



What Is My Battle Plan to Defend Against Satan's Attacks?

2 Samuel 20:15: (NASB) *And they came and besieged him in Abel Beth-maacah, and they built up an assault ramp against the city, and it stood against the outer rampart; and all the people who were with Joab were wreaking destruction in order to topple the wall.*



As Christians, we are constantly faced with the challenge of doing the right thing in a sinful world. We are bombarded with input and suggestions that can easily cloud the simplicity of what is right. Once we get the right thing in focus, the next challenge is to do that right thing the right way. Often times the right way is NOT our natural or preferred approach. The problem? Our handling of what is right in God's eyes is ALWAYS subject to Satan's attacks. These attacks can come from external forces but often his most destructive attacks come from our own fallen thoughts and desires. Essentially Satan can effectively lay siege to our spiritual lives by opening doors to try and accomplish spiritually right things in a humanly sinful way. We need a battle plan for our defense.

Our battle plan begins with examining an Old Testament event about an unnamed woman, the wise woman of Abel, that we did not hear about in Bible class for reasons that will soon become clear. We will view the characters and events in this story as an allegory and create picture language to draw some spiritual lessons.



It is a time of political instability in King David's reign. His son, Absalom, rebelled and was killed in a battle for the throne. Another revolt is brewing, and Sheba leads a revolt against David.

Our spiritual allegory has important characters. Let's look at what they represent.



Like David, we want to be men and women after God's own heart. He represents us in our spiritual growth.



In our lives there is always a tug of war between satanic influences and what is right in God's eyes.



2 Samuel 20:1: (NASB) *Now a worthless man happened to be there whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjaminite; and he blew the trumpet and said, We have no share in David, nor do we have an inheritance in the son of Jesse; every man to his tents, Israel!*

Sheba was from the same tribe as King Saul.

We have no share in David - Sheba claims David is not the rightful ruler.

The son of Jesse - David's father was just a farmer. This was a derogatory term. There was no royal family heritage.

Every man to his tents - in other words, go your own way - do not listen to David.

There was treachery going on here. He was undermining the rule of King David who was appointed by God.

Satan attacks our credibility in front of others, just the way Sheba attacked David's credibility.

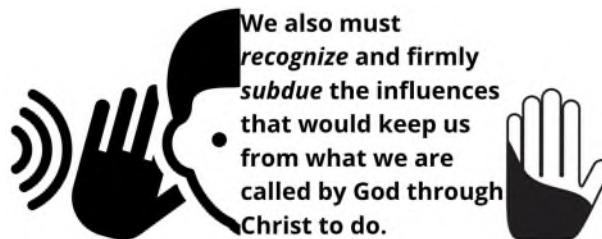
Humble beginnings do not minimize our calling. David had a humble beginning and was just a shepherd. We can also have humble beginnings:

1 Corinthians 1:26: (NASB) *For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble;*

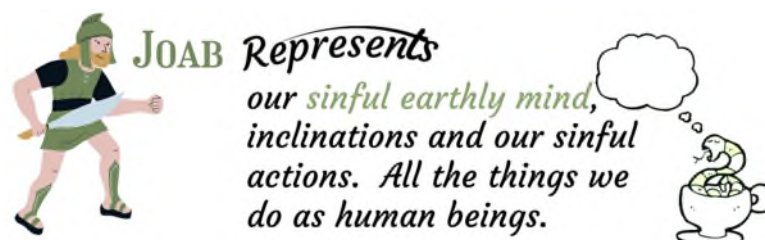
The allegory is bringing this physical historic event to life for us spiritually. In this next scripture, we will be talking about Abishai and Joab. Abishai was commander over one-third of David's army and his personal guard. He had a very significant role. But Joab, his brother, is the commander-in-chief of David's army. Joab is the "go-to guy" for David when it comes to his military things.

2 Samuel 20:2,6: (NASB) ²*So all the men of Israel withdrew from following David and followed Sheba the son of Bichri; but the men of Judah remained loyal to their king, from the Jordan even to Jerusalem. ⁶And David said to Abishai, Now Sheba the son of Bichri will do us more harm than Absalom; take your lord's servants and pursue him, so that he does not find for himself fortified cities and escape from our sight.*

David sends Abishai (and Joab) to neutralize this threat. David had to protect his anointed position as king.



Abishai is not spoken of again in this account so we will not focus on his role.





Sheba represents the influences of Satan in our lives.
David represents our spiritual lives.
Joab represents our human reactions, responses and desires.

2 Samuel 20:10,14: (NASB) ¹⁰...Then Joab and his brother Abishai pursued Sheba the son of Bichri. ¹⁴Now he went on through all the tribes of Israel to Abel, that is, Beth-maacah, and all the Berites; and they assembled and went after him as well.

They were chasing down this treasonous individual because he needed to be removed. He was undermining God's chosen one. Joab was after him because he was after the king. They end up going to the city of Abel.



For this spiritual allegory, the city does not have to necessarily be a place. It can be our state of mind, it can be our fellowship with others, or it can be the relationships we have. It is that environment in which we grow spiritually.

Excavations started at *Abel Beth-maacah* in 2013 prove the city existed. It is in the far north of Israel on the border between Syria, Lebanon and Israel, about 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee.

Joab was thorough and passionate about subduing this enemy of King David. This passion would lead to a very harsh and incredibly unwise decision:

2 Samuel 20:15: (NASB) *And they came and besieged him in Abel Beth-maacah, and they built up an assault ramp against the city, and it stood against the outer rampart; and all the people who were with Joab were wreaking destruction in order to topple the wall.*

(Source: Excerpts from Wikipedia) Siege warfare is a form of constant, low-intensity conflict characterized by one party holding a strong, static, defensive position. Consequently, an opportunity for negotiation between combatants is not uncommon, as proximity and fluctuating advantage can encourage diplomacy.



They were laying siege to the city; Joab and his men are wreaking destruction to *topple the wall*. They were after Sheba and stopping at nothing.

A siege like this would mean the main water and food supplies would be cut off. This was a fight to the death. Every man would be killed, and every woman and child would be either killed or enslaved - or worse. It was a very brutal event of terror once the city walls were finally breached.



Let's examine the practical aspects of how a siege worked and go through several steps of how this warfare would be carried out.



SIEGE WARFARE STEP ONE: Surround the target – block supplies and the reinforcement or escape of troops. **ISOLATE THE CITY!**

Siege warfare is about isolation. Every time we talk about a Siege Warfare Step, we will provide a counteracting Spiritual Defense Step. The appropriate Spiritual Siege Defense Strategy needs to be implemented to counter each Siege Warfare Step.



SPIRITUAL SIEGE DEFENSE STRATEGY STEP ONE:

Defend against being a surrounded target. **Recognize** the symptoms of spiritual isolation. **Measure** your fellowship, study and prayer life against the things you perceive you need to get done. **Replace** spiritual isolation with spiritual integration! Stockpile spiritual nourishment.



What are practical ways to “stockpile spiritual nourishment”?

We need to study, fellowship and co-labor while we can because when things get difficult and we are overwhelmed, we will then have something we can rely upon.



I have a great example from when I was a kid. This made a huge impression on me. My grandfather (my father's father) was a very devoted Christian. When I was young - I must have been 11 or 12 - he thought he was going blind. He had cataracts and was very worried that he would not be able to read his Bible. So, he took to memorizing 20 or 30 Psalms. I remember seeing his list in his little handwriting. He memorized all these different Psalms because he thought, “If I can't ever see, I need to know them.” It made a huge impression on me because I could say, “Grandpa, what is Psalm 91?” and he would recite Psalm 91. So, that is a way to stockpile spiritual nourishment. He had the cataract surgery and didn't end up going blind, but memorizing the Psalms helped him for the rest of his life.



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HOW CAN WE MEMORIZE SCRIPTURES?

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1 Peter 5:8-9: (NASB) ⁸Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹So resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brothers and sisters who are in the world.

This scripture alludes back to what we said about fellowship, co-laboring, working together and understanding that we need to be alert because our adversary is trying to destroy us.



It makes us think of the spiritual isolation that many of us had during COVID. We were not able to meet together, so it is a good thing we already had connections and relationships and were reaching out to each other to get through that time. The beautiful thing about a podcast is that throughout COVID, by God's grace, we were still able to broadcast Christian Questions. It was a way to be able to encourage and be encouraged.

Satan will stop at nothing to derail the lives of God's children. He will use our own minds against us!

**We have just scratched the surface of the dangers of a siege.
What else is there to defend against?**

Ancient sieges were scary and brutal. Even if you were able to outlast or outsmart your enemy, the chance that your city suffered large casualties was high. Satan wants to conquer God's children and he IS willing to play the long game to do it.

A siege is playing the long game. It is set up to overcome the defenses of the city through perseverance. When we think about playing the long game, think of a spider. A spider sets its web and then sits over in a corner, waiting. It waits and waits because it knows something is going to fly through and be captured. Satan is like that. He will play the long game to try to come after us. Our spiritual allegory helps us to defend against Satan's attacks.



Let's look at more Siege Warfare Steps and Spiritual Defense Strategies before we get back to our account in second Samuel.



SIEGE WARFARE STEP TWO: Reduce or weaken fortifications so as to break through them.

Reduce or weaken them by means of siege engines (a device designed to break or circumvent heavy castle doors, thick city walls or other fortifications. For example: battering rams or wheeled siege ladders), bombardment of weapons, construction of underground facilities called "mining" or "undermining" in order to attack, including the use of existing natural caves. Tunnels can be used to undermine fortifications and slip into enemy territory for a surprise attack. Digging tunnels beneath the foundations of the walls could cause them to collapse. Defenders could dig counter-tunnels to cut into the works of the attackers' and collapse them prematurely.

It is a long game and full of strategy. We must be willing to work and defend ourselves.



SPIRITUAL SIEGE DEFENSE STRATEGY STEP TWO:

Defend against reduced fortifications that can be broken through.
Be aware that a constant barrage of low-intensity temptations and negative thoughts can break down our defenses.

When the battle is low intensity, we do not always pay much attention. We look for the big things when the little things can just wear us down.

Spiritual complacency and spiritual doubt can result in self-reliance. Lust and pride often burrow deep within us, gradually weakening our defenses.

Know Satan's siege strategy and resolve to use the appropriate weapons and tools for your defense:

2 Corinthians 10:4-6: (NASB) *⁴For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. ⁵We are destroying arguments and all arrogance raised against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, ⁶and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.*

You are not your thoughts; you are the observer of your thoughts. — Amit Ray



David, a Christian friend of ours, emailed Jonathan with the previous quote and commented, "Our thoughts are shaped by external forces and the adversary can have a dramatic effect on them - making us believe something about ourselves that is very different from what we are as individuals and Christians. Being able to recognize that takes prayer, meditation and the support of others."

We can have a thought, but it does not mean we are bound to the thought. It does not mean we ARE the thought. It just comes into our mind. The low intensity temptations can chip away at who and what we are. *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.* We must rely on God's spirit.



SIEGE WARFARE STEP THREE: Reduce fortifications to induce fear.

Not only would things like seeing and feeling the effects of siege engines fill the city with dread, but early examples of biological warfare included catapulting diseased animals over city walls. This was a sudden and unexpected attack that would appear out of nowhere.



SPIRITUAL SIEGE DEFENSE STRATEGY STEP THREE:

Defend against reduced fortifications to induce fear.
Satan wields dangerous weaponry even now. Our once safe and godly place can be bombarded with ominous threats aimed at our spiritual well-being.



A siege was about tearing walls down and instilling fear as they were trying to conquer the city. We must not be conquered spiritually! We need to set our Spiritual Siege Defense Strategies in place and defend against the weakening of our fortifications.

Blatant temptations may be presented with seemingly no way to avoid them, so we move forward, exploring this new distracting thing shown to us. Emotions are another example. Anger is an emotion that can seemingly appear out of nowhere and capture us suddenly.



For me, I step back and think, "Wow - where did THAT diseased animal come from?" Suddenly the anger shows, and that is not good.

Our strategy must be to focus on and embrace the highest, most important thing which is God's love and providence for us. Fear be gone!

1 John 4:18-19: (NASB) ¹⁸There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. ¹⁹We love, because He first loved us.

Back to our story:

Joab was besieging Abel Beth-maacah, where Sheba was hiding:

2 Samuel 20:16: (NASB) Then a wise woman called out from the city, Listen, listen! Please tell Joab, Come here that I may speak with you.



The wise woman

Represents

God's spirit and counsel which is ever-present in our lives if we are true followers of Jesus. It is always there.

Do we listen to God's spirit and counsel when it is necessary? Remember, Joab represents our earthly thinking, ambitions and broken desires. God's spirit and our earthly thinking are at odds.

Let's see how this wise woman confronts the sinfulness of our own thoughts.

2 Samuel 20:17: (NASB) So he (Joab) approached her, and the woman said, Are you Joab? And he answered, I am. Then she said to him, listen to the words of your maidservant. And he answered, I am listening.

Immediately the wise woman came out and without fear, confronted the most powerful man besides the king himself. She was wise because she was not afraid of Joab, Sheba or the giant army that surrounded her city. She revered God, and through wisdom was able to bring peace to her city and get justice.

Remember, the walls were in the process of being bombarded and torn down. She came out in the middle of this bombardment and asked for the leader. God's spirit at work!



James 3:17: (NASB) *But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.*

The wise woman continues:

2 Samuel 20:18: (NRSV) *They used to say in the old days, Let them inquire at Abel; and so they would settle a matter.*

She reminds Joab of the history of her city. The Bible does not say the woman was a seer or an oracle, but the city of Abel had been a center for wisdom, where people came to have their questions answered.

This wise woman was calmly reintroducing Joab to the facts of what he was in the process of destroying. She was dealing with him face-to-face. This is very significant in terms of understanding the allegory which we will see soon.

2 Samuel 20:19: (NASB) *I am of those who are peaceable and faithful in Israel. You are seeking to destroy a city, even a mother in Israel. Why would you swallow up the inheritance of the LORD?*

She had the courage to speak the truth to others. This phrase, *A city, even a mother in Israel* is interesting. This was a preeminent city and had allegiance to the Lord's choice of King David. A "mother city" was a larger city that supported smaller towns and villages, the "daughter cities." There were several settlements dependent upon the survival of Abel. If it went down, many would suffer.

She does not say, Joab, stop what you are doing. She is telling him: this is who we are; this is what you are destroying. She reminds him they are the loyal ones so, *why would you swallow up the inheritance of the Lord?* She has this great strength. That is why we see her as a picture of God's spirit.



The preservation and development of things sacred are always our most important perspective. God's spirit helps us.

In our spiritual allegory application, we see Joab (our sinful earthly minds) going about the business of destruction. The woman (God's spirit) comes out and says, this is what you are destroying. This is who we are. She says: This is the city that honors God, and we are people who honor God. Is it a good thing to be destroying us?



SIEGE WARFARE STEP FOUR: Use of deception or treachery to infiltrate the city.

This might include coercing someone inside to betray the fortification, like bribing a gatekeeper.

Now there is the deception and treachery to infiltrate. We need to spiritually be on guard against that in our lives to protect our spiritual lives.



SPIRITUAL SIEGE DEFENSE STRATEGY STEP FOUR:

Defend against deception or treachery as a way to infiltrate our spiritual lives. Be deliberate about your choice of whom you let into the walls of your city. Those not looking out for your highest spiritual welfare may intentionally or inadvertently allow Satan's attack to creep in.

Our strategy here is to meet our own aggression or the aggression of others with sound spiritual reasoning that is driven by the wisdom of God's power and influence.

Proverbs 25:11-12: (NASB) ¹¹*Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances.* ¹²*Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold is a wise reproof to a listening ear.*

Remember, Joab represents us, our fleshly response to trying to do the right thing the wrong way. Sometimes we have to be able to stop our own aggression, but cannot because we are the aggressor. It is the wise woman's words, voice and presence (the presence of God's spirit) that can calm us down.

Be deliberate about who you let into the walls of your city. We are only as good as the company we keep. Friends can influence us to go down the wrong path, so it is important to protect our city.

The siege of Satan's influences upon our personal lives can only be combatted by God's influence. Am I listening?

The cold hard aggression of Joab is met squarely with the wise woman's wisdom. What is the result?

We must always be on guard to tame and overcome the power of our own ego when faced with rooting out satanic influences. As Christians, the best and only remedy for this is to be humble enough to let God's spirit become our primary influence, so it can direct our words and guide our actions.

We talk about humility all the time. When we see the destruction Joab is wreaking on the walls of Abel, we recognize that in our allegory this is us wreaking havoc on what is sacred to us. Only through humility will we be able to leave our own course and let God's spirit overwhelm us and show us a different way.



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WHAT IS HUMILITY?

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The wise woman did not try to flatter Joab. She was not rude or indignant. She was not defensive or frantic, but direct and wise in the face of trouble. We admire her calm determination. Despite the fact that her city is under a dangerous siege, she calmly speaks to Joab.

Joab paused, listened and now responds:

2 Samuel 20:20-21: (NASB) ²⁰Joab replied, *Far be it, far be it from me that I would consume or destroy!* ²¹*Such is not the case. But a man from the hill country of Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name has raised his hand against King David. Only turn him over, and I will depart from the city...*

Joab was taken aback by her rebuke. Joab's only goal was to capture Sheba and therefore, destroy the rebellion. Because he paused to listen, he could pause and explain his orders from the king.

Joab was knocking down walls, trying to get all of the soldiers organized in order to get the bad guy, and was not thinking! The wise woman comes out and causes Joab to pause. He stops what he is doing, reflects on what he is doing, and realizes he was not there to destroy (though it seemed a good idea at the time) - he was there to get the bad guy. It was a paradigm shift.

In our lives, we also need to stop and consider the holy spirit's influence helping us make that shift when we are trying to do the right thing in the wrong way.

Let's consider how CONFLICTED Joab was.



With the city of Abel, he recklessly implemented a destructive solution for a legitimately serious problem. He could have approached the walled city in the name of King David, explained to the people that Sheba was taking refuge there and searched the city until he found him. Joab often went about the right thing in the wrong way.

This is why we look at Joab in our allegory as representing our sinful mind. We forge ahead, thinking we are doing the right thing but going about it in a totally wrong way. Joab went from: "Let's find Sheba," to "Let's wipe out an entire loyal city and cripple the surrounding area!" - such misdirected passion...

The wise woman immediately seizes on his response and calmly and courageously knows what she has to do:

2 Samuel 20:21-22: (NASB) ²¹*And the woman said to Joab, Behold, his head will be thrown to you over the wall.* ²²*Then the woman wisely came to all the people...*

She now understands why Joab is destroying the city. She states that they will toss Sheba's head out to him. Remember, Sheba had committed treason by leading an insurrection against King David, God's anointed. It is a deadly, serious crime. After talking to Joab, *she wisely came to all the people...* She involves the townspeople in the decision of turning over Sheba to Joab.



...And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri and threw it to Joab. So he blew the trumpet, and they were dispersed from the city, each to his tent. Joab also returned to the king at Jerusalem.

The wise woman of Abel acted quickly and decisively. She clearly had the respect of the people. She spread the word about the treasonous Sheba and the people responded to her plan. The siege would be stopped and not one innocent life was put in danger.

We feel the sense of calm, the sense of clarity which averted a tragedy. She caused him to stop and think, giving him the solution that he needed. Root out the deep, dark evil and nothing else. Remove the evil without destroying everything else.



The eradicating of satanic influence from within the God-protected environment of our lives requires strong, focused and decisive action.

SPIRITUAL ALLEGORY APPLICATION:

We see the conversation between the wise woman and Joab went as follows:

- She asks questions.
- She reminds him who and what they are in the city.
- Joab pauses, thinks and responds that he did not come to destroy, just to capture a very evil man.
- She has the plan to accomplish what is needed without destroying Abel and its place in Israel's culture.

Essentially, she enabled Joab to wake up from his rage and see reason. This is what the spirit does for us if we let it. The spirit does not overrule us without our permission. We must allow it to show us through the study of God's word and fellowship, for example, so we can grow and do right things the right way.



SIEGE WARFARE STEP FIVE: The opportunity for negotiation between combatants is not uncommon.



SPIRITUAL SIEGE DEFENSE STRATEGY STEP FIVE:

Defend against compromises that would in any way weaken the integrity of our spiritual lives.



Compromise can be tricky. Appropriate compromises never lessen our spiritual focus. The wise woman engineered a compromise for everyone's highest welfare. Joab and his soldiers would stand down from unnecessary destruction while she dealt the precise problem at hand.

This was an appropriate compromise because it was for the highest welfare of everyone. We need to be careful, though. Many of the compromises we make in life are not this kind of compromise.



“Compromise Catastrophe Zones” represent compromises to avoid at all costs:

COMPROMISE CATASTROPHE ZONE #1



**THE INCOGNITO
CHRISTIAN**

Stay in the world but be unrecognizable from the rest. We do NOT apply our Christianity with any seriousness.

This is a compromise where the Christian stays hidden within. It is very dangerous because this Christian does not live any of his Christianity when out in the world.

COMPROMISE CATASTROPHE ZONE #2



**THE CONVENIENT
CHRISTIAN**

You can be different but not TOO different. Do not go too far away from everyone else. We apply our Christianity impulsively.

When it is convenient or comfortable then this type of Christian will quietly admit to being Christian. We need to stand a lot higher than this.

COMPROMISE CATASTROPHE ZONE #3



**THE NEGLECTFUL
CHRISTIAN**

Compromise your household by neglecting your responsibilities and privileges as a spouse, parent and caretaker of needy ones. We apply our Christianity in a self-centered way.

If we are neglecting our responsibilities, doing “God’s work” instead, we are doing it in the wrong way.

There are many good compromises, as with the wise woman and Joab. But we can easily engineer the wrong kind of compromise, allowing the walls of our city to be broken down. We can harbor satanic influences while inside the city.

COMPROMISE CATASTROPHE ZONE #4



**THE INSECURE
CHRISTIAN**

I give it all to You, Lord... except all my stuff. I like my stuff. I can serve Your will IF I can keep my stuff secure. We apply our Christianity in a self-preserving way.

Compromise is appropriate when it is done with the appropriate objectives to obtain the appropriate results. But it is not good otherwise.



We cannot compromise our spirituality or the integrity of what God has given to us.



SIEGE WARFARE STEP SIX: Building a line of earthworks, consisting of a rampart and trench.

(Source: <https://www.baslibrary.org/archaeology-odyssey/7/1/8>) An Old Babylonian mathematical problem indicates that 9,500 men working 12 hours a day could build a ramp to the top of a 70-foot-high wall in five days.

Can you imagine being on the inside of a city, seeing 10,000 men being organized to build this incredible ramp day and night - getting closer and closer? What a sense of doom. When Satan lays siege to us, he will build a ramp to get over the wall, using outside influences, if we allow him to. How do we defend against something like this?



SPIRITUAL SIEGE DEFENSE STRATEGY STEP SIX:

Defend against earthly rationalization of sins layered on top of previously rationalized sins. Such layering sets us up for a corrupted view of godliness.

A siege ramp is built up higher than the walls so they can be breached. In our spiritual lives, the rationalization of sins on top of previous rationalized sins builds Satan's ramp higher and higher until we become breachable. We want to be unreachable by Satan, not breachable. We do not want to let our own *earthly* mind rationalize the integrity of the godly wall that protects our spiritual life. That is what is happening in this picture.

Jesus looks at the results of false Christianity:

Matthew 7:21-23: (NASB) ²¹Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven will enter. ²²Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name cast out demons, and in your name perform many miracles? ²³And then I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.

The people say, Lord, we did things in your name. Jesus says, *I never knew you*. Why? They were doing supposedly right things in the wrong way. They were using earthly thinking for earthly gain. We are surrounded by this. May Jesus never say, *I never knew you* because we are so earthly in our thinking and in our actions.

Fighting against Satan is an everyday, multiple-front battle. Many of these battlefronts are in our own minds!



How can we learn to regularly respond with the wisdom of this wise woman in our everyday life?

The wise woman was proactive. Joab, without good reason, laid siege to her city so she immediately sought him out to understand his actions.

Once Joab revealed that the treasonous Sheba was hiding in her city, she simply and decisively handled the problem and restored the city's godly environment. This is the way God's spirit can work in our lives if we are willing to let it guide us. How can we let it guide us? It guides us through study, prayer, fellowship and by following examples of those who have gone before. There are so many ways to learn...if we listen!

Joab brought chaos. He was appropriately focused on the business of removing treachery against King David by capturing Sheba, but he handled that responsibility in a godless way. He relentlessly went about destroying the walls of a city of innocent people.

How do we handle the chaos of Satan's attacks and influences in our life?



The wise woman

Represents

our voice and actions as a result of God's power and influence in our lives.

Are we listening to our "wise woman" within, or are we listening to our old selves? The earthly thinking of our old selves is destructive, while the godly wisdom His spirit works in us is not only constructive, but it saves lives and produces spiritual maturity.

We learn wisdom from failure much more than from success. We often discover what will do, by finding out what will not do; and probably he who never made a mistake never made a discovery.
— Samuel Smiles

We will make mistakes, but we must listen for God's guidance through His spirit. When we make a mistake, we will say: I am not here to destroy, I am just here to root out the evil. This is our part in this spiritual allegory!



A look at wisdom and how it can change our lives!

To find wisdom:

- **Be full of humility - 1 Peter 5:5-6**

1 Peter 5:5-6: (NASB) ⁵You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. ⁶Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,



The wise woman presented herself as Joab's handmaid. Do we realize that God's power in our lives can be subdued by our own recklessness? **Respect God's influence!**

She presented herself humbly so that Joab would listen. Her humility enabled Joab to take a breath and find his own humility he had lost. Be full of humility and let God's spirit guide that humility.

- **Seek for wisdom and knowledge - Proverbs 16:16**

Proverbs 16:16: (NASB) *How much better it is to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen above silver.*



The wise woman told Joab she was a peaceable and faithful one in Israel. Are we responding to Satan's influences with godly wisdom or in our own way? **Respect God's wisdom!**

She presented herself to Joab - in our allegory, that is the spirituality in our lives presenting itself to our earthly thinking. Our spiritual side reminds us we are dedicated to serving the will of God.

Joab's life was dedicated to serving Israel and King David. He had taken David's orders out of context and made them dangerous and destructive. The spirit of God can come to us and cause us to stop, change direction and go about the right thing in the right way.

- **Be God-centered - 2 Timothy 3:16-17**

2 Timothy 3:16-17: (NASB) *¹⁶All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*



The wise woman reminded Joab of the godly heritage her city was known for. When in the throes of our emotional fight against Satan, can we hear that *still small voice* that represents God's perspective? **Respect God's appointments!**

She reminded Joab of who and what he was destroying. We can destroy our own spiritual life and environment by applying to it earthly wisdom, earthly passion, earthly power, earthly drive or earthly desire. We are in the service of something higher, and we need to listen to the influence of that something higher to find out what we should and should not be doing. If we make a mistake, it is best to pause, consider, refocus and change direction. Joab learned this by seeing the situation through this woman's perspective.



- Recall God's mercy - Psalm 111:10

Psalm 111:10: (NASB) *The fear (reverence) of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments; His praise endures forever.*



The wise woman focused the out-of-control Joab on the recklessness of his actions while serving King David. Are we able to stop, reconsider and refocus based on a willingness to accept where God is pointing us? **Respect God's direction!**

Sometimes we start a project and we feel like we are on a roll, with lots of momentum and energy. Then we realize it is not appropriate spiritually. Joab had already destroyed part of the wall of the city. He had done damage. He was called upon to stop and change direction. How do we do this? We recall God's mercy. No matter how deep we have gone into an experience, we need to change direction.

- Reiterate that it is God who rules - Jeremiah 9:24

Jeremiah 9:24: (NASB) *but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things, declares the LORD.*



The wise woman saw that justice according to God's law was fulfilled. Are we too emotionally stuck to listen to the clear and appropriate direction that God's influence presents to us? **Respect God's providence.**

When we realize that we have ignored an opportunity, we have to ask for forgiveness. If the Lord grants us an opportunity and we ignore it, it is necessary to confess we were at fault and say we are sorry. His providence will provide us a way, but we have to be proactive, recognize our opportunities and follow it.

These are the lessons from this wise woman of Abel. She saved all the people of her city from needless destruction. The treacherous Sheba was yanked out of the city. The treachery took the form of one individual. It was not the city itself, or the wall; it was just the one man. We need to be able to focus in on the specific evil that needs to be removed from our lives without all of the collateral damage.

James 4:7-10: (NASB) ⁷*Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.* ⁸*Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.* ⁹*Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom.* ¹⁰*Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.*

Submit therefore to God - this is the lesson here. The wise woman, representing God's spirit and influence in our lives, is speaking to us individually, reminding us that we are in the service of that new creature, represented by King David in our allegory. Our job is to do the will of the new creature, not the old. If we do not submit to God, we do not submit to that spiritual influence that God provides us.



The holy spirit does not speak words to us, but the words of God are all over the Bible. We can learn and apply those words. They may come through another brother or sister, in a study or in fellowship.

This account is a true story where a city could have been destroyed if not for this wise individual. For us, the application is simple. We ourselves can destroy our spiritual lives because maybe we have allowed Satan in and did not even know it. Now his influence is lurking inside us. We realize this and get panicky, breaking things, instead of removing that which needs to be removed.



God is the one who is inevitably glorified. This is the lesson of the wise woman and Joab!

*So, what is my battle plan to defend against Satan's attacks?
For Jonathan, Rick, Julie and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on August 9, 2021
Ep. 1190: Did I Really Forgive Them?

Teddy Roosevelt once said that "nine-tenths of wisdom consists in being wise in time." After the dust settles, the storm clears, the action stops, it's often too late for wisdom to work its marvels. — Women of the Bible: A One-Year Devotional Study of Women in Scripture, by Ann Spangler and Jean E Syswerda

Bonus Material and Study Questions

Abel Beth-maacah: This city appears three times in the Bible: The first two references were in relation to conquests: in 1 Kings 15:20 by the Aramean king Ben Hadad and in 2 Kings 15:29 by the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III. It took three years for that king to siege the city of Arpad in modern-day Syria. The third time is here in our story.

Abel Beth-maacah is a modern-day archeology site since 2013 with excavations conducted in a joint partnership between Azusa Pacific University (California) and The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

This large, prominent mound called a “tell” (or “tel”) is in the far north of Israel on the border between modern Syria, Lebanon and Israel, about 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee in the Hula Valley.

One of the more notable things archeologists have found is a jar holding 425 ankle bones of sheep, goats and deer (no cattle or pigs) on a podium in a courtyard. Speculating they were used for fortune telling, as game pieces or some

sort of ritual activity, the jar was found on a raised podium in a large public courtyard. These have been found in excavations throughout the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean world.

Map from: <https://www.baslibrary.org/biblical-archaeology-review/45/4/2>

(Source: listverse.com) The Siege of Candia (now called Heraklion) in Crete was easily the longest siege in recorded history, beginning in 1648 and lasting 21 years. In other words, those born in the first few years of the siege were old enough to fight in its final battles.

A besieged city is not defenseless:

- The besieging army is usually encamped in squalid conditions, threatened with disease and starvation.
- A sufficient supply of food and water could defeat starvation.
- The way the fortifications were built: arrow slits, “murder holes” to drop things from the ceiling at an invading army (rocks, arrows, hot sand, scalding water), and more.
- Maintain diverse routes of escape, powerful allies and superior weaponry.



DRAWN BY RUHAMA BONFIL

CULTIC COMPLEXITY. Part of the Iron Age public complex at Abel Beth Maacah seems to have been devoted to ritual activity. One of the north rooms in the late 11th- to early 10th-century B.C.E. (late Iron Age I) structure contains benches, a stone offering table, a cult stand, *masseboth* (standing stones), basins, and a plastered clay installation with a double “sink” on top (see lower middle of the plan). Evidence of ritual activity also appears in the late-tenth- and ninth-century B.C.E. (Iron IIA) stone-paved courtyard, where archaeologists found a jar full of astragali—possibly for a ritual activity (see lower right of the plan). The superimposed plan shows both the Iron Age I and IIA phases in this structure.

Study QUESTIONS

Ep. 1189: What Is My Battle Plan to Defend Against Satan's Attacks?

<https://christianquestions.com/character/1189-defend-against-satan/>

See:  **CQ Rewind**
SHOW NOTES

1. In a spiritual allegory of the siege of the city of Abel, what do King David, Sheba, Joab and the city of Abel represent? (See 2 Samuel 20:1-6, 10, 14-15)
2. What can we learn from the situation surrounding the battle and those involved? How can we apply it to our battles with sin? (See 1 Corinthians 1:26)
3. What is the first step of siege warfare? How can we experience isolation with regard to our spirituality? What is the first Spiritual Siege Defense Strategy? (See 1 Peter 5:8-9)
4. What are the next two steps of siege warfare? What is the danger of step two? What are our defense mechanisms against these types of spiritual warfare? What "casts out fear"? (See 2 Corinthians 10:4-6, 1 John 4:18-19)
5. How did the wise woman confront Joab? What was her demeanor? What does she represent in the spiritual allegory? How does she present her argument? What does she warn against? (See 2 Samuel 20:16-19, James 3:17)
6. What is the fourth step for siege warfare? How can we defend ourselves from Satan's attempts at this? Why must we be careful in our associations? (See Proverbs 25:11-12)
7. How did Joab respond to the woman's confrontation? What was the result? What are the lessons from this experience? Why does Joab remind us of ourselves? Have you ever been a Joab? (See 2 Samuel 20:20-23)
8. What are the fifth and sixth step of siege warfare? How do we defend against them? As Christians, what types of compromises must we avoid? What can the rationalization of sins allow? Explain what Jesus is saying in Matthew 7:21-23.
9. What does the wise woman teach us about what we must do to find wisdom? Explain these steps. In what ways does God's spirit guide us? (See Psalm 111:10, Proverbs 16:16, Jeremiah 9:24, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, James 4:7-10, 1 Peter 5:5-6)
10. What are your experiences dealing with spiritual siege warfare? How do/will you defend yourself against it? What is *your* battle plan to defend against Satan's attacks?

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