
2SAMUEL 4: 1 When Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands became feeble, and all the Israelites were troubled.

Some account of Rechab and Baanah, two of Ish-bosheth's captains, and of Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, 2Sam 4:1-4. Rechab and Baanah murder Ish-bosheth, and escape; and bring his head to David, 2Sam 4:5-8. David is greatly irritated, and commands them to be slain, 2Sam 4:9-12.

Verse 1

All the Israelites were troubled - Abner was their great support; and on him they depended; for it appears that Ish-bosheth was a feeble prince, and had few of those qualities requisite for a sovereign.

2SAMUEL 4: 2 Saul's son had two men who were captains of bands: the name of the one was Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin (for Beeroth also is reckoned to Benjamin:

Verse 2

Captains of bands - Principes latronum, captains of banditti, says the Vulgate; the Syriac is the same. Whether Ish-bosheth kept bands of marauders, whose business it was to make sudden incursions into the country places, and carry off grain, provisions, cattle, etc., we know not; but such persons would be well qualified for the bloody work in which these two men were afterwards employed.

2SAMUEL 4: 3 and the Beerothites fled to Gittaim, and have lived as foreigners there until this day).

Verse 3

The Beerothites fled to Gittaim - Probably the same as Gath; as Ramathaim is the same as Ramah.

2SAMUEL 4: 4 Now Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son who was lame of his feet. He was five years old when the news came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel; and his nurse took him up, and fled: and as she made haste to flee, he fell and became lame. His name was Mephibosheth.

Verse 4

He fell, and became lame - Dislocated his ankle, knee, or thigh; which was never after reduced; and thus he became lame. Lovely Jonathan! unfortunate in thy life, and in thy progeny.

2SAMUEL 4: 5 The sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went, and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ishbosheth, as he took his rest at noon.

Verse 5

Lay on a bed at noon - It is a custom in all hot countries to travel or work very early and very late, and rest at noonday, in which the heat chiefly prevails.

2SAMUEL 4: 6 They came there into the midst of the house, as though they would have fetched wheat; and they struck him in the body: and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped.

Verse 6

As though they would have fetched wheat - The king's stores were probably near his own dwelling; and these men were accustomed to go thither for provisions for themselves, their cattle, and their men. This supposition which is natural, renders unnecessary all the emendations of Houbigant and others.

As these men were accustomed to bring wheat from these stores, from which it appears there was an easy passage to the king's chamber, (especially if we consider this a summer-house, as it most probably was), no man would suspect their present errand, as they were in the habit of going frequently to that place.

2SAMUEL 4: 7 Now when they came into the house, as he lay on his bed in his bedroom, they struck him, and killed him, and beheaded him, and took his head, and went by the way of the Arabah all night.

2SAMUEL 4: 8 They brought the head of Ishbosheth to David to Hebron, and said to the king, "Behold, the head of Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, your enemy, who sought your life! the LORD has avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his seed."

Verse 8

They brought the head - unto David - They thought, as did the poor lying Amalekite, to ingratiate themselves with David by this abominable act.

2SAMUEL 4: 9 David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said to them, "As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my soul out of all adversity,

Verse 9

Who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity - This was, in David's case, a very proper view of the goodness and watchful providence of God towards him. His life was frequently in danger;

murderers had often laid wait for it: but God, the living God, had always redeemed that life from all adversity; and called on him now to punish such evil-minded and blood-thirsty men.

2SAMUEL 4: 10 when someone told me, 'Behold, Saul is dead,' thinking to have brought good news, I took hold of him, and killed him in Ziklag, which was the reward I gave him for his news.

Verse 10

A reward for his tidings - Ὁ εδει με δουναι ευαγγελια, Septuagint. Here is a proof that ευαγγελιον, evangelium or gospel, signifies the reward which the bringer of good tidings is entitled to receive. See my preface to St. Matthew's Gospel.

2SAMUEL 4: 11 How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house on his bed, shall I not now require his blood of your hand, and take you away from the earth?"

Verse 11

How much more - Here are several things which aggravated the guilt of those wicked men.

1. Ish-bosheth was an innocent man, and therefore none could have any ground of quarrel against him.
 2. He was in his own house, which was his sanctuary, and none but the worst of men would disturb him there.
 3. He was upon his bed, resting in the heat of the day, and so free from suspicion that he was not even attended by his guards, nor had he his doors secured. To take away the life of such a man, in such circumstances, whom also they professed to hold as their sovereign, was the most abandoned treachery.
-

2SAMUEL 4: 12 David commanded his young men, and they killed them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged them up beside the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ishbosheth, and buried it in the grave of Abner in Hebron.

Verse 12

And they slew them - None ever more richly deserved death; and by this act of justice, David showed to all Israel that he was a decided enemy to the destruction of Saul's family; and that none could lift up their hands against any of them without meeting with condign punishment. In all these cases I know not that it was possible for David to show more sincerity, or a stricter regard for justice.