

Teaching Plan  
EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Date: August 5, 2018

Lesson Title: "Compromised"

Lesson Passage: 2 Samuel 20:1-2,14-21

ABOUT THIS LESSON

As David sought to re-establish his kingdom after Absalom's rebellion was ended, a minor leader from northern Israel tried to lead a contingent of Israelites out of the kingdom. King David sent Joab to Abel Beth Maacah, a small city on Israel's northern border, to quash this rebellion. Acting on the advice of a wise woman, Joab went straight to the source of the problem, sparing the city as a whole after the rebel leader, was eliminated.

TEACHING/LEARNING GOALS

(1) Describe the historical situation in which Sheba's rebellion occurred. (2) Explain the meaning of the saying quoted to Joab, "Let them but ask counsel at Abel."

BEGINNING THE LESSON

*To introduce the lesson, refer to the amazing fragmentation of Christian communities around the world. For instance, there are approximately 50 million Baptists just in the United States, but they are divided into something like 60 distinct denominations. (Name a few of these: Free Will Baptists, the Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship, Primitive Baptists, Separate Baptists, General Six-Principle Baptists, Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Predestinarian Baptists, the Unregistered Baptist Fellowship, Welcoming and Affirming Baptists, Southern Baptists, Northern Baptists, National Baptists, and Missionary Baptists.) Then comment: "Now, you might be wondering what this has to do with our Lesson Passage, if you have read it. Just this: As David's general, Joab, was preparing to quash a rebellion in northern Israel, a very wise woman convinced him that he should deal with the specific cause of the problem, the upstart rebel leader, rather than destroying her whole city. The "take away" truth in this story is that we should not let relatively minor differences in belief destroy our partnership in Christ. To put it figuratively, we should use a scalpel, not a broad-ax, to deal with disunity within our fellowship.*

TEACHING PROCEDURES

1. Summarize the story in the beginning of the lesson passage: (1) The rebellion against David ended with the death of Absalom; but David now faced the task of putting the pieces of his fragmented kingdom back together. (2) David still had not returned to Jerusalem. He was in Gilgal (19:15), a city located between the Jordan River and Jericho, where leaders from Judah had come to escort the king back to Jerusalem

(19:18). But men from the northern tribes of Israel were also there (19:40); and they complained that the king was being partial to the people from Judah (19:41). (3) Sheba, a troublemaker from Saul's tribe of Benjamin, tried to take advantage of this unsettled situation by encouraging the people from northern Israel to abandon David and go back home (i.e., "every man to his tents, O Israel") (20:1); and some of them began to desert David (20:2) (4) As soon as David was reestablished in his royal palace in Jerusalem (20:3), one of the first things he did was to send troops in pursuit of Sheba, to put down the rebellion before it escalated further (20:6). Joab, the longtime commander of David's army, eventually became the leader of this mission (20:11).

2. Refer to 2 Sam. 20:14-15: (1) Sheba's revolt was not an immediate success; so, to gain support against David, he went from one tribe to another proclaiming his message. (There is no indication that he was accompanied by large groups of men.) (2) It is not surprising that a large number of Bichrites followed Sheba into the city of Abel Beth Maacah (20:14b), since they were kinsmen of "Sheba the son of Bichri" (20:13). (3) The town referred to as "Abel" (v. 14) was in the region called "Beth Maacah," in the northernmost area of Israel's territory, not far from Mt. Hermon and the borders of Phoenicia. Abel was a fortified city surrounded by walls. So, Joab's troops attacked in the way usually used to besiege walled cities during the time of David. They built up mounds of earth against the city walls and pounded the wall with heavy poles in an attempt to make it fall down (v. 15b).

3. *Observe that the deliverance of Abel from certain destruction by Joab's troops is attributed to "a wise woman" in the city (20:16).* (This reminds us that wisdom is personified as a woman in Proverbs.) Her cry, "Hear! Hear!" was intended to attract the attention of Joab's soldiers, who would in turn get Joab to come near enough to the wall for the woman to speak directly to him. After Joab approached the woman (20:17), she asked if he was really Joab, and he confirmed his identity.. Then she begged him to listen to what she had to say, and he assured her that he was listening. *Then interpret what the woman says in verse 18:* "In past ages, Abel was so famed for the wisdom of its people that a proverb arose advising people to consult them when they faced difficulties."

4. *Summarize the dialogue between the woman and Joab in 2 Samuel 20:19-21:* (1) She assures him that Abel is a peace-loving city that has been loyal to Israel, a highly respected "mother city" to all the surrounding villages that depend on her. If Joab destroyed her, he would be destroying what belongs to the Lord. (2) In his response, Joab assures her that if Sheba, the insurrectionist, is surrendered to him he will be glad to spare the city. (3) She responds with a proposal that will assure him that Sheba has been neutralized and meet his condition for sparing the city, "we will throw his head over the wall to you."

#### CLOSING THE LESSON

Note that verse 22 assures us that both of the woman and Joab kept their promises, thus averting a major catastrophe.