

NOON BIBLE STUDY: 2 SAMUEL 18-19

2 SAMUEL 18:1-4 - DAVID'S MEN PREPARE FOR BATTLE

V. 2 - 3 DIVISIONS OF TROOPS LED BY JOAB, ABISHAI & ITTAI

V. 3 - THE PEOPLE URGE DAVID TO STAY BEHIND BECAUSE OF HIS MILITARY VALUE. UNLIKE ABSALOM'S INITIAL PLAN, DAVID IS EAGER TO GO OUT WITH AND LEAD HIS BAND. BUT KNOWING HE IS THE KEY MAN OF THEIR MOVEMENT, THEY URGE HIM TO REMAIN BEHIND IN SAFETY UNTIL HE IS NEEDED.

2 SAMUEL 18:5 - DAVID COMMANDS THAT ABSALOM BE HANDLED GENTLY, FOR HIS SAKE

Q - WHAT DO YOU THINK OF DAVID MAKING THIS REQUEST?

Q - WHAT DO YOU THINK DAVID'S GENERALS THOUGHT OF THIS REQUEST?

"THOSE ORDERS WOULD MAKE SENSE IF ABSALOM WAS ABOUT TO ENTER THERAPY RATHER THAN WAR. THE ORDERS WERE CLEAR, PUBLIC, MEMORABLE, EVEN MOVING - BUT HARDLY WISE. AS ADAR POINTS OUT, DAVID'S ORDER" SHOWS THAT EVEN BEFORE BATTLE DAVID WAS WILLING TO ABANDON MILITARY AND MORAL CONSIDERATIONS IN VIEW OF HIS PERSONAL FEELINGS." (DALE RALPH DAVIS, FOCUS ON THE BIBLE: 2 SAMUEL, PG 229)

OH, HOW OUR FEELINGS CAN CLOUD OUR CLEAR VIEW AT TIMES...

2 SAMUEL 18:6-8 - DAVID'S MEN DECISIVELY VICTORIOUS

2 SAMUEL 18:9-18 - ABSALOM'S DEATH

V. 9 - ABSALOM'S ENTANGLEMENT IN THE BRANCHES OF THE OAK TREE WAS ACCIDENTAL.

V. 11-13 - THE MAN WHO HAPPENS TO FIND STILL ALIVE ABSALOM HANGING IN THE TREE CHOOSES TO INFORM JOAB ABOUT WHAT HE HAS SEEN. JOAB IS SHOCKED THAT THE MAN DID NOT KILL HIM, EVEN REFERENCING THAT JOAB WOULD HAVE REWARDED HIM IF HE HAD! BUT THE UNNAMED MAN DECLARES THAT HE HEARD THE KING'S CHARGE TO JOAB TO KEEP ABSALOM PROTECTED. HE IS WISE WHEN HE SAYS:

AND IF I HAD BETRAYED THE KING BY KILLING HIS SON-- AND THE KING WOULD CERTAINLY FIND OUT WHO DID IT-- YOU YOURSELF WOULD BE THE FIRST TO ABANDON ME." (2 SAMUEL 18:13, NLT)

V. 14-15 - JOAB THROWS SPEARS AT ABSALOM'S HEART AND HIS MEN FINISH KILLING ABSALOM. JOAB LOOKS AT ABSALOM AS THE CAUSE OF THE "MESS" GOING ON IN ISRAEL. HE TREATS HIM AS THE CAUSE OF A PLAGUE, AND MAY FEAR DAVID WOULD NOT. MORE ON THIS LATER...

V. 16-18 - ABSALOM IS BURIED IN A "DEEP PIT IN THE FOREST" WITH A "VERY GREAT HEAP OF STONES" PILED OVER HIS GRAVE. IRONICALLY, ABSALOM HAD BUILT A LARGE PILLAR TO SERVE AS A MEMORIAL FOR HIS NAME, (SINCE AT THIS POINT HE HAD NO SONS ALIVE TO CONTINUE HIS NAME/DYNASTY) YET IT IS A LARGE PILE OF FOREST ROCKS THAT SERVE AS HIS GRAVE. P. KYLE MCCARTER REMARKS THAT "THIS IS A BURIAL OF AN ACCURSED MAN" (2 SAMUEL, ANCHOR BIBLE COMMENTARY, VOL 9, PG 407)

2 SAMUEL 18:19-24 - MESSENGERS SENT TO DAVID

Q - WHY WOULD JOAB NOT WANT AHIMAAZ, SON OF ZADOK TO BE THE MESSENGER?

Q - WHAT DO YOU THINK JOAB ANTICIPATES DAVID'S REACTION WILL BE?

TO GAIN SOME CONTEXT, LET'S REMEMBER THAT AHIMAAZ WAS ONE OF THE MESSENGERS THAT WOULD BE SENT BY THE PRIESTS IN JERUSALEM TO INFORM DAVID ABOUT ABSALOM'S PLANS. AHIMAAZ WAS THE SON OF ZADOK, THE HIGH PRIEST.

2 SAMUEL 15:27 - THE KING SAID ALSO TO ZADOK THE PRIEST, "ARE YOU NOT A SEER? RETURN TO THE CITY IN PEACE AND YOUR TWO SONS WITH YOU, YOUR SON AHIMAAZ AND JONATHAN THE SON OF ABIATHAR.

2 SAMUEL 15:36 - "BEHOLD THEIR TWO SONS ARE WITH THEM THERE, AHIMAAZ, ZADOK'S SON AND JONATHAN, ABIATHAR'S SON; AND BY THEM YOU SHALL SEND ME EVERYTHING THAT YOU HEAR."

IT APPEARS THAT AHIMAAZ'S MESSAGE WAS NOT SPECIFIC REGARDING ABSALOM. HE SAYS TO JOAB "PLEASE LET ME RUN AND BRING THE KING NEWS THAT THE LORD HAS FREED HIM FROM THE HAND OF HIS ENEMIES. (18:19)" JOAB KNOWS THAT THE NEWS OF ABSALOM'S DEATH IS GOING TO BE DEVASTATING FOR DAVID, SO HE CHOOSES SEND AN UNNAMED CUSHITE. FROM THE TEXT, IT SEEMS THIS "CUSHITE" MAY HAVE BEEN THE ORIGINAL MAN WHO SAW ABSALOM HANGING FROM THE TREE. JOAB MAY BE SPARING AHIMAAZ FROM THE KING'S ANGER BY SENDING THIS FOREIGNER AS THE MESSENGER. BUT AHIMAAZ INSISTS THAT HE ALSO RUN TO BRING WORD OF THE BATTLE. HIS INSISTENCE MAY BE FROM A DESIRE TO COMPLETE THE JOB AS INFORMANT AND MESSENGER.

JOAB AGREES TO LET AHIMAAZ GO, IN ADDITION TO THE CUSHITE, BUT ONLY AFTER FIRST SENDING THE CUSHITE. JOAB ASSUMES THAT THE CUSHITE WILL INFORM DAVID OF THE NEWS, SO AHIMAAZ'S ROLE WILL BE REDUNDANT. BUT WHAT JOAB DOESN'T FIGURE IN IS THAT AHIMAAZ TRAVELS A MORE EFFICIENT ROUTE (AND PERHAPS IS FASTER) THAN THE CUSHITE AND BEATS HIM TO DAVID! UT OH...

SOMETIMES OUR PLANS TO COVER OUR TRACKS, COVER OUR SINS, TO HIDE TRUTH FROM OTHERS, ESPECIALLY GOD SEEM SO GOOD. WE DEVISE PLANS THAT SEEM FLAWLESS, TO US. BUT THE LORD IS THE RULER OF THE UNIVERSE. NOTHING ESCAPES HIS NOTICE.

THE BIBLE IS FILLED WITH EXAMPLES OF THIS STRATEGY NOT WORKING. ADAM AND EVE HIDE FROM GOD IN THE GARDEN. ABRAHAM SLEPT WITH HAGAR TO HAVE CHILD. AARON BLAMED THE PEOPLE FOR MAKING THE GOLDEN CALF. SAUL MADE EXCUSES TO SAMUEL. DAVID CALLED UURIAH BACK FROM THE BATTLEFIELD TO SLEEP WITH BATHSHEBA. ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA DONATED MONEY AND TOLD PETER THAT THEY HAD GIVEN ALL OF IT.

THE COMMON THREAD ABOUT THESE STORIES IS THAT THE DECEPTION AND PLOTTING, ALWAYS ENDS UP BACKFIRING. HONESTY, CONTRITION, CONFESSION, ACCOUNTABILITY, ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY, TRUTH NO MATTER THE THREATENED CONSEQUENCE IS THE WAY OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

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V. 1-5 - THE BURDEN OF UNCONFESED SIN, THE FREEDOM OF CONFESSED SIN

V. 6-7 - THE RIGHT PLACE TO GO WHEN AFRAID, OR IN SIN IS TO THE LORD

V. 8-9 - GOD SPEAKING

V. 10-11 - WHICH ONE DO YOU WANT TO BE?

2 SAMUEL 18:24-33 - DAVID HEARS OF ABSALOM'S DEATH

DAVID ASSUMES THAT THERE IS GOOD NEWS WHEN HE SEES AHIMAAZ APPROACHING HIS CAMP.

V. 24-25 - ESV STUDY BIBLE: "A MAN RUNNING ALONE WOULD BE A MESSENGER; A GROUP WOULD PROBABLY BE MEN FLEEING."

THERE IS GOOD NEWS TO GIVE DAVID, FOR THE TROUBLE IN HIS KINGDOM IS OVER. BUT ABSALOM'S DEATH IS A KEY REASON THAT IS TRUE, AND THIS NEWS IS NOT GOING TO PLEASE THE KING. IN 18:29, WE LEARN THAT AHIMAAZ DOESN'T TELL DAVID HE IS SURE ABOUT ABSALOM (HE WAS THOUGH CP. V. 20). SO DAVID'S RESPONSE IS MIXED. HE WANTS TO KNOW ABOUT HIS SON'S FATE. IN THAT IN THE VERY MOMENT DAVID SEES THE CUSHITE MESSENGER APPEARS.

ABSALOM WAS A GREAT THORN IN DAVID'S SIDE, THE CAUSE OF GREAT JOY AND ANGUISH DURING HIS LIFETIME. BUT HIS DEATH IS NO TIME TO REJOICE - ABSALOM WAS DAVID'S SON. WITH HIS DEATH, THERE IS NOW NO LONGER A CHANCE OF RECONCILIATION. AND SO A FATHER MOURNS FOR HIS SON.

AND ON A DEEP LEVEL, REMEMBER THAT DAVID WAS TOLD "THE SWORD SHALL NEVER DEPART FROM YOUR HOUSE (2 SAMUEL 12:10)" AS A RESULT OF HIS SIN. THIS IS NOW THE 3RD SON THAT HAS PERISHED IN THE CONTINUING RIPPLE EFFECT OF DAVID'S SIN. WITHOUT A DOUBT, ABSALOM IS AT FAULT, BUT DAVID GRIEVES, POSSIBLY AWARE OF HIS OWN CONTRIBUTION TO THIS TRAGIC DAY.

2 SAMUEL 19:1-8 - JOAB CONFRONTS DAVID

DAVID IS TORN BETWEEN HIS TWO ROLES - FATHER AND KING. AS A FATHER HE GRIEVES, BUT AS A KING HE SHOULD BE CELEBRATING AND LEADING. HIS PASSIVITY OPENS THE DOOR FOR COMMANDER JOAB TO COMMAND KING DAVID. WHEN JOAB HEARD OF DAVID'S WEeping, HE FINDS HIM TO CONFRONT DAVID. IT IS AN INTERESTING ANGLE JOAB APPEALS TO - THE LOYALTY AND SACRIFICE OF DAVID'S PEOPLE - CONTRASTING ABSALOM'S REBELLION.

THESE CHAPTERS HIGHLIGHT VICTORY, BUT A VICTORY MUDDIED WITH HEARTBREAK AND SORROW.