

Hello everyone,

PERCENT OF BIBLE COMPLETED: 28.1%

Weekly Readings will cover: 2 Samuel 13 through 19 & Psalm 3

Sunday: 2 Samuel 13

Monday: 2 Samuel 14

Tuesday: 2 Samuel 15

Wednesday: 2 Samuel 16 & Psalm 3

Thursday: 2 Samuel 17

Friday: 2 Samuel 18

Saturday: 2 Samuel 19

Current # of email addresses in the group: 605

I hope each of you enjoyed reading through last week's passages. This week is much more straightforward and is not as long as last week. I hope you enjoy the study.

Website archive location for audio files & PDFs:

<https://www.ucg.org/congregations/san-francisco-bay-area-ca/posts/audio-links-re-three-year-chronological-deep-dive-reading-program-circa-2022-2025-903711>

3-YEAR CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY: Week 48

Read the following passages & the Daily Deep Dive on the daily reading.

Day 309 - SUNDAY: December 10th

2 Samuel 13

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: ""The Tamar/Amnon/Absalom story is not simply a tale of lust and a brother's revenge. Amnon, as David's oldest son (2 Samuel 3:2-5), was first in line for the throne. Kileab [or Chileab] had apparently died [as Absalom will act as heir apparent on his return from exile following Amnon's death, see 2 Samuel 15:1-3], so Absalom was next in line after Amnon. Rivalry already existed between Amnon and Absalom! We need to understand the political implications of the events to fully understand the story" (Lawrence Richards, *The Bible Reader's Companion*, 1991, note on 2 Samuel 13).

David, by his sin, had set a horrible example for his children—that of a man unable to govern his passions. We now find Amnon, David's firstborn, unable to govern *his* passions. He is in "love" with his virgin half-sister Tamar, David's daughter by Maacah. David's only daughter recorded in Scripture, Tamar is the full sister of Absalom.

Marriage to a sister or half-sister is forbidden (Leviticus 18:11). So Amnon's infatuation cannot be satisfied. Yet he is so obsessively consumed with his longing for her that he visibly loses weight. Upon discovering the reason for this, his crafty cousin Jonadab encourages Amnon to pursue his wicked desire by using trickery to get Tamar alone with him. The plot succeeds, but she refuses his urging her to lie with him, suggesting rather that he ask for her hand of the king—no doubt a ploy to escape the situation, as she certainly knows that David cannot legally grant such a request. Undaunted, Amnon forces himself upon her. The words "he forced her" here "can also mean, 'he humiliated her.'" Victims of rape sometimes speak more strongly of their humiliation than of the physical pain they were made to suffer" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on 2 Samuel 13:14). Of course, it was undoubtedly physically painful—but the psychological anguish she suffered was likely much worse.

There is a strong distinction between love and lust. The Scriptures reveal the true characteristics of love. Love is kind. It does not seek its own gratification. It does not think evil. It does not rejoice in iniquity (1 Corinthians 13). In contrast, lust requires immediate gratification. It is totally contrary to the way of love. Amnon's "love" reveals itself for what it is—perverted *lust*—in the rape and in his attitude immediately following it. Amnon now *hates* his sister. Once his lust and his desire to conquer were satisfied, there was a big letdown as he realized he had no real love for Tamar. "The sudden revulsion is easily accounted for; the atrocity of his conduct, with all the feelings of shame, remorse, and dread of exposure and punishment, now burst upon his mind,

rendering the presence of Tamar intolerably painful to him" (*Jamieson, Fausset & Brown's Commentary*, note on verse 15). Perhaps he even irrationally blames her for what she has "made him do."

Amnon tells her to "be gone" (verse 15). But she does not. Defiled and with no apparent witnesses to what has happened, she will be left shamed and destitute, with no prospect for future marriage. Amnon, however, will hear none of it. He summons a servant and orders him to put her out. Tamar is devastated by this horrific ruining of her life. She is overcome with grief and despair. After telling Absalom of her plight, her brother encourages her to keep the matter to herself, which she does, while he plots revenge. Absalom certainly cares for his sister—later naming his own daughter after her (2 Samuel 14:27). But remember that, secondarily, politics were probably also involved in this matter. Absalom now has what he perhaps reasons to be a legitimate reason to dispose of Amnon and become heir to the throne.

David, though becoming extremely angry on hearing of the matter, takes no action at all. As to why this is we can only guess. First of all, there may have been some confusion in the case since, upon Absalom's urgings, Tamar did not make the matter public. Secondly, while seizing a betrothed woman and having sexual relations with her against her will was a capital crime punishable by death under Israel's civil code, the death penalty was not mandated for seizing an *unbetrothed* woman and having sexual relations with her. The preset punishment in this case was the payment of a bride price and a forced marriage for life if the father so deemed (see Deuteronomy 22:28-29). Could that be allowed here? After all, Abraham being married to Sarah, his half sister, might seem to serve as precedent (compare Genesis 20:12). But since the time of Moses, incest with even a half-sister was punishable by the death of both participants (Leviticus 20:17).

Yet if it could be ascertained that the woman was unwilling in the act of incest, just as in the matter of the rape of a betrothed woman, she would not be punished—only the man. It is possible that Tamar did not "cry out" when she was raped or was not heard (compare Deuteronomy 22:24). Furthermore, there was evidently no examination to determine that defilement had taken place. It would seem, however, that a thorough interrogation of those who had been sent out before the rape (compare 2 Samuel 13:9), might have yielded the essence of what had happened—perhaps some actually did hear a cry from Tamar but were afraid of retribution from Amnon. Remember that someone could only be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Tamar was only one witness if Amnon refused to testify against himself—although evidence itself could also be considered a "witness" in a matter, as the New Testament makes clear (compare 1 John 5:7-8, NRSV).

Nevertheless, David, as already stated, does nothing—he apparently does not even investigate the matter. Perhaps he doesn't want to shame his own household—particularly with a possible lack of needed evidence. Or it may just be that, as with many parents, David is trying to protect his son from the consequences of his actions. Indeed, David displays an apparent unwillingness to appropriately discipline his children, as can be seen even at the end of his life in the example of Adonijah (see 1 Kings 1:6). And even others of his relatives, such as Joab, sometimes literally get away with murder.

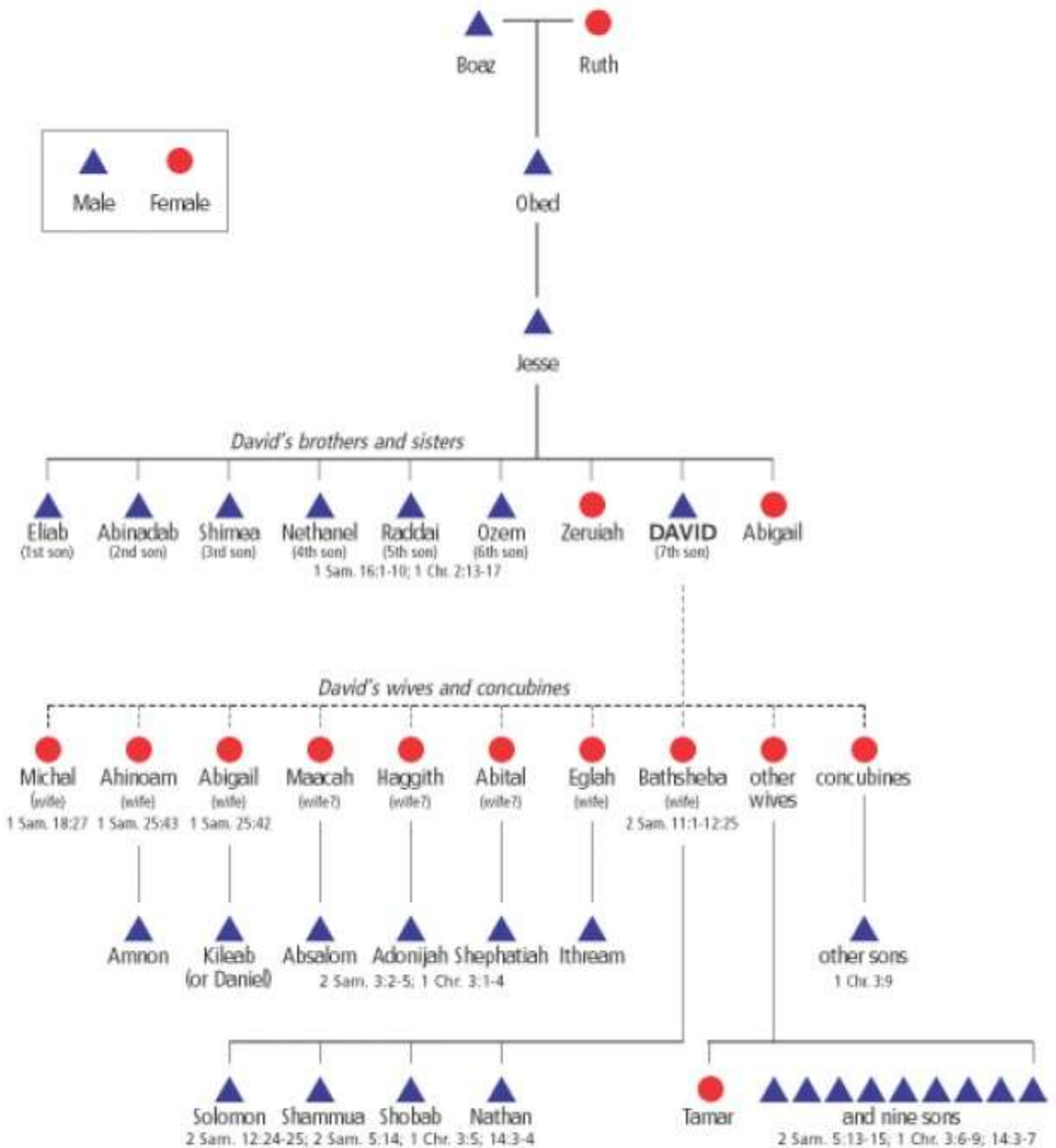
Of course, none of this explains why David took no action on Tamar's behalf, given the normally deep-seated sense of protection a father feels for a daughter. Perhaps David was giving special consideration to Amnon as firstborn and heir apparent. Or it could be that David, having been spared the death penalty in his own adultery and even murder, is unwilling to put his son to death for less. Although David had repented of his sins, he was probably still burdened with feelings of guilt. Often

those who feel guilty are reluctant to take a strong moral stand, feeling they have lost their moral authority and would be hypocritical to take firm action. This often contributes to a downward moral spiral in families and nations. It may even be that David felt his own sin was partly responsible for what happened, since one of its consequences was to be family infighting.

Remember, God had proclaimed that the sword would never depart from David's house (2 Samuel 12:10). And that sword first comes when, two years after Tamar's rape, Absalom finally exacts his revenge. David won't do anything about Amnon—but Absalom does. The deed completed, David's oldest son—an incestuous rapist—is dead. And the one who is now his oldest son is a fugitive from justice charged with murder.

Absalom flees the country to Geshur, northeast of the Sea of Galilee, receiving amnesty from the king there, Talmai, who is his grandfather on his mother's side (see 3:3). There he remains for three years. As David's grief over Amnon's death gradually subsides, he desires a restored relationship with Absalom but perhaps views it as inappropriate to pursue it anytime soon under the circumstances.

The Family of David



Verses 5 & 7 – The Hebrew word translated “meat” (NKJV) can simply be translated bread or food as it’s a general word for food and comes from the root word “to feed”.

This was a heavy chapter. What a sad awful story.

Day 310 - MONDAY: December 11th

2 Samuel 14

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: “Absalom certainly didn't grow up in a good family situation. Remember, David had six sons by six different women in seven and a half years (see 2 Samuel 3:2-5; 2 Samuel 5:5), of whom Absalom was the third. The marriage of his mother, Maacah, daughter of King Talmi of Geshur, to David was undoubtedly a political one, and thus there was probably little love involved in it. This was far from ideal for God intended the stable home environment of a loving, monogamous marriage to produce godly offspring (see Malachi 2:15). But sadly, Absalom and his other siblings have been denied this. This is not to say that people cannot overcome an adverse family situation, as a number of biblical heroes did. It is just to point out that those in such circumstances begin with a disadvantage. Furthermore, it appears that David was rarely home while his earlier children were growing up. Instead, he was away fighting wars (compare 2 Samuel 3-10). This is not stated to condemn David, as these wars carved out the empire God intended Israel to attain. Rather, it is to help us understand the added difficulty Absalom and David's other earlier children had while growing up. And it should also serve as a lesson that a person can be righteous and still need to work on properly balancing work and family responsibilities.

It should also be pointed out that Absalom was a teenager when David committed his terrible sin with Bathsheba and Uriah. How disillusioning this must have been for the boy. His father, the righteous king and great hero, reduced to this. David's actions surely left an impression on his children. Furthermore, besides the natural consequences all of these factors might have produced on their own, God's punishment of turmoil as a consequence of David's sin is now directly at work in David's family. Amnon's character was probably, in part, a result of the same upbringing Absalom experienced. The weaknesses in both of David's sons played a part in the awful circumstances of our previous reading—and the continuing turmoil that God had foretold.

In his longing to see Absalom (2 Samuel 13:39), David perhaps thought about some of the mistakes he had made as a father. He probably couldn't help but realize the fact that his own sin of adultery and murder was, at least in part, responsible for what was happening.

Joab, perhaps viewing the king's distraction over the matter as a threat to national security, devises a scheme to get David to reexamine the whole situation and reestablish a relationship with his son. He sends a woman to tell the king a supposedly parallel story—as Nathan had done earlier following David's sin with Bathsheba. Yet this story is only partially parallel: "The fictitious story does not fit Absalom's case, which involved premeditated murder with known hostile intent (2 Samuel 13:32). David could only have responded as he did because he wanted his son to return so badly (cf. vv. 37-39)" (*Bible Reader's Companion*, note on 14:1-4).

However, there may have been a mitigating circumstance in Absalom's killing of Amnon that David could have considered, though it isn't stated in the account. God equated rape with murder—"for just as when a man rises against his neighbor and kills him, even so is this matter" (Deuteronomy 22:26). Though rape in this verse is that of an

engaged or married woman, the rape of a sister, who could not legally marry her guilty brother, was surely just as heinous. Indeed, both crimes merited the death penalty. Had Amnon *murdered* Tamar, Absalom could have, according to the law, pursued and killed him as the "avenger of blood." Perhaps there was some justification, then, for avenging something that was evidently *on par* with murder. Moreover, David may have come to reason that he should have personally ordered Amnon put to death—and that Absalom was justified for doing what he did upon David's own failure to act.

In any case, David acquiesces to Joab's wish to have Absalom brought back. However, the king refuses to see his son face to face for another two years. Perhaps he cannot break through the barrier of resentment that has built up over the killing of Amnon. Yet this just serves to further fuel Absalom's growing resentment. For consider how atrocious this is from the young man's perspective. First, his father would not punish Amnon for defiling his sister. Then, he is not allowed to see his father for three years. When his father at last sends for him to come back, he still refuses to see him for two more years, which must have been humiliating. It is apparently during these five years that Absalom's children are born, some at Jerusalem. And yet David will not even deign to visit his own grandchildren. Worse, it may even be that some of Absalom's sons die in infancy during this period—as we later see a declaration from him that he has no sons (2 Samuel 18:18)—and yet David still won't come to see Absalom, and neither will he allow Absalom to see him.

Absalom finally presses Joab into intervening, which results in a meeting at last between David and his son—Absalom bowing his head to the ground and the king kissing him. "The kiss was the symbol of their reconciliation. Although David and Absalom were reconciled, the seeds of bitterness that had been sown would soon bear the fruit of conspiracy and rebellion. David's protracted delay in coming to terms

with his son ultimately led to disaster. For the moment, though, there was peace" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on 14:33).

The Scriptures tell us that it is always best to resolve our differences and not let them drag on. There is no other way out. If an offense occurs, both parties should seek settlement and reconciliation. One of David's major faults was that of not addressing family problems head on, along with not spending the time to guide, direct and correct his children in a timely manner. David, a man after God's own heart, was by no means an evil person. Rather, like all of us, he made mistakes—and those mistakes had serious consequences." [END]

Verse 26 – John Gill says that the weight of his hair would be about 100 ounces (or 6.25 pounds).

Day 311 - TUESDAY: December 12th

2 Samuel 15

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: "Chapter 15 of 2 Samuel opens with Prince Absalom beginning to present himself as successor to the throne (verse 1). He also presents himself as one who empathizes with the plight of the people and their personal grievances. There may be a measure of truth in David being busied with affairs of state and somewhat cut off from the citizenry. Absalom may even sincerely resent this, considering David's mishandling of his own situation. Perhaps he really does believe he would do a better job of caring for the populace. Still, even if he is thinking this way, it may simply be a way to rationalize his personal ambition. He wants to be king. And, by personal charm and promises, Absalom, the premier politician, over time steals the hearts of the people from his father.

Absalom finally conspires with others to instigate a full-scale revolt. He engineers to have himself declared king in Hebron, where David was

first crowned (2 Samuel 2:1-7; 2 Samuel 5:1-5). As we'll examine further later, Absalom is even joined by Ahithophel, "David's counselor" (2 Samuel 15:12)—this term perhaps implying *main* counselor, such as a prime minister or chief of staff (compare 1 Chronicles 27:33-34). After David sinned with Bathsheba and Uriah, God told him through Nathan, "Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house" (2 Samuel 12:11). And indeed, his own son has now become his chief adversary—leading a national rebellion against him. David is now reaping what he sowed in his own *personal* rebellion against God (compare Galatians 6:7-8).

Informed of what is happening, David wisely flees from Jerusalem with his trusted servants, lest Absalom's armies trap them all. They head east across the Kidron Valley toward the Judean wilderness. A Levitical contingent led by Zadok and Abiathar bring the Ark of the Covenant to strengthen and encourage the king. But he sends them back to the city with it. "It was David who was going into exile, not the Lord; the symbol of God's presence with his people would remain in the place of worship for the entire community" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on 2 Samuel 15:24-26). David also believes the priests will serve well as effective spies. As for whether David will be restored to his place in Jerusalem as well, he leaves that in God's hands. When he first fled, he apparently felt God would give the city back to him, as he otherwise would probably not have left 10 concubines there to take care of the palace (verse 16). Interestingly, this decision will have incredible consequences. Indeed, as we will see, this will lead to one of the punishments God had decreed for David because of his adultery with Bathsheba.

While the priests return the ark to its place on Mount Zion, David and his company ascend the Mount of Olives, east of the city, with outward signs of mourning (compare Jeremiah 14:3; Ezekiel 24:17). Upon reaching the top, David worships God (2 Samuel 15:32), no doubt looking across the Kidron Valley to Mount Zion, where the ark and its

tent sit next to his palace. He has just received the terrible news that Ahithophel has joined the rebellion—terrible because, besides being a personal betrayal that may be reflected in Psalms 55:12-14 and Psalms 41:9 (also prophetic of Christ's betrayal by Judas), Ahithophel gave brilliant counsel (2 Samuel 16:23). And as David is worshiping and beseeching God over the matter, he receives an answer to his prayers in the appearance of another of his advisers, Hushai—whom he sends to infiltrate Absalom's court and work against Ahithophel.” [END]

Verses 3 to 5 – Any person who is in need of having their case heard, wants to hear that they are right. This is politics, essentially kissing babies and trying to win favor. Absalom promises that if he were in power, he would hear their case and rule in their favor. He then represents himself as a close person to them, by taking and kissing their hand, versus being treated like royalty. Absalom is no fool to how to win the hearts of the people.

Verse 7 – Regarding the 40 years, the John Gill commentary states “Or four years; so long it was from the reconciliation of Absalom to David, as Josephus says; and so read Theodoret on the place, the Syriac and Arabic versions: but some say it was either forty years from the time Israel first had a king; and which might be an era of reckoning with the Jews, as the era of Seleucidae was with the Greeks, on the like account; or from the time Saul slew the priests at Nob, as Jerom; or from the time of David's being anointed by Samuel; or this was the year of Absalom's age, or of David's reign: but these, and other attempts made to account for this passage, are not entirely satisfactory; and therefore one may be tempted to conclude there must be a mistake in the copy, of "arbaim" for "arba", forty for four; which makes it quite easy, and confirms the first sense:” [END]

Verse 11 – A vow offering, was a type of peace offering (Leviticus 7:16) and all who were clean could share in the offering. Here it appears that

Absalom invites a large group to partake in the feast from the Peace Offering (Vow), but they have no idea about his real plan.

Verse 27 – The Adam Clarke commentary states: “That is, As thou art the only organ of the public worship, that worship cannot be carried on without thee; and as thou art the priest of God, thou hast no cause to fear for thy personal safety: the nation has not abandoned their God, though they have abandoned their king. It appears also, that he wished these priests, by means of their sons, Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar, to send him frequent intelligence of the motions and operations of the enemy.” [END]

Day 312 - WEDNESDAY: December 13th

2 Samuel 16 & Psalm 3

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: “Moving on, just past the summit of the Mount of Olives, David's entourage runs into Ziba, the steward of Jonathan's son Mephibosheth. Surprisingly, he tells the king that Mephibosheth is now expecting the kingdom to be given back to the family of Saul by virtue of what is happening in Israel. But this may actually be a lie, as we are later given a completely different report by Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 19:24-30). Nevertheless, David is unaware of this "other side of the story." Moreover, Ziba is clearly bearing gifts for the king and his household, putting himself in mortal danger from Absalom by helping them. So the king, without inquiry, accepts Ziba at his word and grants to him all that belongs to Mephibosheth.

Continuing on a little further east, David's company arrives at Bahurim, where Shimei, a man from the same clan as Saul's family, begins following David and cursing him along the way—implying that David is a usurper guilty of overthrowing Saul and his dynasty. Though David is totally innocent of this charge, he realizes Absalom's rebellion is due to actual sin on his part. And for this reason, he accepts Shimei's railing as

part of God's judgment upon him even though the man is breaking the law by cursing the king (compare Exodus 22:28).

It is evidently the next day when David composes Psalm 3, after a night's sleep (compare superscription, verse 5). It might be surprising to learn that he is able to sleep at all under such stressful conditions. Yet he recalls the previous day when he prayed to God from the Mount of Olives, looking across to His "holy hill," and how God answered him (verse 4). Reassured and trusting in God, he is able to rest secure even in this troubling time.

David's decision to leave 10 concubines, i.e., unofficial wives, at the palace will now be taken advantage of by his enemies. Ahithophel advises Absalom to lie with these women. *The Nelson Study Bible* notes: "In ancient times, taking over a king's harem was a recognized means of claiming the throne. When Ahithophel advised Absalom to have sexual relations with David's concubines, he knew that this would finalize the breach between Absalom and David. It was an irrevocable action. Up to this point, Absalom would have been able to back away from all that he had done and still be reconciled to his father. But once he violated the harem of David, he was set on a course of sure and final alienation from his father" (note on 2 Samuel 16:22). But there is more going on here.

It is clear that these events are bringing to pass the final punishment God had decreed on David through Nathan after David's sin of taking his neighbor Uriah's wife and murdering him. God had said, "I will take *your* wives before your eyes and give them to *your* neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun" (2 Samuel 12:11-12). Thus the manner in which Ahithophel counseled Absalom to go about his deed: "The tent that Absalom pitched in the sight of all Israel was probably a bridal tent. Absalom made the people of Israel fully aware that he was engaging in sexual relations with his

father's concubines. Putting the tent on the roof of the palace was an insolent act that was guaranteed to stir the populace one way or another" (note on 2 Samuel 16:22)." [END]

Verse 23 – John Gill's commentary states: "Ahithophel was a crafty man, a time server, that temporized with princes, and knew how to suit his counsels with their tempers and interests: to David he gave good counsel, what was acceptable with him, and to Absalom bad counsel, which was pleasing to him." [END]

Psalm 3 – The UCG reading program states "begins a thematic grouping of 12 of David's psalms (3-14), as we will later see in conjunction with Psalm 8 and Psalm 14.

Psalm 3 is the lament David composed when he fled from his son Absalom. Driven by ambition to become king himself, Absalom turned the hearts of the people away from David. David despairs that so many have turned against him (verse 1). They no longer believe God is with him to help him (verse 2).

The phrase "lifts up my head" (verse 3) expresses David's belief that God will raise him up from the humiliation he suffers. In 2 Samuel 15:30 we read of the sad occasion of David being driven out of Jerusalem: "So David went up by the Ascent of the Mount of Olives, and wept as he went up and he had his head covered and went barefoot. And all the people who were with him covered their heads and went up, weeping as they went up."

In spite of intense enemy opposition, David is able to sleep without fear, "for the Lord sustained me" (verses 5-6). The KJV and NKJV translation of verse 7 says that God has come to David's defense before. However, the NIV translates verse 7 as a present request for God to "strike all my enemies on the jaw; break the teeth of the

wicked." Even if the latter is correct, God has indeed intervened for David before and will certainly do so again—just as He will for all of us who place our trust in Him." [END]

Day 313 - THURSDAY: December 14th

2 Samuel 17

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states in regard to the end events of chapter 16: "Yet why would Ahithophel be the one to advise such a thing? Indeed, why has Ahithophel joined Absalom's rebellion? And why does he now hate David so much to the point of wanting to be the one to lead the attack to actually kill him (2 Samuel 17:1-2)? It all makes sense when we remember that Ahithophel is the grandfather of Bathsheba (compare 2 Samuel 11:3; 2 Samuel 23:34). And his son, her father Eliam or Ammiel, was a close companion of Uriah (compare verses 34, 39; 1 Chronicles 3:5). Author Grant Jeffrey explains, "As David's counselor in the palace, Ahithophel must have burned with rage to know his king had betrayed his granddaughter's honor and killed Uriah, her husband, who was a fellow soldier with his son Eliam, Bathsheba's father. However, there was nothing he could do at the time to exact his revenge. If he had risen in anger against the king he would have lost his life. So he remained silent, keeping his thoughts of revenge secretly to himself all of the years that followed until he saw an opportunity to destroy King David. The Arabs have an expression, 'That a man who seeks his revenge before forty years has past has moved in haste'" (*The Signature of God*, 1996, pp. 244-245). With this in mind, we can see why Ahithophel would join Absalom's rebellion and offer to kill David personally. And we can understand why it was Ahithophel who instructed Absalom to lie with his father's wives "in the sight of all Israel." He was, no doubt, "attempting to get his revenge by encouraging Absalom to do the same thing to David's wives as the king had done to his granddaughter" (p. 245).

Though Absalom follows Ahithophel's advice concerning David's concubines, he and his lieutenants are persuaded by Hushai to reject Ahithophel's plan of attack. The shrewdness of Hushai's counsel is demonstrated in his carefully worded evaluation that Ahithophel's advice is not good "at this time" (2 Samuel 17:7). In other words, Hushai did not reject Ahithophel's counsel outright. Instead, his criticism of merely the timing of the plan showed respect for Ahithophel's wisdom, which may have served to deter suspicion from himself. Of course, verse 14 explains that Hushai's success is really *God's* doing. Remarkably, while God has been using circumstances to actually bring about Absalom's rebellion as punishment on David—in that sense "helping" Absalom—we now see that God is determined to bring Absalom down and ultimately save David.

With his counsel rejected, Ahithophel hangs himself (verse 23). "He apparently realized that Absalom's cause was doomed, and that when David returned he would be put to death as a disloyal subject" (*Nelson*, note on verse 23)." [END]

Verse 19 – John Gill states regarding “ground corn” (NKJV): “just taken out of the mill, before it was sifted, while in the bran; or corn unhusked, or just threshed out, in order to be dried in the sun, and then parched; or wheat bruised for that purpose:”

Verse 27 – John Gill states: “who was either the son, or rather the brother of Hanun king of the Ammonites, that used David's ambassadors in so shameful a manner, whom David overcame and deposed, and set up this brother in his room; who had showed his dislike of his brother's conduct, and now makes a grateful return to David for his favours;” [END]

Day 314 - FRIDAY: December 15th

2 Samuel 18

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: “

It is interesting to see Absalom's forces referred to as "Israel" and the "people of Israel" (2 Samuel 18:6-7). The appearance is one of a popular uprising—wherein this "army of the people" proves no match against David's experienced troops. The thick woods, rather than concealing and aiding their escape, "devoured more people that day than the sword devoured" (verse 8). Perhaps many died from forest-related injuries, exhaustion, entanglement, exposure, wild animals, etc. The verse could also mean that the forest hindered those fleeing from the field of battle so David's men could more easily catch them. Whatever the case, the observation concerning the part nature played in the outcome is significant—for nature falls within the providence of God.

Indeed, Absalom himself is trapped by a tree (verse 9). We are told that it is his head that becomes caught, but this must surely be due to his thick, long hair. We earlier read in 2 Samuel 14:25-26 of Absalom's good looks and thick hair. Because of these features and the praise he received for them, Absalom gave into vanity—as is clear from the fact that he liked to flaunt his hair by letting it grow long, cutting it only once a year, and then broadcasting the impressive weight of the shorn hair (about five pounds). His addiction to admiration and adulation ultimately contributed to his plot to usurp the throne of Israel. It is thus interesting poetic justice that his hair plays a key part in his ultimate demise.

While Absalom hangs in the tree, Joab kills him—apparently convinced he is doing the right thing. However, it should be pointed out that Joab has violated the king's direct command—which he has no right to do.”

[END]

I don't have anything to add to this chapter.

Day 315 - SATURDAY: December 16th

2 Samuel 19

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: "Hearing news of the victory of his own forces, David's immediate concern is, nevertheless, for Absalom. On learning of his death, David slumps into grief and mourning. The fact that he is inconsolable spreads through the troops. Joab marches in to David and tells him that such behavior is insulting to all his soldiers (19:5-6). Indeed, the victorious fighting men do not come back to Mahanaim with fanfare or a "ticker-tape parade." Rather, they sneak back into the city trying to escape notice. This is sadly pathetic, and Joab is right to point it out to David.

The king responds by taking his seat in the gate of the city—the place of civil government where judgment is typically rendered. The statement that "all the people came before the king" (verse 8) implies that David *is* following Joab's advice by expressing appreciation to them for their loyalty and help during the recent fighting.

The desire to restore David to power is not universal. While many of the people are calling for it, there is a reluctance on the part of those in the nation's leadership to call David back to Jerusalem (verses 10-12). Perhaps they fear David will take revenge on Absalom's supporters. So David orders the priests to begin encouraging the elders to support his return—which they do. And David returns to his capital.

In the meantime, David assigns his nephew Amasa (Joab's cousin) the job of commander over the army in place of Joab. By appointing the man who had been commander of Absalom's army to head the combined forces, he secures the allegiance of those who followed Absalom. Furthermore, Amasa also has influence among the leaders of Judah. All of this is helpful in uniting the kingdom. At the same time, Joab is, in some measure, punished for all the crimes he has committed,

including the recent one of disobeying David's direct orders about not harming Absalom.

Upon coming back to Jerusalem, David demonstrates great restraint in his clemency to Shimei, binding himself with an oath not to harm the man. He apparently still sees Shimei's actions as somewhat justified. And he wants the civil war to be completely over with no more bloodshed. However, on later reflection, David will apparently come to see this whole situation differently. He originally looked upon Shimei's cursing as ordered by God (2 Samuel 16:11). However, Shimei's cursing was over David usurping Saul's throne—a complete falsehood—rather than over David's real sins. At some point, he will decide that Shimei should be executed for his crime of cursing the king, yet David won't be able to do this because of his oath. Therefore, he will order his son Solomon to deal with Shimei (1 Kings 2:8-9, 1 Kings 2:36-46).

David also restores Mephibosheth after he explains his position on what happened earlier. We read a different version given by his servant Ziba in 2 Samuel 16:1-4. There is quite a contrast in the two stories. Mephibosheth's story makes sense and yet Ziba really did put himself in mortal danger from Absalom. Not knowing who is telling the truth, the king requires that the two men divide the wealth equally between themselves. After all, what else can he do at this point?

We are told in the Scriptures that one should not decide a matter before hearing both sides—that the first one to present his case often seems correct until the person on the other side has his say (Proverbs 18:13, Proverbs 18:17). David had not originally followed these principles in this situation.

Concerning 2 Samuel 19:37-38, Chimham is evidently Barzillai's son (see 1 Kings 2:7). Barzillai declines to accept David's offer for himself, but

suggests that Chimham be the recipient of David's gratitude in his stead—to which David readily agrees.

Next we see the growing rivalry and resentment between Judah and the northern 10 tribes of Israel. The following chapter will show how a certain Sheba takes advantage of the widespread instability, suspicion and bitterness to lead Israel in a revolt against David and Judah (2 Samuel 19:40-43).” [END]

Verse 43 – John Gill’s commentary states: “not those that are here recorded, but what followed, and are not written, being so very warm and indecent; and David being silent in this hot dispute between them, which was interpreted taking the part of Judah, the men of Israel were incensed at it; and hence arose a new rebellion, of which more in the next chapter how it began, and was crushed.” [END]