

Day 315 - SATURDAY: December 16th

2 Samuel 19

2 Samuel 19:1-43 NKJV

And Joab was told, "Behold, the king is weeping and mourning for Absalom." So the victory that day was turned into mourning for all the people. For the people heard it said that day, "The king is grieved for his son." And the people stole back into the city that day, as people who are ashamed steal away when they flee in battle. But the king covered his face, and the king cried out with a loud voice, "O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!" Then Joab came into the house to the king, and said, "Today you have disgraced all your servants who today have saved your life, the lives of your sons and daughters, the lives of your wives and the lives of your concubines, in that you love your enemies and hate your friends. For you have declared today that you regard neither princes nor servants; for today I perceive that if Absalom had lived and all of us had died today, then it would have pleased you well. Now therefore, arise, go out and speak comfort to your servants. For I swear by the LORD, if you do not go out, not one will stay with you this night. And that will be worse for you than all the evil that has befallen you from your youth until now." Then the king arose and sat in the gate. And they told all the people, saying, "There is the king, sitting in the gate." So all the people came before the king. For everyone of Israel had fled to his tent. Now all the people were in a dispute throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "The king saved us from the hand of our enemies, he delivered us from the hand of the Philistines, and now he has fled from the land because of Absalom. But Absalom, whom we anointed over us, has died in battle. Now therefore, why do you say nothing about bringing back the king?" So King David sent to Zadok

and Abiathar the priests, saying, "Speak to the elders of Judah, saying, 'Why are you the last to bring the king back to his house, since the words of all Israel have come to the king, to his very house? You are my brethren, you are my bone and my flesh. Why then are you the last to bring back the king?' And say to Amasa, 'Are you not my bone and my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if you are not commander of the army before me continually in place of Joab.' " So he swayed the hearts of all the men of Judah, just as the heart of one man, so that they sent this word to the king: "Return, you and all your servants!" Then the king returned and came to the Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to escort the king across the Jordan. And Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite, who was from Bahurim, hurried and came down with the men of Judah to meet King David. There were a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they went over the Jordan before the king. Then a ferryboat went across to carry over the king's household, and to do what he thought good. Now Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king when he had crossed the Jordan. Then he said to the king, "Do not let my lord impute iniquity to me, or remember what wrong your servant did on the day that my lord the king left Jerusalem, that the king should take it to heart. For I, your servant, know that I have sinned. Therefore here I am, the first to come today of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king." But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said, "Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD's anointed?" And David said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah, that you should be adversaries to me today? Shall any man be put to death today in Israel? For do I not know that today I am king over Israel?" Therefore the king said to Shimei, "You shall not die." And the king swore to him. Now Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king. And he

had not cared for his feet, nor trimmed his mustache, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he returned in peace. So it was, when he had come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said to him, "Why did you not go with me, Mephibosheth?" And he answered, "My lord, O king, my servant deceived me. For your servant said, 'I will saddle a donkey for myself, that I may ride on it and go to the king,' because your servant is lame. And he has slandered your servant to my lord the king, but my lord the king is like the angel of God. Therefore do what is good in your eyes. For all my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king. Yet you set your servant among those who eat at your own table. Therefore what right have I still to cry out anymore to the king?" So the king said to him, "Why do you speak anymore of your matters? I have said, 'You and Ziba divide the land.' " Then Mephibosheth said to the king, "Rather, let him take it all, inasmuch as my lord the king has come back in peace to his own house." And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim and went across the Jordan with the king, to escort him across the Jordan. Now Barzillai was a very aged man, eighty years old. And he had provided the king with supplies while he stayed at Mahanaim, for he was a very rich man. And the king said to Barzillai, "Come across with me, and I will provide for you while you are with me in Jerusalem." But Barzillai said to the king, "How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? I am today eighty years old. Can I discern between the good and bad? Can your servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Can I hear any longer the voice of singing men and singing women? Why then should your servant be a further burden to my lord the king? Your servant will go a little way across the Jordan with the king. And why should the king repay me with such a reward? Please let your servant turn back again, that I may die in my own city, near the grave of my father and mother. But here is your servant Chimham; let him cross over

with my lord the king, and do for him what seems good to you." And the king answered, "Chimham shall cross over with me, and I will do for him what seems good to you. Now whatever you request of me, I will do for you." Then all the people went over the Jordan. And when the king had crossed over, the king kissed Barzillai and blessed him, and he returned to his own place. Now the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him. And all the people of Judah escorted the king, and also half the people of Israel. Just then all the men of Israel came to the king, and said to the king, "Why have our brethren, the men of Judah, stolen you away and brought the king, his household, and all David's men with him across the Jordan?" So all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, "Because the king is a close relative of ours. Why then are you angry over this matter? Have we ever eaten at the king's expense? Or has he given us any gift?" And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, "We have ten shares in the king; therefore we also have more right to David than you. Why then do you despise us—were we not the first to advise bringing back our king?" Yet the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

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]