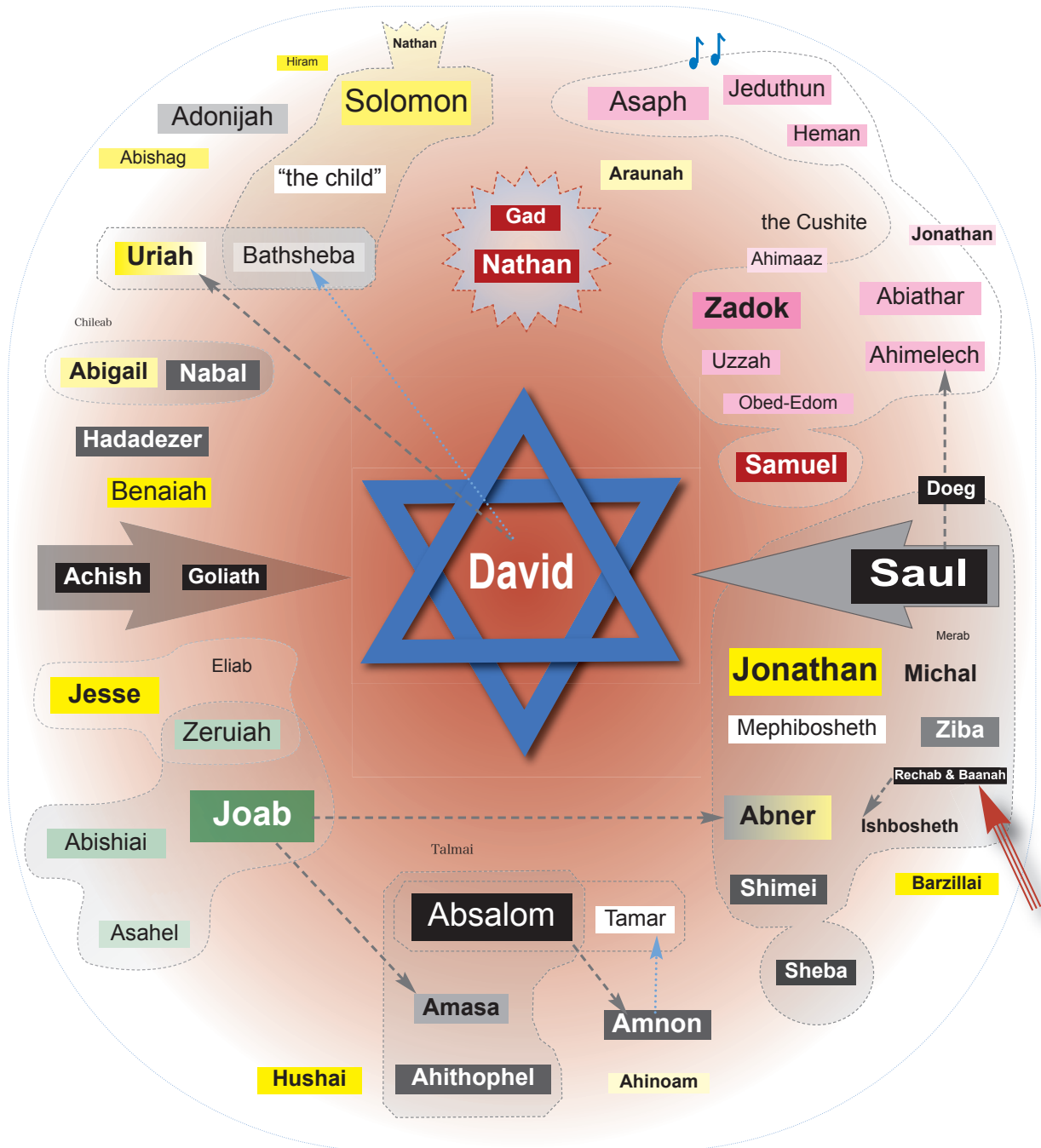


surrounded



people in the life of David

about Rechab and Baanah

1. If you have not read Second Samuel ch. four recently, you probably have no idea who Rechab and Baanah were. They are mentioned nowhere else in the Bible and are known for one thing; they killed King Ishbosheth, as indicated by the dotted line between them and Saul's son on the cover. The cover diagram also shows that they were Benjamites, as stated with emphasis up front in 4:2.

2. The gory nature of their crime, including the fact that these two men killed Ishbosheth in his own home and in his bed is stressed in 4:7 and 4:11. Somehow, even David knew this detail and the point is doubly stressed.

3. Those who have not recently read Second Samuel chs. one through five, the story of how David came to reign over the entire nation of Israel, may wonder why we should study these two obscure brothers. The reason is that they help demonstrate that it was the Lord who protected David and brought him to power, rather than he, himself, or wicked men (4:9).

4. Also the righteous character of David's early reign is demonstrated as he judged Rechab and Baanah in ch. four and the Amalekite in ch. one (referred to in 4:10). They were obviously bad (4:11), but David was a good judge, in contrast to Saul. (See 1 Sam. ch. 22.)

5. Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, is perhaps mentioned in 4:4 to explain why he wasn't also murdered. He appears again in chs. nine and 16.

6. Are you like Rechab and Baanah in some ways? If so, how?

descriptive terms

The list below will help you describe Rechab and Baanah as seen in 2 Sam. ch. four. Some terms fit them well, while others do not; so mark them as correct, incorrect or partly correct. You may also wish to put a question mark beside some phrases and terms because there is insufficient information to decide. Then use the list below to help fill out the worksheet on the opposite page.

brothers (4:2)

Benjamites (4:2)

military leaders (4:2)

close to Ishbosheth (4:2, 5-6)

angry at Ishbosheth (4:2, 10-11)

familiar with Mephibosheth (4:4)

doing the will of God

traitors (4:2-6)

murders (4:11)

cunning, treacherous (4:6-7)

afraid of being caught (4:7)

pretending to be pious (4:8)

wicked men (4:11)

unlike Ishbosheth (4:11)

seeking a reward (4:10-11)

like the Amalekite in ch. one

judged by David (4:9-12)

killed by David (4:12)

wrong about David (4:8-12)

unlike David

like Joab

important characters in Samuel

like worldly people today

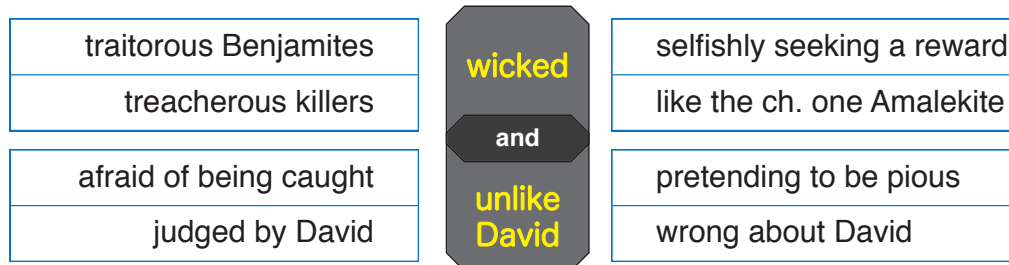
Rechab and Baanah

Obviously Rechab and Baanah were murderous and wicked men, just as David, himself, said at the end of Second Samuel four. The most important point of the chapter, however, is probably about David, that how he was different from them.

They were seeking a reward for killing a rival, but David didn't even think of Ish-bosheth as a rival. The long war with the house of Saul (3:1) was over. Perhaps David's commander-in-chief, Joab, who murdered Abner after the war had ended (3:27), would have rewarded these two Benjimites, but David did not. He was different from these two murderers in ch. four just as he was different from Joab, the murdered or Abner, in ch. three.

David thought and acted differently because he believed differently. Rechab and Baanah pretended to be pious (4:8), but David truly was God-centered. He knew that it was the Lord who had saved him from all his enemies and made him king (4:9). Wicked men, however, naturally assume that others are just as selfish and man-centered as themselves. So these two wicked men were fundamentally wrong about David and paid for their error and wickedness with their lives. The Amalekite in ch. one did so, as well. Thus David fulfilled his duty as God's anointed king to rid his kingdom of such great wickedness (4:11).

Rechab & Baanah were...



Sadly David, himself, later became a murderer by having Uriah killed to hide his sin with Bathsheba. His great sin in ch. 11, of course, greatly tarnished his reputation established in chs. one through five as a good king who judged righteously as God's rightful king. David, himself, later dealt treacherously and killed an innocent man. David too paid a great price for his sin from chs. 13 onward, though God forgave him and spared his life (12:13).

Is it fair then that Rechab and Baanah were judged so swiftly and severely in ch. four while David's life was spared in ch. 12? There's no easy answer, but here are a few helpful points. First, despite his sin, David was a genuine believer, while Rechab and Baanah apparently were not. Second, David repented and God forgave him. And third, God still disciplined David for his sins.