

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Let's pray...

**[2Sa 18:1-33 NKJV] 1 And David numbered the people who [were] with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them.**

When Absalom was approaching Jerusalem – David chose to spare Jerusalem and he fled Jerusalem with a small group of people.

We know that he left behind 10 of his concubines back home and we also know that he also had turned away people that wanted to go with him.

He turned away Hushai

And he also turned away Zadok, the priest, and the Levites.

So it really wasn't a big group – most estimates put the amount of people in the group to about 600.

So from the time that David fled Jerusalem to the time that chapter 18 begins, guess what happened – people have started to come and join David.

Josephus, a Jewish historian writes that David had 4000 followers at this time.

And because David is an experienced warrior – he begins to take inventory and organize the men that are going to fight against Absalom and the army of Israel.

**2 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."**

David splits his army into thirds –

Joab – an experienced warrior and leader – he leads a third

Abishai, Joab's brother, he has been fighting alongside of David since he became king.

Ittai the Gittite – he was a leader himself, he is the one that had just shown up to Jerusalem with 600 men when the Absalom rebellion took place.

He told David that his loyalty was to him – and now David has put him in charge of a third of his army.

Remember, I mentioned last week that Absalom was not a warrior – he was just a spoiled rich kid –

Now, at the end of verse two, David makes the statement that he is all in – he is going to go into battle with them.

You see, David remembers how God gave him victory after victory when he was leading Israel into battle – and whenever he decided to take a battle off, Israel was not very prosperous.

The whole David and Bathsheba incident started when David decided to stay home instead of leading his forces against the enemy.

So David wants to go.

**3 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."**

The people surrounding David would not allow him to go out to battle with the rest of his army.

And there were three reasons why they insisted on this:

- His life was more valuable (you are worth ten thousand of us).
- He could bring reserves if needed (you are now more help to us in the city).
- They understood that it would be hard for David to fight against his own son Absalom.

**4 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.**

David was not stubborn. He knew how to submit to the good advice of others. He did not give up leadership; he practiced good leadership by listening to the wise advice of the people around him.

Unlike Absalom – who we saw last week turn down good advice because the poor advice played into his pride.

**5 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. 6 So the people went out into the field of battle against Israel. And the battle was in the woods of Ephraim.**

David gives an order – so that it is clearly known to everyone that he wants Absalom captured alive and not mistreated.

Despite everything that Absalom has done –

Absalom killed Amnon – David's oldest

Absalom turned the people against David and organized a rebellion against him.

Absalom slept with the 10 of the concubines that David left back in Jerusalem – and he did it in a manner so that everyone was fully aware of what he did.

And last but not least, Absalom also wants David dead –

Yet, we still see David trying to protect his son.

Church, this is not a good thing – this is a bad thing.

Absalom is the root of all his problems – David needs to cut him off once and for all.

How David deals with Absalom here is very similar to the way that many people deal with sin in their lives.

When we face sins in our lives, we cannot deal with them in kindness or gentleness – we need to cut it off no matter how bad it hurts.

We need to remember that God cares about character more than our comfort.

I had you make a note of where the first battle was fought.

In the woods –

Absalom had the bigger army –

Yet he allowed David to dictate where the battle was going to be fought.

And because David's leaders were experienced, they had the upper hand.

**7 The people of Israel were overthrown there before the servants of David, and a great slaughter of twenty thousand took place there that day. 8 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.**

20,000 vs 4,000 and it wasn't even close – David's army prevailed.

Now, I had you make a note of where it says that the woods devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.

This means either two things happened –

1. Either the men in Absalom's army were very clumsy
2. Or God fought for David in unusual ways –

**9 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.**

Absalom comes face to face with David's men and he tries to escape riding a mule, and as he goes under a terebinth tree and his hair gets tangled in its branches – and the mule continued to walk.

Back in chapter 14, we were told that Absalom would cut his hair once a year and when he did, it would weigh 6 lbs.

His hair was his source of pride and thus it was his point of pride that brought him down.

He is not dead – just dangling where he cannot free himself

Why didn't he simply take out a sword and cut it off and free himself –

It was his pride – he wasn't going to let go of it.

**10 Now a certain man saw [it] and told Joab, and said, "I just saw Absalom hanging in a terebinth tree!" 11 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." 12 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!' 13 "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]."**

The man knows his king.

He knows that if he killed Absalom, he'd probably be killed by David.

If David killed the man who claimed to kill Saul, and then the men who claimed to kill Saul's son Ishbosheth, what do you think he would do to the man who kills his own son?

**14 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. 15 And ten young men who bore Joab's armor surrounded Absalom, and struck and killed him.**

Why did Joab and his ten armor bearers take it upon themselves to kill Absalom?

- Absalom deserved it after everything he had done.
- They knew that David was going to continue to be indulgent toward Absalom and let him get away with it.

**16 So Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing Israel. For Joab held back the people. 17 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.**

Not only did Joab kill Absalom, he also buried him.

Turn with me to Deut 21

**[Deu 21:18-21 NKJV] 18 "If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and [who], when they have chastened him, will not heed them, 19 "then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city, to the gate of his city. 20 "And they shall say to the elders of his city, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.' 21 "Then**

**all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones; so you shall put away the evil from among you, and all Israel shall hear and fear.**

A rebellious child was to be taken out of the camp and stoned to death.

Now Absalom was already dead, but his burial under a “large heap of stones” represented the stoning he deserved.

Now – stay in Deut 21,

I want to show you the last two verse,

**[Deu 21:22-23 NKJV] 22 "If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, 23 "his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the LORD your God is giving you [as] an inheritance; for he who is hanged [is] accursed of God.**

Absalom and Ahithophel both died hanging from a tree – and for the Israelite, this was evidence that the deceased was cursed by God –

When you consider the crimes these two men committed, is it any wonder they were cursed?

Yet God in His grace forgave David of his crimes and allowed him to live.

**18 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.**

Because Absalom was self-centered, he built himself a living memorial – however, Joab's actions made sure that he would not have a memorial in death.

Absalom did have three sons – however, from this it appears that they must have died before their father did.

**19 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." 20 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." 21 Then Joab said to the Cushite, "Go, tell the king what you have seen." So the Cushite bowed himself to Joab and ran. 22 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?" 23 "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.**

If the name Ahimaaz sounds familiar to us – it should. Ahimaaz was one of the sons of Zadok that were bringing David messages regarding what Absalom was planning.

Because Joab is worried about how David is going to react when he hears what happened to Absalom, he tries to protect Ahimaaz from being the one who delivers the bad news.

So Joab appoint a Cushite – a man from Ethiopia to deliver the news to David.

So the Cushite dude takes off running to tell David and Ahimaaz still asks permission to run after the Cushite – and Joab allows him to go.

Ahimaaz takes a short cut and beats the Cushite to where David was.

**24 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. 25 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. 26 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."**

If Ahimaaz was running with a group of men – then the people on top of the gate would have known that there was bad news because this would mean that they were retreating or running for their lives.

But because they were running alone, it was obvious that they were bring a message to King David.

**27 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."**

The watchman recognizes the runner in the lead and tells David that it is Ahimaaz – now David, when he hears the name – he expects good news because Ahimaaz is the messenger that had been bringing him the messages from what was going on in Jerusalem.

**28 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!" 29 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]."**

Ahimaaz did not know the whole story –

The problem church was that Ahimaaz was a messenger

And a messenger is of no value if he doesn't provide the message.

He kept asking for permission to be the one that brought the news to David – but it turns out that all he wanted to do was run.

As believers, we are messengers too –

Turn with me to Rom 10,

**[Rom 10:8-15 NKJV] 8 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): 9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. 13 For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved." 14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"**

We have a message to give – that is what Paul exhorts us to do.

Some of us may have the zeal like Ahimaaz to serve, but we lack the knowledge or maturity in Him.

That is why it is important that we study to show ourselves approved unto God and continue to search the scriptures.

So that when we finally get to the scene, we will have something to say.

**30 And the king said, "Turn aside [and] stand here." So he turned aside and stood still. 31 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." 32 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!"**

Translation – no king, Absalom is dead.

**33 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!"**

What father would not rather die in place of his child?

Part of us cannot fault David for his reaction.

We still love our children when they are disobedient, when they rebel against our leading.

When they cause trouble we hang in there with them.

We can certainly understand David's heart as a father.

Ah, but David was more than a father. He was the king.

He had a responsibility beyond being a father to his children, and that was to be a shepherd to God's people.

He did not have the luxury of ignoring his responsibilities as king to indulge his grief as a father.

At the end of the chapter, we see that David wanted to die in the place of his rebellious son.

Church - What David could not do - God did by dying in the place of rebellious sinners.

Amen

Let's pray...

