



# A BETTER KING

## A SERIES IN 2 SAMUEL



### 2 Samuel 17:24-19:8 – Battle For The Kingdom

November 12, 2023

## 1. David And His People Regrouped

Then David came to Mahanaim.... 2 Samuel 17:24 (ESV)

...And Absalom crossed the Jordan with all the men of Israel. Now Absalom had set Amasa over the army instead of Joab. Amasa was the son of a man named Ithra the Ishmaelite, who had married Abigail the daughter of Nahash, sister of Zeruiah, Joab's mother. And Israel and Absalom encamped in the land of Gilead. 2 Samuel 17:24b–26 (ESV)

When David came to Mahanaim, Shobi the son of Nahash from Rabbah of the Ammonites, and Machir the son of Ammiel from Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim, brought beds, basins, and earthen vessels, wheat, barley, flour, parched grain, beans and lentils, honey and curds and sheep and cheese from the herd, for David and the people with him to eat, for they said, "The people are hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness." 2 Samuel 17:27–29 (ESV)

## 2. The Battle

Then David mustered the men who were with him and set over them commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds. And David sent out the army, one third under the command of Joab, one third under the command of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and one third under the command of Ittai the Gittite... 2 Samuel 18:1–2b (ESV)

...And the king said to the men, "I myself will also go out with you." But the men said, "You shall not go out. For if we flee, they will not care about us. If half of us die, they will not care about us. But you are worth ten thousand of us. Therefore it is better that you send us help from the city." The king said to them, "Whatever seems best to you I will do."... 2 Samuel 18:2b–4a (ESV)

...So the king stood at the side of the gate, while all the army marched out by hundreds and by thousands. 2 Samuel 18:4b (ESV)

And the king ordered Joab and Abishai and Ittai, "Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom." And all the people heard when the king gave orders to all the commanders about Absalom. 2 Samuel 18:5 (ESV)

So the army went out into the field against Israel, and the battle was fought in the forest of Ephraim. And the men of Israel were defeated there by the servants of David, and the loss there was great on that day, twenty thousand men. The battle spread over the face of all the country, and the forest devoured more people that day than the sword. 2 Samuel 18:6–8 (ESV)

## 3. The Death Of Absalom

And Absalom happened to meet the servants of David. Absalom was riding on his mule, and the mule went under the thick branches of a great oak, and his head caught fast in the oak, and he was

suspended between heaven and earth, while the mule that was under him went on.

2 Samuel 18:9 (ESV)

And a certain man saw it and told Joab, "Behold, I saw Absalom hanging in an oak." Joab said to the man who told him, "What, you saw him! Why then did you not strike him there to the ground? I would have been glad to give you ten pieces of silver and a belt." But the man said to Joab, "Even if I felt in my hand the weight of a thousand pieces of silver, I would not reach out my hand against the king's son, for in our hearing the king commanded you and Abishai and Ittai, 'For my sake protect the young man Absalom.' On the other hand, if I had dealt treacherously against his life (and there is nothing hidden from the king), then you yourself would have stood aloof."

2 Samuel 18:10–13 (ESV)

Joab said, "I will not waste time like this with you." And he took three javelins in his hand and thrust them into the heart of Absalom while he was still alive in the oak. And ten young men, Joab's armor-bearers, surrounded Absalom and struck him and killed him.

2 Samuel 18:14–15 (ESV)

Then Joab blew the trumpet, and the troops came back from pursuing Israel, for Joab restrained them. 2 Samuel 18:16 (ESV)

And they took Absalom and threw him into a great pit in the forest and raised over him a very great heap of stones. And all Israel fled every one to his own home. 2 Samuel 18:17 (ESV)

And they raised over him (Achan) a great heap of stones that remains to this day. Then the Lord turned from his burning anger. Therefore, to this day the name of that place is called the Valley of Achor. Joshua 7:26 (ESV)

Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and set up for himself the pillar that 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 it is called Absalom's monument to this day. 2 Samuel 18:18 (ESV)

And Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning. And it was told Samuel, "Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself and turned and passed on and went down to Gilgal." 1 Samuel 15:12 (ESV)

## 4. The Messengers

Then Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said, "Let me run and carry news to the king that the LORD has delivered him from the hand of his enemies." 2 Samuel 18:19 (ESV)

And Joab said to him, "You are not to carry news today. You may carry news another day, but today you shall carry no news, because the king's son is dead." Then Joab said to the Cushite, "Go, tell the king what you have seen." The Cushite bowed before Joab, and ran.

2 Samuel 18:20–21 (ESV)

Then Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said again to Joab, "Come what may, let me also run after the Cushite." And Joab said, "Why will you run, my son, seeing that you will have no reward for the news?" "Come what may," he said, "I will run." So he said to him, "Run."

2 Samuel 18:22–23a (ESV)

...Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and outran the Cushite. 2 Samuel 18:23b (ESV)

## 5. A Grieving Father

Now David was sitting between the two gates, and the watchman went up to the roof of the gate by the wall, and when he lifted up his eyes and looked, he saw a man running alone. The watchman called out and told the king. And the king said, "If he is alone, there is news in his mouth." And he drew nearer and nearer. The watchman saw another man running. And the watchman called to the gate and said, "See, another man running alone!" The king said, "He also brings news." 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." 2 Samuel 18:24–27 (ESV)

Then Ahimaaz cried out to the king, "All is well." And he bowed before the king with his face to the earth and said, "Blessed be the LORD your God, who has delivered up the men who raised their hand against my lord the king." And the king said, "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" Ahimaaz answered, "When Joab sent the king's servant, your servant, I saw a great commotion, but I do not know what it was." And the king said, "Turn aside and stand here." So he turned aside and stood still. 2 Samuel 18:28–30 (ESV)

And behold, the Cushite came, and the Cushite said, "Good news for my lord the king! For the LORD has delivered you this day from the hand of all who rose up against you." The king said to the Cushite, "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" And the Cushite answered, "May the enemies of my lord the king and all who rise up against you for evil be like that young man." 2 Samuel 18:31–32 (ESV)

And the king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And as he went, he said, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!" 2 Samuel 18:33 (ESV)

- A. David was overwhelmed with grief because parents love their children.
- B. David was overwhelmed with grief because he knew the death of his son was connected with his sin.

...You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your wife and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house... 2 Samuel 12:9–10 (ESV)
- C. David was overwhelmed with grief because he feared his son would be eternally separated from him.
- D. David was overwhelmed with grief because he wished he had done things differently.

## 6. Lost In Grief

It was told Joab, "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 that day, "The king is grieving for his son." And the people stole into the city that day as people steal in who are ashamed when they flee in battle. 2 Samuel 19:1–3 (ESV)

The king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, "O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!" 2 Samuel 19:4 (ESV)

Then Joab came into the house to the king and said, "You have today covered with shame the faces of all your servants, who have this day saved your life and the lives of your sons and your daughters and the lives of your wives and your concubines,..." 2 Samuel 19:5 (ESV)

...because you love those who hate you and hate those who love you. For you have made it clear today that commanders and servants are nothing to you, for today I know that if Absalom were alive and all of us were dead today, then you would be pleased. 2 Samuel 19:6 (ESV)

Now therefore arise, go out and speak kindly to your servants, for I swear by the LORD, if you do not go, not a man will stay with you this night, and this will be worse for you than all the evil that has come upon you from your youth until now." 2 Samuel 19:7 (ESV)

Then the king arose and took his seat in the gate. And the people were all told, "Behold, the king is sitting in the gate." And all the people came before the king. Now Israel had fled every man to his own home. 2 Samuel 19:8 (ESV)

## Applications

- 1. The consequences of sin are far greater and longer lasting than the pleasures of sin.**
- 2. Be careful not to let our sadness turn into self-centeredness that keeps us from loving others.**
- 3. Absalom is an example of why it is foolish for children to rebel against their parents.**

"Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise),  
"that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."  
Ephesians 6:2-3 (ESV)

The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother will be picked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures. Proverbs 30:17 (ESV)

- 4. God is behind the scenes, caring for His people and rescuing them from disaster in ways they don't expect.**

## Life Group Questions

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- 1. Read 2 Samuel 17:24-19:8.** What surprised you in this chapter?
- Did David honor his son above God? If so, how did he do that? How can we honor our children above God today?
- Why did David command his three generals to deal gently with Absalom? What does this say about his parenting?
- Why did Joab kill Absalom? In your opinion, was it justified or unjustified?
- Why did Joab rebuke David for not commending his troops? Was this justified?
- Has there been a time when your grief or self-pity made you a selfish person who was ungrateful toward those who love and sacrifice for you?
- What events led to the failure of Absalom's rebellion? How was the hand of God at work in orchestrating these events?
- God was at work behind the scenes, rescuing David. Can you look back at a time in your life and see how God was at work behind the scenes, either rescuing or protecting you?