

# Godly Resistance vs. Civil Rebellion

## 2 Samuel 20:1-2

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 4-27-2014

### Introduction

This world has known many civil rebellions. I've not seen any list that claims to be a complete list. But I have seen some pretty long lists of armed civil rebellions on history websites. Apparently, between the years 1590 and 1715 (a mere 125 year period) Southwestern France experienced 450 armed peasant rebellions. 450! That's a lot of rebellion. Now, granted, most countries don't experience that many. But you get into the 1900s and there are an astonishing number of armed rebellions around the world.

And we need to be able to distinguish between lawful resistance to tyranny and unlawful rebellion against tyranny. Many times the two are lumped together, but they are quite different. We've spent some sermons in the past looking at the characteristics of lawful armed resistance to tyranny – and always at least one principle is present – it is at least one civil magistrate from the executive office who is leading others to resist the unlawful actions of another magistrate. Obviously there are a lot of other principles that have to be in place as well, but lawful resistance to tyranny is not simply a bunch of individuals riding horses against the civil government. This morning we are going to look at a portrait of unlawful civil rebellion, and then Lord willing, next week we will look at the disastrous results of rebellion. And we know that it was unlawful rebellion because God calls it a rebellion. And verses 1-2 give us ten telltale signs of rebellion. What does it look like?

### **I. How to tell when civil resistance is ungodly rebellion (vv. 1-2)**

#### ***A. When it is fueled more by emotion than substance (19:40-43)***

And actually, I've thrown in an eleventh sign from the last chapter under point A. Even though I have already preached on the last four verses of chapter 19, it doesn't hurt to remind you of this one characteristic - you know it is an ungodly rebellion when it is fueled more by emotion than it is by legal substance.

In chapter 19 all twelve tribes were quite OK with going along with David. They didn't have a legal or a constitutional issue with him. The only

thing that made them quit was that they were offended; they were *very* offended. Look at chapter 19:40-43.

**2Sam. 19:40** Now the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him. And all the people of Judah escorted the king, and also half the people of Israel.

**2Sam. 19:41** Just then all the men of Israel came to the king, and said to the king, “Why have our brethren, the men of Judah, stolen you away and brought the king, his household, and all David’s men with him across the Jordan?”

**2Sam. 19:42** So all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, “Because the king *is* a close relative of ours. Why then are you angry over this matter? Have we ever eaten at the king’s *expense*? Or has he given us any gift?”

**2Sam. 19:43** And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, “We have ten shares in the king [keep that in mind when they say in chapter 20, we have *no* share in David. Anyway, they say, “We have ten shares in the king”]; therefore we also have more *right* to David than you. Why then do you despise us—were we not the first to advise bringing back our king?” Yet the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

There is no substance to their offense. It is all emotion. And we saw that it was complicated by some of the regional and cultural differences that existed between the north and the south. There were prejudices that added fuel to the fire. But this whole outburst was emotional. And when you get into groups that want to resist the government, and all you hear is anger over injustice but not a lot of constitutional, legal, or theological arguments, watch out. Rebellion is often rooted in emotion.

Contrast that with the stable emotions that George Washington and the Colonial magistrates had when they resisted Britain. They had very well reasoned tracts, longer articles, and books defending the legality of what they were doing, and urging people to moderation and to not be Jacobin (which was their term for the radical revolutionaries of France). There was legal, Biblical, and historical foundation for their resistance. By the way, just to show you the depth of the general population's reasoning - the Federalist Papers and the Anti-federalist papers were tracts that everyone was reading and discussing. They had a much higher level of reading and we're not as easily duped.

So that is the first thing to watch out for: is there more to this than simply people being upset and offended? And of course, this is true in other areas of life as well. When resistance to parents is based on emotion more than calm, humble, well-reasoned petitions, it is likely rebellion. When resistance to church tyranny is based on emotion, it is likely growing in the demonic soil of rebellion, not in the godly soil of Divine Right Presbyterianism – which, by the way, gives great principles of resistance to

church tyranny – Divine Right Presbyterianism; you need to study that. And when resistance to the state is fueled far more by emotion than it is by substance, run (do not walk) to the nearest exit. Those kinds of meetings will appeal to your baser nature and cause rebellion to want to rise up in your own heart.

***B. When it is spontaneous rather than carefully planned (v. 1a)***

But let's look at an additional ten signs of rebellion that we can see in verses 1-2. Verse 1 begins by saying,

And there happened to be there a rebel...

That first phrase, "There *happened* to be there," indicates a spontaneous action, not something that has been well thought through and planned. And it makes sense that this spontaneous action is closely connect to the spontaneous emotion of the previous chapter. Somebody lit a match, things started burning, and before you know it, some wise-guy is suggesting that we secede. And he hasn't thought this through very carefully. When we get to verse 14 next week we will see that he is obviously not known well enough to be able to gain a good following. He has no strategy. He just jumps into action.

I've known children who get angry and run away, never having thought through what they will do when they run away. It's a spontaneous action, based on emotion. They haven't thought through if it is lawful to do what they are doing, or if it will be successful (something that Jesus commands us to think about in Luke 14 – He in effect is saying, "Look before you leap."). They haven't thought through the long-term effects or even the short-term. You maybe read about the 16 year old boy who ran away from home last week, climbed a fence at the airport, climbed up into the wheel well of a Hawaiian jet, and almost froze to death on a five hour flight. That's what we are talking about.

Now, I will hasten to say that rebellion is not *always* that way. It was not that way with Absalom. But such rashness never distinguishes Biblical resistance. Such spontaneity frequently will either cause a person to either leave in a huff or push someone out the door in huff.

***C. When it is run by ungodly characters (v. 1b – "son of Belial")***

The third telltale sign is the character of the leadership. Rebellions are often run by ungodly people. Actually, the literal Hebrew for "rebel" in verse 1 is a "son of Belial." We've already seen that since Belial is a synonym for Satan, the prince of rebels, that there could be demonic

influence. But at a very minimum, it springs from ungodly character. And this makes sense: if your methodology is rebellious, your ethics are likely to be rebellious as well. So it's not enough to ask if the goal of this group is right. There were a lot of people who agreed with the goal of ending slavery in America, but in siding with John Brown, they had no idea that they were siding with a son of Belial and what a disaster that would produce. John Brown said, "If any obstacle stands in your way, you may properly break all the Decalogue [that means all the ten commandments] in order to get rid of it."<sup>1</sup> He didn't have the character to have godly resistance to an institutional evil.

This is why I am reluctant to jump on the bandwagon of modern resistance movements that are led by sons of Belial. If I lived during the mid 1800's, I would have been opposed to the ungodly form of slavery that was legal in our country. But I would not have joined Abraham Lincoln's rebellion against the Constitution to do so. I for sure would not have joined with John Brown and the Secret Six who funded his raid on Harper's Ferry in 1859. If you knew the character of those men, you would have known for sure that it was going to be a rebellion, not godly resistance. Those men were sons of Belial, and I would have stayed as far away from them as I possibly could. They were revolutionaries, not true advocates for Biblical law. If you oppose unlawfulness with unlawful means and unlawful methods, you cannot expect God's backing. Unlawful resistance to unlawfulness just perpetuates the problem. Well, most American politics is simply unlawful resistance to unlawfulness with unlawful means. It's rebellion. And I would be happy to discuss the whys and the wherefores of that with you.

***D. When it breaks with a known entity to follow an unknown entity (vv. 1c with 2a)***

The fourth telltale sign of its rebellious character was that Sheba was asking these people to break with a known entity (David) and to follow an unknown entity, Sheba. And the unstated implication is that "You just need to trust my rhetoric. We need change." Does that sound familiar?

Verse 1 says, "And there happened to be there a rebel, whose name was Sheba the son of Bichri, a Benjamite." Other than this description, we know nothing about Sheba. He was definitely not one of the higher-ranking

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Otto Scott, *The Secret Six: John Brown and the Abolitionist Movement* (New York: Times Books, 1979), p. 251.

officers. We have long lists of the officers in Israel and the magistrates, and he's not on the list. *But, despite that fact*, verse 2 says, "So every man of Israel deserted David, and followed Sheba the son of Bichri." It's odd that people would do this. But with their emotions inflamed, Sheba saw an opportunity to rally people into a secessionist movement.

Did David have some bad moves in the past that could have easily led to impeachment? Yes he did. He should have been impeached. But since there was no impeachment that took place, he was lawfully in power. And I would much rather follow a known man who is good but not perfect over an unknown man whose only characteristic that we know of is his one-time support of David and now his opposition to David. But he knew how to rally the crowds.

Contrast that with the American War for Independence. Every leader of that American war was well known by their communities, and most were quite well known throughout America as well. Or contrast America's War with the French Revolution. The French Revolution was much more like Sheba's revolution. In 1789 there were leaders in the Estate-Generals who were seeking to bring about reform. But the crowds didn't have patience to follow their slow methods of reform. They wanted reform now, and since there was so much emotion in Paris, they followed the eloquent speeches of Camille Desmoulins rather than the known reformers. Obviously, it was more complicated than that, but the crowds followed totally unknown men into this revolution rather than known men who wanted reform. When a crowd blindly follows the ravings of a person whom they really do not know, run (don't walk) to the nearest exit. It is rebellion, not lawful resistance, and it will not end well. They are saying, "Trust my rhetoric. You don't need to know much about my past, or my birth certificate, or anything else." And if we just blindly follow an unknown American into politics simply because of his promises, we aren't being too smart. We will find that the Sheba who rebels against the problems in a David has just as many problems, if not more.

***E. When it has more sound than substance (v. 1d)***

But verse 1 goes on to say,

... And he blew a trumpet, and said...

Sound (calling to action) and speech (designed to stir the emotions). And some people are pretty good at sound bites that can stir the emotions and want to make you follow them. During the French Revolution, the

lawful reformers were themselves eloquent in some ways, but they spent so much time dealing with substantive law, history, and the legal means of changing the country (which was good) that their speeches were lost on the crowds. But Danton, Marat, and Robespierre understood the language of the people. Though there was no substance to their speeches, they knew how to stir the emotions of the people and how to connect with their frustrations. Marat, who was fabulously wealthy, dressed poorly and pretended to love the poor. His speeches were designed to motivate and manipulate the rabble to action. But of course, it was disastrous actions that followed, and the rebellion they spawned produced rebellion everywhere. And many of the leaders got executed themselves. But Biblical resistance to evil is much more than sound (calling to action) and speech (designed to stir the emotions). It is substantive. But a lot of people are too lazy and too impatient for Biblical resistance.

***F. When the leader presumes to speak for your future and to speak your mind and your will (“we” - v. 1e)***

The sixth telltale sign of rebellion is when its leaders presume to speak for your future. In verse 1 he says, “We have no share in David, nor do we have inheritance in the son of Jesse.” With that “we” he is speaking on behalf of all the people. And a good question to ask is, “Who made you our representative?” Do they know him, or does he know them? It doesn’t appear so. Yet he speaks for them.

The leaders of rebellion always presume to speak for the people. During the French Revolution, the revolutionary leaders always spoke of “the people.” The wishes of the people, the will of the people, the tribunal of the people, in the name of the people, the friend of the people - the people, the people, the people. And it was all lies. But it appealed to the desire to belong to a ground swell of something important. It was an easy and empty way of identifying with the crowds and getting them to rally.

One of the worst dictators and tyrants in Africa was a Colonel by the name of Muammar Gaddafi. And the communists who trained him taught him how to speak in the name of the people. When he came to power he gave a speech that stirred the crowds like no one had been able to stir them before. His speech, titled, “Declaration of the Authority of the People” is amazingly eloquent. But all the way through it he presumes to speak for the people. I’ll just give you a couple of excerpts:

“From the desert, the dawn of a new age shines upon humanity, the age of the masses. For the desert is neither arid nor desolate. From the

desert, and on this fateful day in the life of our people, nation and mankind, comes forth the ringing voice of a people announcing the establishment of the authority of the people, the birth of the Jamahiriya, the beginning of the age of the masses.

Popular direct authority is the basis of the political system in the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. The authority is for the people who alone should have authority. The people exercise their authority through the popular congresses, the people's committees, the syndicates, the unions, the professional associations and the General People's Congress.<sup>2</sup>

Oh, he just goes on and on presuming to speak the mind of the people. He's all about the people – yeah right! He was one of the worst dictators ever, squashing the people under his heel.

Well, we've got politicians who presume to do the same thing here in America. Rather than speaking for the constitution (which they are sworn to do), they speak for the people. Sounds nice, but what does it mean? It's empty. When a leader presumes to speak for your future to speak your mind and your will, run (don't walk) to the nearest exit. Most politicians in America are rebels against the Constitution and against God's law (which they *should be* speaking for), and instead foment rebellion against the Constitution *in the name of the people*.

One of the most eloquent defenses of this concept was the book, *Common Law*, by Chief Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes. It was a revolutionary book that masterminded judicial rebellion against Christian Common Law in the courts of our nation and substituted a concept of a *living* Constitution that moves ever leftward to reflect the supposed will of the people. Of course, it's always the unelected members the court who somehow know what the will of the people is on abortion, homosexuality, and many other things. But he masterminded a massive rebellion in the courts. And this was one of the principles he used to eloquently do so. The courts for the most part have become rebels against the Constitution, but more importantly, against God's law.

### ***G. When it wants to lead against lawful leadership (v. 1e)***

The seventh telltale sign of rebellion is when people want to lead against lawful leadership. In other words, they inconsistently seek to

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<sup>2</sup> Excerpt from a Speech By Muammar Gaddafi, March 2, 1977, entitled, "Declaration on the Authority of the People."

overturn leadership and resist authority while trying to be a leader and to speak with authority. Virtually every revolution in Africa has been that way. Sheba is encouraging the people to rebel against lawful authority, but he is hoping that in their rebellion they will follow his leadership. But why would they do that? They do it because it is not just leaders who have rebel hearts.

But here is the problem: if you rebel against lawful authority, you are modeling to others that rebellion against you is OK. People don't always realize that this is the long-term consequence of rebellion, but it eventually comes back to bite them. And the only way that a rebel like Sheba can continue to hold power is by seizing so much tyrannical power they are worse than the tyrant that they overthrew. That's what happened in the French Revolution. Once the current evil order was overthrown the revolutionary leaders realized that in order to maintain control they would have to crack down on their followers more tightly than any leaders before them had done. They were constantly executing the so-called "counter-revolutionaries." But more radical revolutionaries than Robespierre and Marat killed the first-generation revolutionary leaders. That's just the way things work. If you are a rebel, you either have to become a master-tyrant or a master-manipulator, or you will get overthrown. It's no wonder that David refused to use revolutionary means to overthrow Saul. He knew it would backfire.

Well, Sheba didn't have time to become a Muammar Gaddafi. He didn't have time to consolidate power. But you can see the lack of respect for him in verse 14 as he goes throughout all Israel trying to get people to follow him, and very few do. It's hard to get the masses to follow a rebel indefinitely. They might do so initially, but once they see that they are facing bayonets, they bail on the new leader. Rebellion looks fun until things get serious.

Well, whenever you see any person seeking to lead against leadership (and I am talking about any of the governments: family, church, or state – whenever you see any person seeking to lead against leadership) run (don't walk) to the nearest exit. Don't go along with their rebellion or you will be a rebel yourself. This has huge implications for the family, for the church, and for civil government. When mothers undermine leadership they don't realize that they are modeling rebellion. And they shouldn't be surprised that they get disrespect and abandonment down the road. They think they are happy initially, but it always comes back to bite them. Shebas don't succeed without becoming more and more controlling and manipulative with their rebellion.

***H. When it leverages party principles over legal or theological issues  
(v. 1e)***

The eighth telltale sign of rebellion is when it leverages other issues than legal or theological issues to get you to see things their way. Sheba doesn't appeal to the Bible for what he is saying. He doesn't appeal to a law above man's law. He can't. The Bible stands against him. Instead, he appeals to party principle, or more specifically, to be against a party. It's easier to be against something. So he says, "We have no share in David, nor do we have inheritance in the son of Jesse." He forgot to mention what share any of them had in Sheba (but that's beside the point).

I get calls all the time that are doing this Sheba-number on me. The Republican National Committee calls to thank me for my generous contributions. And I say, "Uh, I haven't contributed to you guys in over three decades." "Well, would you like to start?" "Uh, No." "Well, we desperately need your contributions to keep the Democrats out of Congress." In effect they are saying, "We have no share in the Democratic Party, nor do we have an inheritance in their president." And I ask them, "Well, what about keeping unconstitutional Republicans out of office? Why have you guys been supporting unconstitutional candidates?" And their response? "Well, you don't want the Democrats to win. They've been doing a horrible job." And I say, "So have the Republicans. When are you guys going to start supporting the constitution rather than blindly supporting Socialistic Republicans?" But it doesn't actually do any good because they are trained fundraisers. For every argument you give they lower the price – "Well, would you be willing to contribute \$25? How about \$15." And my response is, "How about nothing until you guys quit standing behind traitors who are overturning the Constitution?" Well, it doesn't do much good, but it makes me feel better.

But what is weird about this statement that Sheba made is that he had just earlier that day agreed (behind the scenes) to support David. What a political switcheroo! In chapter 19:43 he has said, "We have ten shares in the king." Now we have no share!?! They had earlier argued vigorously for the right to be on David's administration. It just illustrates that there is nothing new under the sun. But it's important that we start calling these politicians what they really are. They are rebels. They are rebels against God and rebels against the Constitution, and I am not interested in supporting rebellion. I am interested in supporting *lawful* resistance to tyranny. And we need a ground swell of lawful resistance to the traitors in both parties in Washington. We need a back to God movement, a back to the Bible

movement, and a back to the Constitution movement. On the Bundy situation, why are conservatives arguing that we should exchange communistic ownership of the land by the Federal Government to communistic ownership of the land by the State of Nevada? It's still communism for the government to own all property whether it is the feds or the state. It makes no sense. But with rebellion it doesn't have to make sense – you just have to be against something.

***I. When it is looking for handouts or appeals to envy (v. 1f)***

The ninth telltale sign of rebellion is that it is frequently (I won't say always, but frequently) motivated by redistribution of wealth and class envy. Verse 1 goes on to say,

Nor do we have inheritance in the son of Jesse;

Well, *nobody* is supposed to have inheritance in the king. The king isn't supposed to give handouts to the population. Deuteronomy forbids that. That is a sign of corruption, not of good leadership. But that is the perpetual temptation within politics – to want handouts if you are not in government, and to both promise handouts if you are in government and to cash in on handouts yourself. And of course, the only way you can give handouts is if you steal them in the first place, like king Saul did.

Socialism is built on complaining about the riches of productive citizens, and appeasing the envy of people through promises. And yet the poor never get richer. They just get enslaved. Sheba thought that the 'haves' should give an inheritance to the 'have-nots.' Nesta Webster's history of the French Revolution showed the constant appeals to class envy and constant promises that if they followed the revolutionaries, they would get rich at the expense of the nobles. That's what the revolutionaries promised the Ethiopians when we lived in Ethiopia. This is the kind of thing that you see in almost every rebellion. This is at the heart of the Occupy Movement. Anyway, in Nesta Webster's history of the French Revolution, he said,

Here is a remark habitual to him [Danton]: 'The Revolution should profit those who make it, and if the Kings enriched nobles the Revolution should enrich patriots.'<sup>3</sup> We shall find Danton giving vent to the same sentiments up to the very foot of the scaffold. Danton's own greed for gold led him to believe that the people were to be won by the same means; money he held to be the great lever by which the revolutionary mobs could be moved to action.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> He cites rudhomme, *Crimes de la Révolution*, iv. 162, for this quote.

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.yamaguchy.com/library/webster/french\\_revolution/fr\\_rev\\_07.html](http://www.yamaguchy.com/library/webster/french_revolution/fr_rev_07.html)

Well, to a large degree he was right. Promises of inheritance from government have caused most revolutions in the last three hundred years. And this has been the perpetual policy in America since FDR. People feel that the government owes them, and the politicians make themselves powerful by manipulating the population with such redistribution. On Thursday I posted this quote that Gary sent to me on my Facebook account. It said,

Columnist Burt Prelutsky [wrote]: "A reader of mine we'll call Ray sent me six contradictions that sum up the thinking of Progressives, or at least what passes for thinking in those bizarre quarters. It begins: 'One, America is capitalist and greedy, and yet half the population is subsidized. Two, half the population is subsidized, yet they regard themselves as victims. Three, they think they are victims, yet their representatives run the government. Four, their representatives run the government, yet the poor keep getting poorer. Five, the poor keep getting poorer, yet they have things that people in other countries only dream about. Six, they have things that people in other countries only dream about, yet they want America to be more like those other countries.' [aka Obamacare and other Socialistic programs that have impoverished those other countries.]

What a bundle of contradictions! Anyway, I thought it was well said. But this is at the heart of the Occupy Movement protests around America and around the world. Those are not lawful protests against tyranny. Those are unlawful examples of rebellion, and the envy can be seen everywhere. In effect they are saying, "We reject this government because it is not giving us enough. Where's our inheritance?" This indignation over economic inequality is at the heart of the Spanish Indignados protests. Anytime you see a protest against government that has anger over economic inequality and that expects the government to do something about it, you are witnessing rebellion. The protests demanding that the Republicans create jobs is a protest spawned by rebellion. And if you don't understand the difference between rebellion and lawful resistance, you shouldn't even get involved, because if you do, you are likely to be manipulated. Lawful resistance always appeals to God's lawful order. And if you want to get educated, I would urge you to read some of the old writings like, *A Defense of Liberty Against Tyrants*, by Junius Brutus, or *Lex Rex* by Samuel Rutherford.

***J. When it appeals to individualism and anarchy rather than to the covenant (v. 1g)***

Point J says that you can tell that it is rebellion by the fact that it appeals to individualism and anarchy rather than to the covenant. And

Thomas Paine had too much of this individualism. The last part of verse 1 says,

“Every man to his tents, O Israel!”

This is not States resisting the national government. This is every man to his tents. This was not cities interposing themselves against David. Sheba had no authority to call for either action. It was a call to individualism and anarchy (each man doing that which is right in his own eyes) rather than an appeal to any civil covenant. One commentator said,

This proverbial expression . . . was the usual watchword of national insurrection, and from the actual temper of the people, it was followed by effects beyond what he probably anticipated.<sup>5</sup>

There is no covenant connection when each man, each woman, and each child makes decisions independently. And of course, people with rebellion in their hearts will get their hackles up by my even making that statement. But it is true. Rebellion is the opposite of covenantal relationships. The American War for Independence was not rebellion. It was covenantal to the core. The Declaration of Independence was appealing to broken covenants. It makes no sense apart from covenant theology. Covenant families should have solidarity, and if there is need for resistance to tyranny within the family, it should be done lawfully by way of appeal to church elders. Covenant churches should have solidarity, and if resistance is needed, God has provided a way of appeal to presbytery. The same is true of various civil governments. There are lawful ways that the Bible gives to resist sin and tyranny within covenantal units. But rebellion has no patience for that. Rebellion takes matters into its own hands and if the covenant unit refuses to listen, they are out of here. Lawful resistance is always covenantal. Rebellion appeals to the individual, and to my desires, and to what I am willing to put up with. It may pretend to be doing this on behalf of “the people,” but rebellion always ignores the people who are in covenant with each other and ends up embracing anarchy.

***K. When it has no transcendent basis for loyalty (v. 2)***

The last telltale sign of rebellion is that it is incapable of loyalty because there is no transcendent basis for resistance or for loyalty. Verse 2 says,

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<sup>5</sup>Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, 1871, Accordance electronic ed. (Altamonte Springs: OakTree Software, 1996), n.p.

2Sam. 20:2 So every man of Israel deserted David, *and* followed Sheba the son of Bichri. But the men of Judah, from the Jordan as far as Jerusalem, remained loyal to their king.

So there is clearly loyalty on the one side and no loyalty on the other. But I want us to examine why. Let's take this verse apart piece by piece. The desertion is obvious, but notice that it wasn't the ten tribes deserting David. It was every man deserting David. They were not being loyal to the tribe. They are not being loyal to the covenant. Nor were they actually being loyal to Sheba. It might look like that when it says, "and followed Sheba." But how did they follow him? They followed him by imitating his rebellion, not by being loyal to him. They liked his *rebellion*, not *him*; they didn't even *know* who he was.

Lord willing, next week we will see several disastrous consequences of rebellion. But verse 14 and following highlight disastrous consequences to Sheba as well. Sheba went through all Israel trying to find some followers. Commentators point out that there were some who followed Sheba, but it wasn't all that he had hoped for. In fact, it was such a small number, that they were able to fit into a very small city in verse 15. And rather than fighting for him, in the following verses they chop off his head and given his head to Joab so as to avoid having to fight. There is no loyalty there.

So you know that it is likely rebellion when there is not any good basis for loyalty to the cause. They were *against* something in these verses, but they weren't *for* anything. Since there was nothing transcendent that formed the basis for their resistance, there was nothing transcendent that could form the basis for loyalty. The most that could be said as the basis for resistance was selfishness, and selfishness is not a very good basis for loyalty to the cause.

When push comes to shove, promising cell phones is not a very good basis for loyalty to Obama. Of course, if there is no push or shove, people might continue to like the handouts. But when times get tough, it takes the tough to keep going in resisting tyranny. And unless they have a transcendent reason to do so, it will fizzle; it will fall apart.

What do I mean by transcendent reasons? These would be reasons that go beyond my own selfish interests. They are reasons that are bigger than myself – in fact, big enough that I am willing to die for them. What made the founding fathers of America willing to lose their fortunes and their lives to fight against the Brits? Obviously not selfish reasons, because many lost

everything that a selfish person might fight for. No, they fought for freedom, for the rule of law, for the liberties of their children and grandchildren, for the cause of God and truth. They were driven by a vision that was far bigger than them. It was a vision that *inspired* them. Rebels have too small a vision to do that. But the signers of the Declaration of Independence said,

And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.

When you are driven by the big causes of the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God; when you are driven by a hatred for bureaucracy and lawless tyranny; when you are driven by a passion for liberty and lawful government under God, then you have the courage to enter into their kind of lawful resistance. But that is worlds apart from the rebellion of a Sheba. Most of our founding fathers despised the Sheba kind of rebellion – what they called a Jacobite rebellion. They recognized the dangers that we have looked at this morning. Thomas Paine was blind to them, but most of our founding fathers were covenantal, and they understood the dangers, and they resisted them.

As things get worse and worse in America, there will be the temptation to join with every rebel group that hates being told what to do. I would urge you not to join those groups. The Shebas of this world will not bring you liberty. They will bring you further bondage. Instead, join with Patriots around America who have a vision bigger than themselves and bigger than one generation, and be willing to make the sacrifices needed to restore our nation to being a nation under God and under His law. Resistance yes; rebellion no. Make David your example of liberty under God. Amen.

**II. To be continued next week**

## Godly Resistance vs Civil Rebellion

### 2 Samuel 20:1-2

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on

#### Introduction

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  - C. When it is run by ungodly characters (v. 1b – “son of Belial”)
  - D. When it breaks with a known entity to follow an unknown entity (vv. 1c with 2a)
  - E. When it has more sound than substance (v. 1d)
  - F. When the leader presumes to speak for your future and to speak your mind and your will (“we” - v. 1e)
  - G. When it wants to lead against lawful leadership (v. 1e)
  - H. When it leverages party principles over legal or theological issues (v. 1e)
  - I. When it is looking for handouts or appeals to envy (v. 1f)
  - J. When it appeals to individualism and anarchy rather than to the covenant (v. 1g)
  - K. When it has no transcendent basis for loyalty (v. 2)
- II. To be continued next week