, they would work and live with the end in view. Not a bad way for a disciple to follow Christ, with the end in view. If you read Luke 19:11-28, you'll see that Jesus was very clear that the kingdom would not appear immediately and they were to do business until He returned.

V. 8 This is a key verse for every one of us. After giving the disciples the future vision and expectancy, he told them to focus on their mission. The *you will be* is what we are. Notice that the Spirit's power is given to us for this mission.

Notice too, the pattern of outreach and harvest. This is the structure of the book of Acts and it is vital to any group of believers. You start close to home, your neighbors. It amazes me that churches still do outreaches to the inner city and send missionaries to other countries, but it isn't easy to find a pastor or elder who has seen a neighbor come to Christ or to church. As disciples we have to understand that if we are not reaching out close to home, the other areas further out can become an excuse to relieve our guilt for being ineffective at home. Also, disciple-making involves the process of leading someone to Christ and leading them to lead others to Christ, thereby making them reproducing disciples. If you can't reach people at home, you can't make disciples. It's impossible. Our job is not to fill the room and then close the door. We are to be reaching out constantly, making disciples and leading them to reach out and make disciples. The church is to be a moving stream of salvation/disciple-making, not a stagnant pool.

Vs. 9-11 Talk about an interesting way to get the disciples to remember these words. The connection to the kingdom is also here in Jesus going before their eyes. The kingdom will be established on earth, when Jesus returns the very same way, probably on that very same spot, at the end of the Tribulation.

Vs. 12-14 They were all together in Jerusalem and prayed for the Spirit for two weeks. Of course, they didn't know it would be two weeks. That's a long time to pray. I wonder if Thomas was getting antsy.

This upper room was thought to belong to the well-to-do family of John Mark, the writer of the Gospel of Mark. This would also explain why they had the room for so long, since this was a feast where thousands filled Jerusalem and meeting space was hard to find.

Vs. 15-26 Jesus told them they would be sitting on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel. They needed a twelfth guy. Note that Peter took the lead.

V. 18 There are lots of theories of how this happened and they all end up with a mess.

V. 22 Note that both of these guys had been with Jesus the entire time. In the Gospels we see that Jesus had lots of other disciples. This is interesting to see these guys were still following even though they were not a part of the Twelve.

Some people think that the disciples made a bad choice, but that is because we know about Paul and think that they should have chosen him. They didn't know about Paul; God didn't tell them, but He did lead them to do this. Who knows, Paul might sit on a throne in Revelation anyway, since there are 24 of them. On the other hand, knowing Paul, he won't mind if he doesn't get a special honor and sees everything from the stands.

Psalm 121

As a pilgrim walked to Jerusalem singing this song of ascent, he might have thought, "But who's holding down the fort while I'm gone?" God promised in Exodus 23:20 and Exodus 34:24 that He would guard them and their lands when they attended the feasts.

Vs. 1-2 As they were walking up to Jerusalem, that hill upon which the tabernacle or temple stood would have been their goal. It was from the presence of God that their help would come.

Vs. 3-4 As they left their lands and houses, it was God who would watch and protect them, without sleeping or resting.

Vs. 5-6 The Lord was also their help and their comfort.

Vs. 7-8 As we learn from David and from Paul, even in danger with death a step away, God always keeps us. Particularly when we leave this body, we are the safest we will ever be.

As disciples, we need to remember that our hope for protection and care is ultimately in the Lord. If we can't rest in that, then our worry, and Satan, will find a thousand reasons to keep us out of the harvest.

Proverbs 16:18

As we've seen in David and will see with many other kings, when they were weak and dependent, they were men of faith and close to the Lord, but when they were (insert a word) they got into trouble. Pride and arrogance come in many forms. That is good for us to remember as disciples. I can hardly drive to the store and back without showing my arrogance and pride a couple of times. Being needy and fearing God helps to keep our sin in view and our hearts in check.