

2 Samuel 4 Commentary

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Chart from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission
[2 Samuel Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll

TIMELINE OF THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL, KINGS & CHRONICLES									
1107	1011				971	931	853	722	586
1 Samuel	2 Samuel				1 Kings	1 Kings	2 Kings		
31	1-4	5-10	11-20	21-24	1-11	12-22	1-17	18-25	
1Chr 10		1 Chr 11-19		1 Chr 20-29	2 Chronicles 1-9	2 Chronicles 10-20	2 Chronicles 21-36		

Legend: B.C. dates at top of timeline are approximate. Note that 931BC marks the division of the Kingdom into Southern Tribes (Judah and Benjamin) and Ten Northern Tribes. To avoid confusion be aware that **after the division** of the Kingdom in 931BC, the Southern Kingdom is most often designated in Scripture as "**Judah**" and the Northern Kingdom as "**Israel**." Finally, note that 1 Chronicles 1-9 is not identified on the timeline because these chapters are records of genealogy.



Map of David's Kingdom-ESV Global

Map of Cities in 2 Samuel

2 Samuel 4:1 Now when Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, heard that Abner had died in Hebron, he lost courage, and all Israel was disturbed.

BGT 2 Samuel 4:1 κα κουσεν Μεμφιβοσθε υ ς Σαουλι τι τ θνηκεν Αβεννηρ ν Χεβρων κα ξελθησαν α
χε ρες α το κα πι ντες ο νδρες Ισραηλ παρε θησαν

LXE 2 Samuel 4:1 And Jebosthe the son of Saul heard that Abenner the son of Ner had died in Chebron; and his hands were paralyzed, and all the men of Israel grew faint.

KJV 2 Samuel 4:1 And when Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands were feeble, and all the Israelites were troubled.

NET 2 Samuel 4:1 When Ish-bosheth the son of Saul heard that Abner had died in Hebron, he was very disheartened, and all Israel was afraid.

CSB 2 Samuel 4:1 When Saul's son Ish-bosheth heard that Abner had died in Hebron, his courage failed, and all Israel was dismayed.

ESV 2 Samuel 4:1 When Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, heard that Abner had died at Hebron, his courage failed, and all Israel was dismayed.

NIV 2 Samuel 4:1 When Ish-Bosheth son of Saul heard that Abner had died in Hebron, he lost courage, and all Israel became alarmed.

NLT 2 Samuel 4:1 When Ishbosheth, Saul's son, heard about Abner's death at Hebron, he lost all courage, and all Israel became paralyzed with fear.

- **he lost courage** (Literally - his hands were feeble): 2Sa 17:2 Ezr 4:4 Ne 6:9 Isa 13:7 35:3 Jer 6:24 50:43 Zep 3:16
- **and all Israel**: Mt 2:2,3

ISH-BOSHETH'S HANDS BECOME FEEBLE

Now when Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, heard that Abner had died in Hebron, he lost courage (Literally - his hands were feeble), **and all Israel was disturbed** - NET - "he was very disheartened, and all Israel was afraid." Israel is without a commanding general and now only has a disheartened king. Ish-Bosheth is just like his father. He had never really learned to turn to the Lord in the midst of a crisis, and so when one comes, he lost courage. 1 Samuel 28:5 "When Saul saw the camp of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly."

2 Chron. 32:7,8 "Be strong and courageous; do not fear or be dismayed because of the King of Assyria, not because of all the multitude which is with him; for the One with us is greater than the one with him. With him is

only an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles.' And the people relied on the words of Hezekiah, King of Judah

Ish-bosheth "He trusted in man to gain his position, so when the man was gone, he knew his position would be soon gone. Ishbosheth was weak because he trusted in man." ([Guzik](#))

Don Anderson - Now that Abner was dead, Ish-Bosheth knows he can't maintain his kingdom against David. His army is now weak. So he takes to the bed. That is what I like to do when I am worried about something—go hide under the covers.

Life Application Study Bible ([borrow](#)) - Ishbosheth was a man who took his courage from another man (Abner) rather than from God. When Abner died, Ishbosheth was left with nothing. In crisis and under pressure, he collapsed in fear. Fear can paralyze us, but faith and trust in God can overcome fear (2Ti 1:6-8+; Hebrews 13:6+). If we trust in God, we will be free to respond boldly to the events around us.

Matthew Henry - Verses 1-7. See how Ishbosheth was murdered! When those difficulties dispirit us, which should sharpen our endeavours, we betray both our heavenly crowns and our earthly lives. Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty and ruin. The idle soul is an easy prey to the destroyer. We know not when and where death will meet us. When we lie down to sleep, we are not sure that we may not sleep the sleep of death before we awake; nor do we know from what hand the death-blow may come.

2 Samuel 4:2 Saul's son had two men who were commanders of bands: the name of the one was Baanah and the name of the other Rechab, sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, of the sons of Benjamin (for Beeroth is also considered part of Benjamin,

BGT 2 Samuel 4:2 καὶ ὁ υἱὸς Σαουλ ἔσχε δύο ἀδελφοὺς οὗς ἐκαλεῖτο Βαανὰ καὶ Ῥεχαβ υἱοὶ Ῥιμμὸν τοῦ Βηρωθίτου υἱοὶ Βενιαμὴν ὅτι ὁ Βηρωθὶς λογίζεται εἰς τὸν Βενιαμὴν

LXE 2 Samuel 4:2 And Jebosthe the son of Saul had two men that were captains of bands: the name of the one was Baana, and the name of the other Rechab, sons of Remmon the Berothite of the children of Benjamin; for Beroth was reckoned to the children of Benjamin.

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

NET 2 Samuel 4:2 Now Saul's son had two men who were in charge of raiding units; one was named Baanah and the other Recab. They were sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, who was a Benjaminite. (Beeroth is regarded as belonging to Benjamin,

CSB 2 Samuel 4:2 Saul's son had two men who were leaders of raiding parties: one named Baanah and the other Rechab, sons of Rimmon the Beerothite of the Benjaminites. Beeroth is also considered part of Benjamin,

ESV 2 Samuel 4:2 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;

NIV 2 Samuel 4:2 Now Saul's son had two men who were leaders of raiding bands. One was named Baanah and the other Recab; they were sons of Rimmon the Beerothite from the tribe of Benjamin--Beeroth is considered part of Benjamin,

NLT 2 Samuel 4:2 Now there were two brothers, Baanah and Recab, who were captains of Ishbosheth's raiding parties. They were sons of Rimmon, a member of the tribe of Benjamin who lived in Beeroth. The town of Beeroth is now part of Benjamin's territory

- **commanders of bands:** 2Sa 3:22 2Ki 5:2 6:23
- **Beeroth:** Jos 9:17 18:25

BACKGROUND FOR THE MURDER OF ISH-BOSHETH

Saul's son had two men who were commanders of bands: the name of the one was [Baanah](#) and the name of the other

[Rechab](#), sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, of the sons of Benjamin (for Beeroth is also considered part of Benjamin- [Beeroth](#) is northwest of Gibeah, about 8 or 9 miles. It is also a part of the territory for the tribe of Benjamin These two men were under Ish-bosheth's rule but would soon commit treason and murder in hopes of currying favor with David. But clearly they did not know David's heart and their ignorance would cost them their lives!

2 Samuel 4:3 and the Beerothites fled to Gittaim and have been aliens there until this day).

BGT 2 Samuel 4:3 κα π ῥασαν ο Βηρωθα οι ε ς Γεθθαιμ κα σαν κε παροικο ντες ως τ ς μ ρας τα της

LXE 2 Samuel 4:3 And the Berothites ran away to Gethaim, and were sojourners there until this day.

KJV 2 Samuel 4:3 And the Beerothites fled to Gittaim, and were sojourners there until this day.)

NET 2 Samuel 4:3 for the Beerothites fled to Gittaim and have remained there as resident foreigners until the present time.)

CSB 2 Samuel 4:3 and the Beerothites fled to Gittaim and still live there as foreigners to this very day.

ESV 2 Samuel 4:3 the Beerothites fled to Gittaim and have been sojourners there to this day).

NIV 2 Samuel 4:3 because the people of Beeroth fled to Gittaim and have lived there as aliens to this day.

NLT 2 Samuel 4:3 because the original people of Beeroth fled to Gittaim, where they still live as foreigners.

- 1Sa 31:7 Ne 11:33

and the Beerothites fled to Gittaim and have been aliens there until this day). Evidently there was some conflict, and the people of Beeroth fled to Gittaim and continued to find residence in that place.

2 Samuel 4:4 Now Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son crippled in his feet. He was five years old when the report of Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled. And it happened that in her hurry to flee, he fell and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth.

BGT 2 Samuel 4:4 κα τ Ιωναθαν υ Σαουλ υ ς πεπληγ ς το ς π ῏ας υ ς τ ν π ντε ο το ς ν τ λθε ν τ ν γγελ αν Σαουλ κα Ιωναθαν το υ ο α το ξ Ιεζραελ κα ρεν α τ ν τιθην ς α το κα φυγεν κα γ νετο ν τ σπε δειν α τ ν κα ναχωρε ν κα πεσεν κα χωλ νθη κα νομα α τ Μεμφιβοσθε

LXE 2 Samuel 4:4 And Jonathan Saul's son had a son lame of his feet, five years old, and he was in the way when the news of Saul and Jonathan his son came from Jezrael, and his nurse took him up, and fled; and it came to pass as he hasted and retreated, that he fell, and was lamed. And his name was Memphibosthe.

KJV 2 Samuel 4:4 And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was lame of his feet. He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth.

NET 2 Samuel 4:4 Now Saul's son Jonathan had a son who was crippled in both feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan arrived from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up and fled, but in her haste to get away, he fell and was injured. Mephibosheth was his name.

CSB 2 Samuel 4:4 Saul's son Jonathan had a son whose feet were crippled. He was five years old when the report about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel. The one who had nursed him picked him up and fled, but as she was hurrying to flee, he fell and became lame. His name was Mephibosheth.

ESV 2 Samuel 4:4 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.

NIV 2 Samuel 4:4 (Jonathan son of Saul had a son who was lame in both feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up and fled, but as she hurried to leave, he fell and became crippled. His name was Mephibosheth.)

NLT 2 Samuel 4:4 (Saul's son Jonathan had a son named Mephibosheth, who was crippled as a child. He was five years old when the report came from Jezreel that Saul and Jonathan had been killed in battle. When the child's nurse heard the news, she picked him up and fled. But as she hurried away, she dropped him, and he became crippled.)

- **Jonathan:** 2Sa 9:3
- **when the report of Saul and Jonathan came:** 1Sa 29:1,11 31:1-10
- **Mephibosheth:** 1Ch 8:34 1Ch 9:40 2Sa 19:24-30

Related Passages:

2 Samuel 9:3-11+ The king said, "Is there not yet anyone of the house of Saul to whom I may show the kindness of God?" And Ziba said to the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan who is crippled in both feet." 4 So the king said to him, "Where is he?" And Ziba said to the king, "Behold, he is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel in Lo-debar." 5 Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar. 6 **Mephibosheth**, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and prostrated himself. And David said, "**Mephibosheth**." And he said, "Here is your servant!" 7 David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will surely show kindness to you for the sake of your father Jonathan, and will restore to you all the land of your grandfather Saul; and you shall eat at my table regularly." 8 Again he prostrated himself and said, "What is your servant, **that you should regard a dead dog like me?**" 9 Then the king called Saul's servant Ziba and said to him, "All that belonged to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's grandson. 10 "You and your sons and your servants shall cultivate the land for him, and you shall bring in the produce so that your master's grandson may have food; nevertheless Mephibosheth your master's grandson shall eat at my table regularly." Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. 11 Then Ziba said to the king, "According to all that my lord the king commands his servant so your servant will do." So Mephibosheth ate at David's table as one of the king's sons.

THE CRIPPLING OF MEPHIBOSHETH

Now Jonathan, Saul's son (Jonathan), **had a son crippled in his feet. He was five years old** (he would be 12 yo now) **when the report of Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled. And it happened that in her hurry to flee, he fell and became lame** - The writer introduces what is almost a parenthetical fact which will come into play in chapter 9. He explains how Mephibosheth had become crippled when the news of the of his grandfather and father's death reached their home. There is a touch of tragic irony in that the fall of his father Jonathan brought about the fall of his son!

Jezreel ("sown of God," "God sows," "God scatters") is the plain where the Philistines engaged Israel in battle (1Sa 29:1, 11) and was a perfect site for the Philistines to use their deadly chariots because the terrain for flat and allowed for maneuvering. Regarding the name Mephibosheth, see note on 1 Chron. 8:34. His story is resumed in 2 Sam. 9. His lameness disqualified him from serving as king.

Valley of Jezreel is first described in Joshua (Josh 15:56, 17:16, 19:18) and next in Judges as the site of Gideon's battle with the Midianites (Jdg 6:33). It was next described as the place of the defeat of the Israelites under Saul and Jonathan (1Sa 29:1, 11; 1Sa 31:1-6; 2Sa 4:4). This broad plain is adjacent to Megiddo and is very likely the site of the final battle when anti-God forces gather at Armageddon (See notes on Revelation 16:16). In Re 16:16 the scene of a the struggle of good and evil is suggested by that battle plain of Esdraelon, which was famous for two great victories, of Barak over the Canaanites, and of Gideon over the Midianites; and for two great disasters, the deaths of Saul and Josiah. Hence in Revelation a place of great slaughter, the scene of a terrible retribution upon the wicked.

And his name was Mephibosheth - In 1Ch 8:34 we read "And the son of Jonathan was **Merib-baal**, and **Merib-baal** became the father of Micah." **Merib-baal** is the original name of this particular **Mephibosheth** (see note below for another person of same name). **Baal** (**ba'al**) means "lord" or "owner," but of course it was also used to designate the Canaanite's male god of fertility, their "storm god," their "most powerful" (idols have no power beloved!) deity in Canaanite cosmology probably because of association with fertility with life giving rain from storms (thus their "storm god"). Because of this association with the Canaanite's idol, the name was changed from **Merib-baal** to Mephibosheth. The name **Mephibosheth** means something like "exterminating the idol," "exterminator of shame," "dispeller of shame" (i.e. of Baal).

2 Samuel 4:5 So the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, departed and came to the house of Ish-bosheth in the heat of the day while he was taking his midday rest.

BGT 2 Samuel 4:5 κα πορεθησαν υιο Ρεμμων το Βηρωθαου Ρεχχα κα Βαανα κα εσλθον ντ καμαπι τς μρας ες οκον Μεμφιβοσθε κα ατς κθευδεν ντ κοτ τς μεσημβρας

LXE 2 Samuel 4:5 And Rechab and Baana the sons of Remmon the Berothite went, and they came in the heat of the day into the house of Jebosthe; and he was sleeping on a bed at noon.

KJV 2 Samuel 4:5 And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went, and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ishbosheth, who lay on a bed at noon.

NET 2 Samuel 4:5 Now the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite— Recab and Baanah— went at the hottest part of the day to the home of Ish-bosheth, as he was enjoying his midday rest.

CSB 2 Samuel 4:5 Rechab and Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, set out and arrived at Ish-bosheth's house during the heat of the day while the king was taking his midday nap.

ESV 2 Samuel 4:5 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.

NIV 2 Samuel 4:5 Now Recab and Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, set out for the house of Ish-Bosheth, and they arrived there in the heat of the day while he was taking his noonday rest.

NLT 2 Samuel 4:5 One day Recab and Baanah, the sons of Rimmon from Beeroth, went to Ishbosheth's house around noon as he was taking his midday rest.

- **came to the house:** 2Ch 24:25 25:27 33:24
- **while he was taking his midday rest** 2Sa 11:2 1Ki 16:9 Pr 24:33,34 1Th 5:3-7

THE PLOT UNFOLDS

So the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, departed and came to the house of Ish-bosheth in the heat of the day while he was taking his midday rest - It was the custom as in all hot middle eastern countries, to travel or work very early and very late, and to rest at noon, when the sun was hottest. Ish-bosheth was resting, but the men were plotting!

2 Samuel 4:6 They came to the middle of the house as if to get wheat, and they struck him in the belly; and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped.

BGT 2 Samuel 4:6 κα δο θυρωρς το οκου κθαιρεν πυρος κα νσταξεν κα κθευδεν κα Ρεχχα κα Βαανα ο δελφο διλαθον

LXE 2 Samuel 4:6 And, behold, the porter of the house winnowed wheat, and he slumbered and slept: and the brothers Rechab and Baana went privily into the house:

KJV 2 Samuel 4:6 And they came thither into the midst of the house, as though they would have fetched wheat; and they smote him under the fifth rib: and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped.

NET 2 Samuel 4:6 They entered the house under the pretense of getting wheat and mortally wounded him in the stomach. Then Recab and his brother Baanah escaped.

CSB 2 Samuel 4:6 They entered the interior of the house as if to get wheat and stabbed him in the stomach. Then Rechab and his brother Baanah escaped.

ESV 2 Samuel 4:6 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.

NIV 2 Samuel 4:6 They went into the inner part of the house as if to get some wheat, and they stabbed him in the stomach. Then Recab and his brother Baanah slipped away.

- as though: It is still the custom of the East, according to Dr. Perry, to allow the soldiers a certain quantity of corn, with other articles of provision, together with some pay: and as it was the custom also to grind the corn, as needed, at the break of day, these two captains very naturally went the day before to the palace, where the king's stores appear to have been kept, to fetch wheat, in order to distribute it to the soldiers under them, to be ground at the accustomed hour in the morning. The princes of the East, in those days, as appears from the history of David, reposed on their couches till the cool of the evening: they therefore came in the heat of the day, when they knew their master would be resting on his bed; and as it was a necessary to have the corn before it was needed, their coming at this time, though it might be earlier than usual, excited no suspicion.
- under: 2Sa 2:23 3:27 20:10

THE PLOY TO DECEIVE

A ploy is a cunning plan or action designed to turn a situation to one's own advantage.

They came to the middle of the house as if to get wheat, and they struck him in the belly- They played their ploy which allowed them to make their point (pun intended)!

and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped - Their daring assassination of the king was successful

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

BGT 2 Samuel 4:7 κα ε σ λθον ε ς τ ν ο κον κα Μεμφιβοσθε κ θευδεν π τ ς κ λ ν η ς α τ ο ν τ κοι ν ι α τ ο
κα τ π τ ο υ σ ι ν α τ ν κα θ α ν α τ ο σ ι ν κα φ αι ρ ο σ ι ν τ ν κε φ α λ ν α τ ο κα λ α β ο ν τ ν κε φ α λ ν α τ ο κα π λ θ ο ν δ ν
τ ν κα τ δ υ σ μ ς λ η ν τ ν ν κ τ α

LXE 2 Samuel 4:7 And Jebosthe was sleeping on his bed in his chamber: and they smite him, and slay him, and take off his head: and they took his head, and went all the night by the western road.

KJV 2 Samuel 4:7 For when they came into the house, he lay on his bed in his bedchamber, and they smote him, and slew him, and beheaded him, and took his head, and gat them away through the plain all night.

NET 2 Samuel 4:7 They had entered the house while Ish-bosheth was resting on his bed in his bedroom. They mortally wounded him and then cut off his head. Taking his head, they traveled on the way of the Arabah all that night.

CSB 2 Samuel 4:7 They had entered the house while Ish-bosheth was lying on his bed in his bedroom and stabbed and killed him. Then they beheaded him, took his head, and traveled by way of the Arabah all night.

ESV 2 Samuel 4:7 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,

NIV 2 Samuel 4:7 They had gone into the house while he was lying on the bed in his bedroom. After they stabbed and killed him, they cut off his head. Taking it with them, they traveled all night by way of the Arabah.

NLT 2 Samuel 4:7 They went into the house and found Ishbosheth sleeping on his bed. They struck and killed him and cut off his head. Then, taking his head with them, they fled across the Jordan Valley through the night.

- took his head: 1Sa 17:54 31:9 2Ki 10:6,7 Mt 14:11 Mk 6:28,29 When those difficulties dispirit us which should rather invigorate us and sharpen our endeavours, we betray a carelessness of character which is soon taken advantage of by our more watchful neighbours. Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty and ruin. The idle soul is an easy prey to the destroyer.

Jordan Rift Valley (Arabah)

Topography

ISH-BOSHETH'S HEAD TAKEN AS A "TROPHY"

Now when they came into the house, as he was lying on his bed in his bedroom, they struck him and killed him and beheaded him - One has to wonder how they could have gotten this close to the king? Most kings in the savage ancient world had

a number of guards and bodyguards. In any event, God allowed them to come into his bedroom (God is not the Author of evil, but He is in full control of events, evil and good).

And they took his head and traveled by way of the Arabah all night - They were men on a mission, but little did they know it would be the last mission they would ever undertake! After having killed Ish-Bosheth, they beheaded him; and took the head and immediately traveled south toward Hebron, which is about 60-65 miles southwest from where they were. They went through the wilderness and desert area because they did not want to call attention to themselves.

2 Samuel 4:8 Then they brought the head of Ish-bosheth to David at Hebron and said to the king, 'Behold, the head of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, your enemy, who sought your life; thus the LORD has given my lord the king vengeance this day on Saul and his descendants.'

BGT 2 Samuel 4:8 κα νεγκαν τ ν κεφαλ ν Μεμφιβοσθε τ Δαυιδ ε ς Χεβρων κα ε παν πρ ς τ ν βασιλ α δο κεφαλ Μεμφιβοσθε υ ο Σαουλ το χθρο σου ς ζ τει τ ν ψυχ ν σου κα δωκεν κριος τ κυρ βασιλε κδ κησιν τ ν χθρ ν α το ς μ ρ α τη κ Σαουλ το χθρο σου κα κ το σπ ρ ματος α το

LXE 2 Samuel 4:8 And they brought the head of Jebosthe to David to Chebron, and they said to the king, Behold the head of Jebosthe the son of Saul thy enemy, who sought thy life; and the Lord has executed for my lord the king vengeance on his enemies, as it is this day: even on Saul thy enemy, and on his seed.

KJV 2 Samuel 4:8 And they brought the head of Ishbosheth unto David to Hebron, and said to the king, Behold the head of Ishbosheth the son of Saul thine enemy, which sought thy life; and the LORD hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his seed.

NET 2 Samuel 4:8 They brought the head of Ish-bosheth to David in Hebron, saying to the king, "Look! The head of Ish-bosheth son of Saul, your enemy who sought your life! The LORD has granted vengeance to my lord the king this day against Saul and his descendants!"

CSB 2 Samuel 4:8 They brought Ish-bosheth's head to David at Hebron and said to the king, "Here's the head of Ish-bosheth son of Saul, your enemy who intended to take your life. Today the LORD has granted vengeance to my lord the king against Saul and his offspring."

ESV 2 Samuel 4:8 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."

NIV 2 Samuel 4:8 They brought the head of Ish-Bosheth to David at Hebron and said to the king, "Here is the head of Ish-Bosheth son of Saul, your enemy, who tried to take your life. This day the LORD has avenged my lord the king against Saul and his offspring."

NLT 2 Samuel 4:8 When they arrived at Hebron, they presented Ishbosheth's head to David. "Look!" they exclaimed to the king. "Here is the head of Ishbosheth, the son of your enemy Saul who tried to kill you. Today the LORD has given my lord the king revenge on Saul and his entire family!"

- **sought:** 1Sa 18:11 19:2-11,15 20:1 23:15 25:29 Ps 63:9,10 71:24 Mt 2:20
- **the Lord:** 2Sa 18:19,31 22:48 Lu 18:7,8 Rev 6:10 18:20

ASSASSINS PRESENT "TROPHY" OF ISH-BOSHETH'S HEAD TO DAVID

Then - After they had murdered and beheaded Ish-bosheth and made the 30 mile journey under the cover of darkness.

they brought the head of Ish-bosheth to David at Hebron - The Jordan River is the location of the "Arabah" (Jordan Rift Valley) by which the assassins fled from Ish-bosheth's palace in Mahanaim, east of the Jordan in the map above.

and said to the king, "Behold, the head of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, your enemy, who sought your life- I am not sure their statement is accurate -- I am not sure there is any evidence that Ish-Bosheth had sought to assassinate David and I know that David did not consider Ish-bosheth and **enemy** because he did not consider his father an **enemy**, even though he was in fact trying to take

his life! This is a man after God's own heart. And these two men are men after a man's (fallen) heart!

thus the LORD has given my lord the king vengeance this day on Saul and his descendants - They are putting words into David's mouth! Or looked at another way, they are presuming that the vengeance they had carried out was the LORD'S will. David had never mentioned the word **vengeance** in regard to Saul or family and he did not seek **vengeance** toward them. He knew and practiced the principle of Ro 12:19 "Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, **"VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,"** says the Lord."

Warren Wiersbe - David was not pleased at what they did. What terrible things people do in the name of the Lord, thinking to please Him! How many "religious" wars and church conflicts have broken God's heart and disgraced His name! When you are tempted to retaliate, keep in mind that God's people do not "do evil that good may come" (Ro 3:8). Rather, they "overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:21). (Borrow [With the Word](#))

2 Samuel 4:9 David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said to them, "As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my life from all distress,

BGT 2 Samuel 4:9 κα πεκρθη Δαυιδ τ Ρεχχα κα τ Βαανα δελφ ατο υ ος Ρεμμων το Βηρωθα ου κα επεν α το ς ζ κ ριος ς λυτρ σατο τ ν ψυχ ν μου κ π σης θλ ψεως

LXE 2 Samuel 4:9 And David answered and Rechab and Baana his brother, the sons of Remmon the Berothite, and said to them, As the Lord lives, who has redeemed my soul out of all affliction;

KJV 2 Samuel 4:9 And David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said unto them, As the LORD liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity,

NET 2 Samuel 4:9 David replied to Recab and his brother Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, "As surely as the LORD lives, who has delivered my life from all adversity,

CSB 2 Samuel 4:9 But David answered Rechab and his brother Baanah, sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, "As the LORD lives, the One who has redeemed my life from every distress,

ESV 2 Samuel 4:9 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,

NIV 2 Samuel 4:9 David answered Recab and his brother Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, "As surely as the LORD lives, who has delivered me out of all trouble,

NLT 2 Samuel 4:9 But David said to Recab and Baanah, "The LORD, who saves me from all my enemies, is my witness.

- **who has:** Ge 48:16 1Ki 1:29 Ps 31:5-7 34:6,7,17,22 71:23 103:4 106:10 Ps 107:2 2Ti 4:17,18

DAVID BEGINS WITH AN OATH TO THE LORD

David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said to them, "As the LORD lives, Who has redeemed my life from all distress - The assassins must have liked the way David began his reply, but their attitudes would soon change. David's reply focuses the attention on the LORD, Who had been his Protector and delivered him out of all (note **all distress**) the troubles he had experienced! It is implicit that when the LORD is your Protector, you really do not need human protectors, especially men who are assassins!

Don Anderson - How wonderful to see David in this situation recognizing that the Lord lives and recognizing that the Lord has delivered him out of all his trouble. So now in this situation, the Lord could have delivered him out of all of this trouble, and he was willing to wait for that to happen.

Psalm 31:14-15 "But as for me, I trust in thee, O Lord. I say thou art my God. My times are in thy hand. Deliver me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me."

Psalm 32:7 "Thou art my hiding place; thou dost preserve me from trouble. Thou dost surround me with songs of deliverance."

Psalm 50:15 "And call upon me in the day of trouble. I shall rescue you, and you will honor me."

Utley - David swears an oath by the name of YHWH ("as the Lord lives," cf. 1Sa 14:39). He characterizes YHWH as the one who "redeemed his life from all enemies." Thus implying he did not need the help of these two brothers to deal with his former enemy's family.

The assassins did not know that David had agreed to Saul's request....

Now, behold, I know that you will surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hand.
21 "So now **swear to me by the LORD that you will not cut off my descendants after me** and that you will not destroy my name from my father's household." 22 David swore to Saul. And Saul went to his home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold. (1 Samuel 24:20-22)

F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily - 2 Samuel 4:9 As the Lord liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity.

It was the midday of David's life, and, looking back, he saw how good the Lord had been to him. Step by step God had brought him up out of a horrible pit, and from the miry clay, setting him upon a rock, and establishing his goings. What need was there, then, that men should interfere to hasten the unfolding of the Divine purposes? It had been his lifelong habit to wait. Whatever he needed he looked to God to supply. Whatever difficulties blocked his path, he looked to God to remove. Whatever men stood in his way he looked to God to deal with them. Twice in the wilderness he refused to take Saul's life. He had executed the Amalekite because he claimed to have slain Saul on Gilboa. And, in pursuance of the same policy, he could have no complicity in the act of the murderers of Ish-bosheth, even though they made his way clear to the throne of Israel.

Let God redeem thee out of all thine adversities. Do not lose heart or hope. Do not put forth thy hand to snatch at any position or deliverance by an act which might afterward cause thee shame or sorrow. "Trust in the Lord, and do good. Roll thy way upon the Lord. Trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him" (Psalm 37:3-7, R. V.). **He who turns glaciers to rivers that pass away, will remove all thy difficulties and perplexities. He shall cause thee to inherit the land. He will promote thee in due time, and give thee to see thy desire upon thine enemies. He who redeemed thy soul by His most precious blood cannot fail thee, however long He may tarry.** Remember that He ever liveth, and loveth, and reigneth.

2 Samuel 4:10 when one told me, saying, 'Behold, Saul is dead,' and thought he was bringing good news, I seized him and killed him in Ziklag, which was the reward I gave him for his news.

BGT 2 Samuel 4:10 τι παγγελας μοι τι τθνηκεν Σαουλ κα ατς ν ς εαγγελιζμενος ν πι ν μου κα κατ σχον ατ ν κα π κτεινα ν Σεκελακ δε με δο ναι εαγγ λια

LXE 2 Samuel 4:10 he that reported to me that Saul was dead, even he was as one bringing glad tidings before me: but I seized him and slew him in Sekelac, to whom I ought, as he thought, to have given a reward for his tidings.

KJV 2 Samuel 4:10 When one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead, thinking to have brought good tidings, I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag, who thought that I would have given him a reward for his tidings:

NET 2 Samuel 4:10 when someone told me that Saul was dead— even though he thought he was bringing good news— I seized him and killed him in Ziklag. That was the good news I gave to him!

CSB 2 Samuel 4:10 when the person told me, 'Look, Saul is dead,' he thought he was a bearer of good news, but I seized him and put him to death at Ziklag. That was my reward to him for his news!

ESV 2 Samuel 4:10 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.

NIV 2 Samuel 4:10 when a man told me, 'Saul is dead,' and thought he was bringing good news, I seized him and put him to death in Ziklag. That was the reward I gave him for his news!

NLT 2 Samuel 4:10 Someone once told me, 'Saul is dead,' thinking he was bringing me good news. But I seized him and killed him at Ziklag. That's the reward I gave him for his news!

- **when one told me:** 2Sa 1:2-16

Related Passages:

2 Samuel 1:13-16+ David said to the young man who told him, "Where are you from?" And he answered, "I am the son of an alien, an Amalekite." 14 Then David said to him, "How is it you were not afraid to stretch out your hand to destroy the LORD'S anointed?" 15 And David called one of the young men and said, "Go, cut him down." So he struck him and he died. 16 David said to him, "Your blood is on your head, for your mouth has testified against you, saying, 'I have killed the LORD'S anointed.'"

DAVID'S DESCRIPTION OF REWARD FOR KILLING KINGS!

when one told me, saying, '**Behold, Saul is dead,**' and thought he was bringing good news, I seized him and killed him in Ziklag, which was the reward I gave him for his news Hebrew literally says "he was in his own eyes, as a bringer, etc." who thought, etc.

2 Samuel 4:11 "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 from your hand and destroy you from the earth?"

BGT 2 Samuel 4:11 κα ν ν νδρες πονηρο πεκτ γκασιν νδρα δ καιον ν τ ο κ α τ ο π τ ς κ ο τ η ς α τ ο κα ν ν κ ζ η τ σ ω τ α μα α τ ο κ χει ρ ς μ ν κα ξ ο λ ε θ ρ ε σ ω μ ς κ τ ς γ ς

LXE 2 Samuel 4:11 And now evil men have slain a righteous men in his house on his bed: now then I will require his blood of your hand, and I will destroy you from off the earth.

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

NET 2 Samuel 4:11 Surely when wicked men have killed an innocent man as he slept in his own house, should I not now require his blood from your hands and remove you from the earth?"

CSB 2 Samuel 4:11 How much more when wicked men kill a righteous man in his own house on his own bed! So now, should I not require his blood from your hands and wipe you off the earth?"

ESV 2 Samuel 4:11 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?"

NIV 2 Samuel 4:11 How much more--when wicked men have killed an innocent man in his own house and on his own bed--should I not now demand his blood from your hand and rid the earth of you!"

NLT 2 Samuel 4:11 How much more should I reward evil men who have killed an innocent man in his own house and on his own bed? Shouldn't I hold you responsible for his blood and rid the earth of you?"

- **when wicked:** 1Ki 2:32 Pr 25:26 Hab 1:4,12 1Jn 3:12
- **require:** 2Sa 3:27,39 Ge 9:5-6 Ex 21:12 Nu 35:31-34 Ps 9:12
- **from:** Ge 4:11 6:13 7:23 Ex 9:15 Ps 109:15 Pr 2:22 Jer 10:11

Related Passage:

Genesis 9:5-6 "Surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from every man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man. 6 "**Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed,** For in the image of God He made man.

BLOOD REQUIRED FOR BLOOD

How much more, when wicked men have killed a righteous (NIV, NLT = "innocent") man in his own house on his bed, shall I not now require his blood from your hand and destroy you from the earth - Not only does David not see Ish-bosheth as an enemy, to the contrary he sees him as a righteous man! The two assassins surely were beginning to tremble! What the two assassins thought was good news was bad news to David and for them, for they must pay with their own blood for spilling Ish-bosheth's blood!

Life Application Study Bible ([borrow](#)) - As Saul's son, Ishbosheth had reason to think he was in line for the throne. He was not wicked for wanting to be king; rather, he was simply too weak to stand against injustice. Although David knew Ishbosheth was not the strong leader needed to unite Israel, he had no intention of killing him. God had promised the kingdom to David, and he knew that God would fulfill his promise.

Guzik comments that "David was used to seeing severed heads – he carried the head of Goliath around as a trophy for some period of time. But David knew that Saul and his descendants were not his enemies in the same way that Goliath was his enemy.. Even though Ishbosheth was not the LORD's anointed in the same sense as Saul was, David had thoroughly learned to let God take vengeance.. David would not accept their evil deed, even though it seemed to serve a good purpose – unifying Israel under David's reign as king."

G Campbell Morgan - "While it is true that God overrules all the doings of men, and compels them ultimately to serve His high purposes, it is equally true that no servant of His can ever consent to do evil that good may come. It is an arresting truth that our Lord in the days of his earthly life would not accept the testimony of demons."

2 Samuel 4:12 Then David commanded the young men, and they killed them and cut off their hands and feet and hung them up beside the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth and buried it in the grave of Abner in Hebron.

BGT 2 Samuel 4:12 κα̅νετε λα̅το Δα̅υιδ̅ το̅ς̅ παι̅δα̅ρ̅ ο̅ι̅ς̅ α̅το̅ κα̅̅ πο̅κ̅τ̅ ν̅ου̅σι̅ν̅ α̅το̅ς̅ κα̅̅ κ̅ο̅λ̅ο̅β̅ο̅ σ̅ι̅ν̅ τ̅ς̅ χ̅ε̅ρ̅α̅ς̅ α̅τ̅ν̅ κα̅̅ το̅ς̅ π̅̅δ̅α̅ς̅ α̅τ̅ν̅ κα̅̅ κ̅ρ̅ μ̅α̅σ̅α̅ν̅ α̅το̅ς̅ π̅̅ τ̅ς̅ κ̅ρ̅ ν̅η̅ς̅ ν̅ Χ̅ε̅β̅ρ̅ων̅ κα̅̅ τ̅ν̅ κ̅ε̅φ̅α̅λ̅ ν̅ Μ̅ε̅μ̅φ̅ι̅β̅ο̅σ̅θ̅ε̅ θ̅α̅ψ̅α̅ν̅ ν̅ τ̅ τ̅ φ̅ Α̅β̅ε̅ν̅ν̅η̅ρ̅ υ̅ ο̅ Ν̅η̅ρ̅

LXE 2 Samuel 4:12 And David commanded his young men, and they slay them, and cut off their hands and their feet; and they hung them up at the fountain in Chebron: and they buried the head of Jebosthe in the tomb of Abenezzer the son of Ner.

KJV 2 Samuel 4:12 And David commanded his young men, and they slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged them up over the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ishbosheth, and buried it in the sepulchre of Abner in Hebron.

NET 2 Samuel 4:12 So David issued orders to the soldiers and they put them to death. Then they cut off their hands and feet and hung them near the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth and buried it in the tomb of Abner in Hebron.

CSB 2 Samuel 4:12 So David gave orders to the young men, and they killed Rechab and Baanah. They cut off their hands and feet and hung their bodies by the pool in Hebron, but they took Ish-bosheth's head and buried it in Abner's tomb in Hebron.

ESV 2 Samuel 4:12 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.

NIV 2 Samuel 4:12 So David gave an order to his men, and they killed them. They cut off their hands and feet and hung the bodies by the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-Bosheth and buried it in Abner's tomb at Hebron.

NLT 2 Samuel 4:12 So David ordered his young men to kill them, and they did. They cut off their hands and feet and hung their bodies beside the pool in Hebron. Then they took Ishbosheth's head and buried it in Abner's tomb in Hebron.

- **killed them:** 2Sa 1:15 Ps 55:23 Mt 7:2
- **hung:** 2Sa 21:9 De 21:22,23
- **buried it in the grave of Abner in Hebron:** 2Sa 3:32

ASSASSINS "ASSASSINATED"

Then David commanded the young men, and they killed them and cut off their hands and feet and hung them up beside the pool in Hebron - Hands and feet would seem to be symbolic of how they deceptively entered (their**feet**) his palace (looking of

wheat) and then savagely slew him with their **hands**. This would serve as a warning to any and all who might seek to "help" David take Ish-bosheth's throne unjustly. The pool of Hebron is likely a significant point of city water so would be a place all of Hebron would see the "reward" for murdering the LORD'S anointed. This news would surely get back to Mahanaim and would demonstrate that David was just, not unjust and a unifier not a divider. David's actions would aid in unification of all the tribes of Israel under a man with such obvious integrity and sense of God's justice.

J D Greear on why all the mutilation (Ish-bosheth's head, the assassin's hands and feet) - Remember, this is an honor-shame culture. Rechab and Baanah wanted not just to defeat Ish-bosheth but also to shame Saul and his dynasty. As a result, they mutilated Ish-bosheth and thereby brought shame to his entire household. Likewise, David responds by shaming the two men and their household. Mutilating the bodies with hands and feet cut off recalls the fate of the Dagon idol in the Philistine temple (1 Sam 5). **David, with utmost sincerity and resolve, denounced the actions of the men by shaming them.** Displaying their bodies would ensure that anyone who saw what they did would know it was disgraceful. In a backhanded way David honored the house of Saul with his actions against Rechab and Baanah. He was appalled that they would do this to Ish-bosheth while he was alone, defenseless, and in his bed—no man should die like that (2 Sam 4:11).

Adam Clarke - 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 [appropriate] punishment.

Keil and Delitzsch "David acted with strict justice in this case also, not only to prove to the people that he had neither commanded nor approved of the murder, but from heartfelt abhorrence of such crimes, and to keep his conscience void of offense towards God and towards man."

But they took the head of Ish-bosheth and buried it in the grave of Abner in Hebron- Just as David had honored Abner in his uncalled for death, so too he honored Ish-bosheth for his untimely demise.

Winter asks "Why did David bury Ish-Bosheth in Abner's tomb? Ish-Bosheth was also of the tribe of Benjamin. He was the son of Saul and thereby a second cousin of Abner. Families were quite often buried together."

Matthew Henry comments on this, "The murderers were put to death according to law to be monuments of David's justice. But what a confusion was this to the two murderers. What a horrid disappointment and such those will meet with who think to serve the interests of the son of David (Jesus) by any immoral practices, by war and persecution, fraud and rapine; who under color of religion murder prices, break solemn contracts, lay countries waste, hate their brethren and cast them out and say, 'Let the Lord be glorified;' kill them and think they do God good service. However men may canonize such methods of serving the church, Christ will let them know another day Christianity was not intended to destroy humanity."

Life Application Study Bible ([borrow](#)) - When David learned of Ish-bosheth's death, he was angry. He had never harmed Saul, and he thought the assassins' method was cowardly. David wanted to unite Israel, not drive a permanent wedge between him and Ish-bosheth's supporters. To show that he had nothing to do with the extermination of Saul's royal line, he ordered the assassins killed and gave Ish-bosheth a proper burial. All the tribes of Israel, recognizing in David the strong leader they needed, pledged their loyalty to him. No doubt the Philistine threat and David's military reputation (1 Samuel 18:7) also helped unify the people.

Davis points out, "One cannot help but be impressed with the ethical and political sophistication that David brought to Israel's politics. This was in contrast to the approach adopted by King Saul. David did not follow the philosophy that the end justifies any means. He was convinced of the providential and sovereign control of his God. He believed that in the proper time the way would be opened for the unification of the land and the establishment of one throne." (Borrow [The Birth of a Kingdom : Studies in I-II Samuel and I Kings 1-11](#))