

Iron Man!

I. INTRO:

- A. "There is nothing," says *Socrates* to *CephAlus* in **the Republic**, "I like better than conversing with **aged men**. For I regard them as travelers who have gone a journey which I too may have to go, and of whom it is right to learn the character of the way, whether it is rugged or difficult, or smooth and easy" (p. 328 E.).
1. We get to meet 1 of the lesser-known characters of Scripture, & we might never have heard of him had it not been for his connection with King David.
 2. His name is **Iron Man!** - No, not the superhero from Marvel Comics, Tony Stark, (Robert Downey Jr.'s). This is *the original* Iron Man. His name, **Barzillai** (Heb Iron Man)
 3. 1st we need to reacquaint ourselves with 2 other men. *Shimei & Mephibosheth*.
- B. **Outline:** **Shimei**, Singing a Different Tune-Man; **Mephibosheth**, Misunderstood-Man; **Barzillai**, The Original Iron-Man.
- C. **Read** starting from vs.15.

II. SHIMEI, SINGING A DIFFERENT TUNE-MAN! (16-23)

- A. As a gesture of goodwill, David let Shimei live.
- B. David gives Shimei *Amnesty* (from a Gk word *amnesia/forgetfulness*)
- C. We want to ask the *Shimei's* of this world, "You're repenting because you **have to now, or you really meant it?**" Was he sincere?
1. **Do you know what a wine-brick is?** When wine was outlawed during the prohibition, bootleggers began to press **grape concentrates** into the form of **bricks**, which wasn't against the law. **On the label this warning was printed:** "Do not let this brick sit in a gallon of water for 21 days. It will ferment & become illegal wine." [That's insincere]
 2. If Shimei was **sincere** then we can learn 2 things from him here:
 - a) The knowledge of sin - **I have sinned** (owning it).
 - b) **And**, The best time to come - **the first to come today**.
 3. **If he was not sincere** - He had to appear repentant, it was his only hope.
- D. **Shimei** - a Benjamite, & related to Saul, blamed David for the destruction of Saul's family & kingdom.
1. Shimei probably nursed this grudge against David for 20 years, ever since the royal dynasty shifted from Saul to David.

2. Separated from David & his party by a deep ravine, he went along the hill opposite, casting stones & cursing.

E. Now Shimei's singing a different tune!

F. (21) Shimei's blasphemies against *the Lord's anointed* were a capital offense, as Abishai was zealous to point out.

1. **Caution:** *Abishai people* delight in **the letter of the law** & in watching people **get what they deserve**. There advice is always **Make Them Pay!!!**

G. 1st time David told Abishai no, because, "maybe this was judgment from the Lord."

1. This time he told him no because, "it was a day of **rejoicing**, not a day of vengeance."

H. Lets jump ahead to **the end** of Shemei's & his story. When David was on his deathbed.

1. **1 Kings 2:36-46** - When Solomon took over, he restricted him to Jerusalem so he could be watched. **Shimei overstepped his bounds, was arrested/executed**.

I. Shimei had a weakness for resisting authority & treating God's appointed ministers with disdain, & maybe that's why David cautioned Solomon.

1. Shimei didn't appreciate David's **mercy** or Solomon's **grace**, & his independence & arrogance finally caught up with him.

III. SHIMEI, *the* SINGING A DIFFERENT TUNE-MAN!

IV. **MEPHIBOSHETH, MISUNDERSTOOD-MAN! (24-30)**

A. As a gesture of goodwill, David gave back to Mephibosheth half of his grandfather's state.

B. *Ziba was Mephibosheth's head servant*. He was one of Saul's land managers. He was a custodian of Jonathan's crippled son Mephibosheth. *Ziba was an opportunist with evil motives*.

1. Ziba took advantage of both David & Mephibosheth.

a) David immediately disinherited Mephibosheth, giving his estate to Ziba instead.

2. David was weary & deeply wounded within, & it wasn't the best time for him to be making character decisions.

3. He accepted Ziba's story & made **a rash judgment** that gave Ziba the property.

a) Which was later/*here* discredited.

C. Note Mephibosheth **came down**(24)...not an easy task for someone handicapped in that day.

D. Mephibosheth made it clear that he wasn't asking his king for anything.

1. The king had given him life, so what more was there to desire?

E. Vs.30 must have stunned David.

1. It was about **Relationship** not **Real-estate!**
2. He was saying as Anne Graham Lotz immortalized *Take the world just give me Jesus!*
 - a) We sang the chorus, *You take the world, just give me You!*
3. **Can you say that? Are you willing to say that?** Would it sound closer to *let him take it all....but....*(this one thing)
4. *A songwriter wrote:*
 - a) I'd rather have **Jesus** than silver or gold, I'd rather have **Him** than have riches untold; I'd rather have **Jesus** than houses or lands, I'd rather be **led** by his nail-pierced hands.
5. **Who is this Jesus?** What makes Him so compelling **that...**¹
6. **A Yugoslavian nun** would give her life to comfort the dying in Calcutta for his sake?
7. Some of the **greatest architectural achievements** in Europe were built for worship of Him?
8. Some of the worlds most **beautiful art** was created to honor Him?
9. Some of the worlds most **glorious music** was written to praise Him?
10. 167 years after Rome crucified Him, He was acknowledged as **the only God in the Roman Empire?**
11. **Aleksander Solzhenitsyn**, rotting in a Siberian work camp, said **the very thought of Him was enough to keep his sanity?**
 - a) You take the world, just give me **Him!**

F. SHIMEI, *the* SINGING A DIFFERENT TUNE-MAN! Now, MEPHIBOSHETH, *the* MISUNDERSTOOD-MAN!

V. **BARZILLAI, THE ORIGINAL IRON-MAN! (31-39)**

- A. As a gesture of goodwill, David rewarded Barzillai by letting Chimham (most likely Barzillai's son) become a permanent member of the royal court.
- B. **Barzillai** (*of Iron*; a.k.a. *Iron Man*) was: **A Generous Man!** (ch.17); **A Contented Man!** (ch.19); & **A Remembered Man!** (1 Kings2:7)
 1. He shows us how to grow old **gracefully & beautifully.**
 2. He shows us not only how to **live**, **but** how to **die.**
 - a) **Most men don't know how to live let alone how to die.**
 - b) Many men will die like a man *run-down* in a race. **Or**, die with these words on there lips, *"Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"* that James warned of.

¹ Taken from pg.4 of Anne Graham Lotz, Just Give Me Jesus, book.

C. **A Generous Man!** (read 17:27-29)

1. Barzillai was one of the 3 wealthy landowners who met David when he arrived at Mahanaim. He actually lived 20-25 m. North in Rogelim.
 - a) He wasn't the type to *see how the wind would blow*...but jumped in to help.
2. He had no sins to confess, like Shimei; no misunderstanding to clear up, like Mephibosheth; & no favor to ask the king; he just wanted to give his best to the king!
3. He lived out Prov.11:24,25 **There is one who scatters(gives), yet increases more; And there is one who withholds more than is right(stingy), But it leads to poverty. The generous soul will be made rich, And he who waters(refreshes) will also be watered(refreshed) himself.**

D. **A Contented Man!** (ch.19)

E. Older people don't like to pull up their roots & relocate, & they usually want to die at home & be buried with their loved ones.

1. Here its his birthday, 80 years old, an *octogenarian*.

F. When you are a **kid** you describe age in fractions, "I'm five and a half."²

1. You **turn 30, reach 40, make 50, obtain 60, & someday you might hit 70.**
 - a) After that it's **day-to-day**. You're happy to **hit Wednesday**.
 - b) In your 80s, you **hit dinner!**
2. **Then it's really day-to-day.** They say your wild oats have turned to shredded wheat; and your narrow waist and broad shoulders have *switched places*. **Everything is starting to wear out, fall out, or spread out.** Your knees buckle and your belt won't. You have too much room in the house and not enough in the medicine cabinet. You look forward to a dull evening. You drive with your hands in the 10 and 2 o'clock position, and by the time you get out of the car, your grandkids are already in the house. You know your old when...*your favorite song is playing in the elevator.*

G. Solomon gave us one of the most imaginative descriptions of old age & death found anywhere in literature. (See Eccl.12:3-5 *You know your old when...*)

1. (3) **Keepers of the house tremble** – arms & hands in which we use to defend ourselves with, now tremble.
2. **Strong men bow down** – legs & knees weaken & you start to bend over.
 - a) Ray Stedman said, *"It's when your knees buckle but your belt won't!"*
3. **Grinders cease** – start to loose your teeth!
4. **Look through the windows** – fading of the eyesight as old age approaches.
 - a) Cataracts form, various eye problems develop.

² Adapted from Charles Lowery, "The Big 60".

5. (4) **Doors are shut in the street** – either hearing start to fail, or you keep your mouth shut because you lost your teeth.
 - a) Too many missing teeth, & the doors of the face & lips start to fall in.
6. **Sound of the grinding is low** – (grinding already referred to as teeth) there's not too much sound when you gum your food!
 - a) No more Grape-Nuts!
7. **Rise up at sound of bird** – You wish you could sleep longer but the littlest sound wakes you up in the morning.
8. **Daughters of music are brought low** – increased deafness, when the keyboard of the ear isn't playing music correctly anymore.
9. (5) **Afraid of height, & of terrors in the way** – stay away from ladders & heights. And don't go out at night.
10. **Almond trees blossom** – (are what color?) What hair you have left turns **white** like almond blossoms.
11. **Grasshopper is a burden** (NIV, *drags himself along*) – When you wake up in the morning your stiff & get up a little slower each day.
12. **Desire fails** – All appetites start to fail, even sexual desire. [Guys are glad this is last on the list] [and Solomon is writing *pre-Viagra!*]
13. **Man goes to his eternal home...the mourners mourn** – While you go home, people mourn your death.

H. **Key:** What Barzillai didn't need for *himself* he was willing for **others** to enjoy.

1. What a wonderful reminder of **generosity!**
2. How much is enough? Do I need it? Can I use it instead to bless someone else?
3. David Platt in his Book **Radical** (Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream) reminds us, "Slave owners actually thought they were generous when they gave their slaves **an extra chicken** at Christmas."
 - a) What we learn, "Good intentions, from good church goers, & even studying the bible do not prevent **blindness** in us."
 - b) We **see** what we want to **see** & we **ignore** what we want to **ignore**.
 - c) What will the Christians in 150 years look back on our generation & ask?
 - (1) How could they live in such big houses? How could they drive such nice cars & wear such nice clothes? How could they live in such affluence while thousands of children were dying because they didn't have food & water? How could they go on with their lives as though the billions of the poor didn't even exist? Is materialism a blind spot

in American Culture & Christianity today? More importantly, is materialism a blind spot in **your** Christianity today?³

(2) You might be thinking, *“Hey when I’m in my 80s, I’ll start thinking that way too!”*

(a) To which I would respond, I guarantee, this heart didn’t start in his 80’s. If anything, left to itself the flesh grows more **selfish** in time, not more **generous!**

4. I’ll ask it again, **How much is enough? Do I need it? Can I use it instead to bless someone else?**

I. **A Remembered Man!** (1 Kings2:7)

J. (38) Evidence that David kept his promise to treat **Chimham** well is found in **Jer. 41:17** where mention is made of a site near Bethlehem known as *Geruth Kimham* (lit.*the hospitality of Kimham*)

1. **The Habitation of Chimham** = **A roadside Inn or Khan or caravansary.**

a) **Caravansary** - 2 Persian words: **caravan** + **sara** (building with enclosed courts)

2. **Near Bethlehem...** Hmm, an Inn near Bethlehem?...could it be?

K. Barzillai had learned to **number his days**, & had **applied his heart to wisdom!**

L. **Are you a Barzillai? Are you an iron-man in someone’s life today?**

1. Everyday we will have Barzillai’s **duty & opportunity** also, **if only we** have Barzillai’s **mind & heart**. **Not that a king** will be in want or need us to rescue him in our neighborhood, **but good causes do**, & **needy & deserving men**, & **old and distressed friends**.

M. **SHIMEL, the SINGING A DIFFERENT TUNE-MAN!**

MEPHIBOSHETH, the MISUNDERSTOOD-MAN!

BARZILLAI, THE ORIGINAL IRON-MAN!

N. Next Week:

1. David’s troubles weren’t over yet, for the long-running feud between the **10 tribes**(The Hatfield’s) & **Judah**(The McCoy’s) would surface again & almost cause another civil war.⁴

2. Shakespeare was right: **“Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.”**

³ David Platt, Radical. Audiobook, Chapter 6, How Much Is Enough?

⁴ Warren Wiersbe, Be Restored, pg.125.