

Day 314 - FRIDAY: December 15th

2 Samuel 18

2 Samuel 18:1-33 NKJV

And David numbered the people who were with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them. Then David sent out one third of the people under the hand of Joab, one third under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and one third under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said to the people, "I also will surely go out with you myself." But the people answered, "You shall not go out! For if we flee away, they will not care about us; nor if half of us die, will they care about us. But you are worth ten thousand of us now. For you are now more help to us in the city." Then the king said to them, "Whatever seems best to you I will do." So the king stood beside the gate, and all the people went out by hundreds and by thousands. Now the king had commanded Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, saying, "Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom." And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains orders concerning Absalom. So the people went out into the field of battle against Israel. And the battle was in the woods of Ephraim. The people of Israel were overthrown there before the servants of David, and a great slaughter of twenty thousand took place there that day. For the battle there was scattered over the face of the whole countryside, and the woods devoured more people that day than the sword devoured. Then Absalom met the servants of David. Absalom rode on a mule. The mule went under the thick boughs of a great terebinth tree, and his head caught in the terebinth; so he was left hanging between heaven and earth. And the mule which was under him went on. Now a certain man saw it and told Joab, and said, "I just saw Absalom hanging in a terebinth tree!" So Joab said to the man who told

him, "You just saw him! And why did you not strike him there to the ground? I would have given you ten shekels of silver and a belt." But the man said to Joab, "Though I were to receive a thousand shekels of silver in my hand, I would not raise my hand against the king's son. For in our hearing the king commanded you and Abishai and Ittai, saying, 'Beware lest anyone touch the young man Absalom!' Otherwise I would have dealt falsely against my own life. For there is nothing hidden from the king, and you yourself would have set yourself against me." Then Joab said, "I cannot linger with you." And he took three spears in his hand and thrust them through Absalom's heart, while he was still alive in the midst of the terebinth tree. And ten young men who bore Joab's armor surrounded Absalom, and struck and killed him. So Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing Israel. For Joab held back the people. And they took Absalom and cast him into a large pit in the woods, and laid a very large heap of stones over him. Then all Israel fled, everyone to his tent. Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and set up a pillar for himself, which is in the King's Valley. For he said, "I have no son to keep my name in remembrance." He called the pillar after his own name. And to this day it is called Absalom's Monument. Then Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said, "Let me run now and take the news to the king, how the LORD has avenged him of his enemies." And Joab said to him, "You shall not take the news this day, for you shall take the news another day. But today you shall take no news, because the king's son is dead." Then Joab said to the Cushite, "Go, tell the king what you have seen." So the Cushite bowed himself to Joab and ran. And Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said again to Joab, "But whatever happens, please let me also run after the Cushite." So Joab said, "Why will you run, my son, since you have no news ready?" "But whatever happens," he said, "let me run." So he said to him, "Run." Then Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain, and outran the Cushite. Now David was sitting between the two

gates. And the watchman went up to the roof over the gate, to the wall, lifted his eyes and looked, and there was a man, running alone. Then the watchman cried out and told the king. And the king said, "If he is alone, there is news in his mouth." And he came rapidly and drew near. Then the watchman saw another man running, and the watchman called to the gatekeeper and said, "There is another man, running alone!" And the king said, "He also brings news." So the watchman said, "I think the running of the first is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok." And the king said, "He is a good man, and comes with good news." So Ahimaaz called out and said to the king, "All is well!" Then he bowed down with his face to the earth before the king, and said, "Blessed be the LORD your God, who has delivered up the men who raised their hand against my lord the king!" The king said, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" Ahimaaz answered, "When Joab sent the king's servant and me your servant, I saw a great tumult, but I did not know what it was about." And the king said, "Turn aside and stand here." So he turned aside and stood still. Just then the Cushite came, and the Cushite said, "There is good news, my lord the king! For the LORD has avenged you this day of all those who rose against you." And the king said to the Cushite, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" So the Cushite answered, "May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise against you to do harm, be like that young man!" Then the king was deeply moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept. And as he went, he said thus: "O my son Absalom—my son, my son Absalom—if only I had died in your place! O Absalom my son, my son!"

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.