

# SECOND SAMUEL

## Chapter 4

### *Ish-Bosheth Murdered*

When Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, heard that Abner had died at Hebron, his courage failed, and all Israel was dismayed. 2 Now Saul's son had two men who were captains of raiding bands; the name of the one was Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab, sons of Rimmon a man of Benjamin from Beeroth (for Beeroth also is counted part of Benjamin; 3 the Beerothites fled to Gittaim and have been sojourners there to this day). 4 Jonathan, the son of Saul, had a son who was crippled in his feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled, and as she fled in her haste, he fell and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth. 5 Now the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, set out, and about the heat of the day they came to the house of Ish-bosheth as he was taking his noonday rest. 6 And they came into the midst of the house as if to get wheat, and they stabbed him in the stomach. Then Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped. 7 When they came into the house, as he lay on his bed in his bedroom, they struck him and put him to death and beheaded him. They took his head and went by the way of the Arabah all night, 8 and brought the head of Ish-bosheth to David at Hebron. And they said to the king, "Here is the head of Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul, your enemy, who sought your life. The LORD has avenged my lord the king this day on Saul and on his offspring." 9 But David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, "As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my life out of every adversity, 10 when one told me, 'Behold, Saul is dead,' and thought he was bringing good news, I seized him and killed him at Ziklag, which was the reward I gave him for his news. 11 How much more, when wicked men have killed a righteous man in his own house on his bed, shall I not now require his blood at your hand and destroy you from the earth?" 12 And David commanded his young men, and they killed them and cut off their hands and feet and hanged them beside the pool at Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth and buried it in the tomb of Abner at Hebron.

**4:1** *his courage failed.* Ish-Bosheth was very much aware of his dependence on Abner. (CSB)

Lit, "his hands became feeble." (TLSB)

*dismayed.* Lit, "trembled inwardly." (TLSB)

*all Israel was dismayed.* Civil strife threatened, and the northern tribes were now without a strong leader. (CSB)

**4:2** *raiding bands.* They probably plundered non-Israelite communities for Ish-bosheth, much as Joab's band had done for David (3:22). (TLSB)

*Beeroth.* One of the Gibeonite cities (Jos 9:17) assigned to Benjamin (Jos 18:25). (CSB)

**4:3** *Gittaim.* Its location is not known (but see Ne 11:33), so it is possible that the "because" at the beginning of the verse is unwarranted. (CSB)

Lit, "two winepresses." (TLSB)

**4:4** Anticipates ch 9. (TLSB)

*Jonathan son of Saul had a son who was crippled in his feet.* The writer emphasizes that with the death of Ish-Bosheth (see v. 6) there was no other viable claimant to the throne from the house of Saul. (CSB)

*Jezreel.* Region where Saul and Jonathan died (on Mount Gilboa). (TLSB)

*Mephibosheth.* See 9:1–13; 16:1–4; 19:24–30; 21:7–8. The name was originally Merib-Baal (apparently meaning “opponent of Baal”; see 1Ch 8:34), perhaps to be spelled “Meri-Baal” (meaning “loved by Baal”), but was changed by the author of Samuel to Mephibosheth (meaning “from the mouth of the shameful thing”). (CSB)

Member of Saul’s family; sole potential heir to Saul’s throne, apart from Ish-bosheth. (TLSB)

**4:7** Explains v 6. (TLSB)

*they.* Rechab and Baanah. (TLSB)

**4:8** *This day the LORD has avenged my lord the king against Saul.* Recab and Baanah depict their assassination of Ish-Bosheth in pious terms, expecting David to commend them for their act—a serious miscalculation. (CSB)

They believed they had God’s approval for the murder of Ish-bosheth and hoped David would reward them. (TLSB)

**4:9** *As the LORD lives.* An oath formula. (CSB)

*redeemed my life.* David relied not on murderous conspirators but on the Lord. (TLSB)\_

**4:10** *one told me.* Amalekite who claimed to have killed Saul (1:14–16). (TLSB)

**4:11** *a righteous man.* Ish-bosheth had done nothing to deserve death. (TLSB)

*I will require his blood at your hand.* An expression for the death penalty (see Ge 9:5–6). David here does what he was unable to do with Joab. (CSB)

**4:12** *their hands and feet.* The hands that had assassinated Ish-Bosheth and the feet that had run with the news. (CSB)

*hanged them.* To show they had died under a divine curse (Dt 21:22–23). (TLSB)

*head ... buried it.* To show respect. (TLSB)

**Ch 4** Two of Ish-bosheth’s soldiers murder him and bring his head to David, hoping to receive a reward. Instead, David sentences them to death, but honors his enemy Ish-bosheth. “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rm 12:21). Through the Son of David, God has mercy on us, who were once His enemies. • Lord Jesus, Son of David, give me Your Spirit, that I may love my enemies and do good to those who hate me. Amen. (TLSB)