

2Samuel 19:1 ¶ And it was told Joab, Behold, the king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom.

2Samuel 19:2 And the victory that day was *turned* into mourning unto all the people: for the people heard say that day how the king was grieved for his son.

2Samuel 19:3 And the people gat them by stealth that day into the city, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle.

2Samuel 19:4 But the king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!

Joab was told that the king was weeping and mourning for Absalom. The people followed the king's lead. Instead of celebrating their victory, the day had turned into a day of mourning. Instead of entering the city of Mahanaim in celebration of their victory, the people came in quietly like people who were ashamed because they had deserted their fellow soldiers.

The king meanwhile continued to cover his face and cry aloud in mourning for Absalom.

2Samuel 19:5 And Joab came into the house to the king, and said, Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons and of thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines;

2Samuel 19:6 In that thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends. For thou hast declared this day, that thou regardest neither princes nor servants: for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well.

2Samuel 19:7 Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak comfortably unto thy servants: for I swear by the LORD, if thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee this night: and that will be worse unto thee than all the evil that befell thee from thy youth until now.

Joab knew that David was sending the wrong message to his people. He confronted the king and told him that his actions were bringing shame upon all the men that had fought to save his life and the lives of all his family and loved ones. His actions seemed to indicate that he loved his enemies and hated his friends. His actions seemed to indicate that he would have been happier if his troops had been slaughtered and Absalom had lived.

Joab urged the king to go before his people and speak kind and encouraging words to them for their loyalty and faithfulness to him. He warned the king that if he did not show his gratitude to his men, they would desert him; and he would be worse off than ever before. The implication seemed to be that he would lead them away that very night and abandon David.

As a parent, it is hard to fault David for his grief. As a Christian parent, however, our perspective and response to such sorrow should be tempered by our relationship with God and our recognition of His sovereignty over us that is always for the better good. We should be able to find and testify to peace and comfort in His love for us and in the fact that we know His actions are always for

the best whether or not we can understand the whys and wherefores at the time.

2Samuel 19:8 Then the king arose, and sat in the gate. And they told unto all the people, saying, Behold, the king doth sit in the gate. And all the people came before the king: for Israel had fled every man to his tent.

The king evidently realized that Joab had given him good counsel. We know from later scripture, however, that David never forgave Joab for his continued insubordination. As he was dying, he instructed Solomon to execute him.

1 Kings 2:5-6 "Moreover thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, and what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew, and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that was about his loins, and in his shoes that were on his feet. Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace."

He got up and sat in the gate. When the people heard that he was ready to receive his men as their king, they came before him. The men of Israel that had followed Absalom, however, had fled to their own homes.

2Samuel 19:9 ¶ And all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, The king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines; and now he is fled out of the land for Absalom.

2Samuel 19:10 And Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?

Once the news of Absalom's death became known throughout Israel, the people began to worry about the fact that they did not have a king and to argue about whether or not to reinstate David. They began to talk about how David had delivered them from their enemies, especially the Philistines. He had fled the land because of Absalom, the man whom they anointed as their new king and who was now dead. In light of all he had done for them in the past, they wondered why no one had suggested bringing David back as their king.

Gill had an interesting observation concerning the death of Absalom: "...which shows the thing was not of God, and by which means they were released from their oath of allegiance to him...."

2Samuel 19:11 And king David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying, Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying, Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house? seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, *even* to his house.

2Samuel 19:12 Ye *are* my brethren, ye *are* my bones and my flesh: wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king?

David decided to send a message to the elders of Judah through Zadok and Abiathar, the priests. His question: Why weren't you the first ones to propose

reinstating me as king? The rest of Israel wants it. You are my kinsman, yet you are the last ones to express a desire for me to return as king.

2Samuel 19:13 And say ye to Amasa, *Art thou not of my bone, and of my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not captain of the host before me continually in the room of Joab.*

2Samuel 19:14 And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as *the heart of one man*; so that they sent *this word* unto the king, Return thou, and all thy servants.

2Samuel 19:15 So the king returned, and came to Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to conduct the king over Jordan.

David also had a message for Amasa, the one that Absalom had appointed as the chief commander of his military. He noted that they were family, and he promised before God to make him the commander of his army instead of Joab.

Amasa was evidently able to influence the hearts of the men of Judah, and they sent word to David asking him to return as their king and bring all of his men with him.

As King David prepared to cross the Jordan in his return to Jerusalem, the men of Judah came to Gilgal to meet the king and escort him across the river.

Guzik made a good application: "God will not force His reign on us. We must welcome His reign and He will not force our heart response. Our hearts must be swayed by the work of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit."

2Samuel 19:16 ¶ And Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite, which *was* of Bahurim, hasted and came down with the men of Judah to meet king David.

2Samuel 19:17 And *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 Jordan before the king.

Shimei, the man of Benjamin who had cursed David when he fled from Jerusalem, was part of the delegation from Judah to meet the David. A thousand men from the tribe of Benjamin came with him, including Ziba, the servant of the house of Saul, along with his fifteen sons and his twenty servants. They all escorted the king across the Jordan.

2Samuel 19:18 And there went over a ferry boat to carry over the king's household, and to do what he thought good. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, as he was come over Jordan;

2Samuel 19:19 And said unto the king, Let not my lord impute iniquity unto me, neither do thou remember that which thy servant did perversely the day that my lord the king went out of Jerusalem, that the king should take it to his heart.

2Samuel 19:20 For thy servant doth know that I have sinned: therefore, behold, I am come the first this day of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king.

A ferryboat was provided to carry over the king's household and assist in his return. When he arrived on the other side of the Jordan, Shimei fell down in public humility before David. He basically asked for David's forgiveness for the way he had treated him previously. He admitted that he had sinned and was determined to be the first man from the house of Joseph to meet him as he returned as king.

2Samuel 19:21 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?

2Samuel 19:22 And David said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries unto me? shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? for do not I know that I *am* this day king over Israel?

2Samuel 19:23 Therefore the king said unto Shimei, Thou shalt not die. And the king sware unto him.

Abishai, ever the hothead, declared that Shimei should be put to death for cursing the LORD's anointed; just as he had wanted to do on their way out of Jerusalem.

2 Samuel 16:7-9 "And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial: The LORD hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the LORD hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, behold, thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man. Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head."

David basically said that he would never understand his nephews; they always disagreed with his decisions. He declared that this was not a day of death, but a day to rejoice; he was returning as the king of Israel. He then swore to Shimei that he would not be killed.

Spurgeon made a beautiful application at this point: "Perhaps you have been like Shimei, who cursed king David, and you are afraid that Jesus will never forgive you. But David forgave Shimei, and Jesus is ready to forgive you. He delighteth in mercy. I do believe that the harps of heaven never give to Christ such happiness as he has when he forgives the ungodly, and saith, 'Thy sins are forgiven; go in peace.' "

2Samuel 19:24 ¶ And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came *again* in peace.

2Samuel 19:25 And it came to pass, when he was come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto him, Wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth?

2Samuel 19:26 And he answered, My lord, O king, my servant deceived me: for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king; because thy servant *is* lame.

2Samuel 19:27 And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but my lord the king *is* as an angel of God: do therefore *what is* good in thine eyes.
2Samuel 19:28 For all of my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king: yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table. What right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the king?

Mephibosheth, the lame son of Jonathan, Saul's grandson, also came to meet the king. He had not taken care of his feet, trimmed his beard or washed his clothes since David left Jerusalem. When he arrived in Jerusalem to meet the king, David asked him why he had not gone with him when he left. Mephibosheth explained that his servant had deceived him. He offered to saddle an ass for his use since he couldn't walk, but he never brought it to him (is implied). Instead, he had slandered Mephibosheth to the king. Mephibosheth declared his faith in David to do what was right, and he would abide by that decision. He acknowledged that when all from his father's house were dead, David had given him the privilege of eating at his table. He had no right to expect any thing further from the king. He was certainly a man after his father's heart.

JFB adds some insight: "The Hebrews cut off the hair on the upper lip (**see note on Leviticus 13:45**), and cheeks, but carefully cherished it on the chin from ear to ear....there are various modes of trimming it: they train it into a massy bushy form, swelling and round; or they terminate it like a pyramid, in a sharp point. Whatever the mode, it is always trimmed with the greatest care; and they usually carry a small comb for the purpose. The neglect of this attention to his beard was an undoubted proof of the depth of Mephibosheth's grief."

2Samuel 19:29 And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land.

2Samuel 19:30 And Mephibosheth said unto the king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house.

David basically said that he didn't need to hear anything else. His decision was that Mephibosheth and Ziba divide the land. This decision replaced the decision he had made to give all the land to the deceitful servant; it was more in accordance with his original ruling on the land. Ziba benefitted from David's benevolence instead of receiving just recompence for his treatment of his master.

Mephibosheth quickly responded that Ziba could have it all. He was just happy that David had returned in peace as their king.

2Samuel 19:31 ¶ And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim, and went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him over Jordan.

2Samuel 19:32 Now Barzillai was a very aged man, *even* fourscore years old: and he had provided the king of sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim; for he *was* a very great man.

2Samuel 19:33 And the king said unto Barzillai, Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem.

2Samuel 19:34 And Barzillai said unto the king, How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem?

2Samuel 19:35 *I am this day fourscore years old: and can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king?*

2Samuel 19:36 *Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king: and why should the king recompense it me with such a reward?*

2Samuel 19:37 *Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and of my mother. But behold thy servant Chimham; let him go over with my lord the king; and do to him what shall seem good unto thee.*

2Samuel 19:38 *And the king answered, Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem good unto thee: and whatsoever thou shalt require of me, that will I do for thee.*

Barzillai, a man of Gilead from the town of Rogelim that was east of the Jordan River, also came to be part of the group to escort David across the Jordan. He was a wealthy man, 80 years old, who had provided supplies for David and his men while they were at Mahanaim.

The king invited Barzillai to come to Jerusalem and live, and he would take care of him. Barzillai noted that he was already 80 years old and couldn't really taste what he ate or drank and couldn't really hear well. I think he is basically saying that David's fine cuisine and entertainment would be wasted on him.

Barzillai did not want to be a burden to the king. He only wanted to be part of the escort to take David back across the Jordan as king; that was reward enough for him. He asked David's permission to go back home and die in his own city near the grave of his parents (or be buried in the family tomb according to some commentators).

Barzillai then presented his son Chimham to David. He asked that David let him cross with him and serve him in whatever way the king desired. David readily agreed to take Chimham and reward him in whatever way Barzillai desired.

Though we are told nothing more, John Gill provides some possible insight: "We nowhere read what it was that Barzillai asked, or whether he asked anything; only this we read, that some hundreds of years afterward there was a place called the habitation of Chimham near Bethlehem, which makes it probable that David gave him a paternal estate of his there, since Bethlehem was his city; and the Targum on that place is expressly for it."

Jeremiah 41:17 "And they departed, and dwelt in the habitation of Chimham, which is by Bethlehem, to go to enter into Egypt,"

2Samuel 19:39 *And all the people went over Jordan. And when the king was come over, the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him; and he returned unto his own place.*

After the whole group crossed the Jordan, the king came over to kiss Barzillai

and pronounce a blessing upon him. He was then allowed to return home as he had requested.

2Samuel 19:40 ¶ Then the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him: and all the people of Judah conducted the king, and also half the people of Israel.

2Samuel 19:41 And, behold, all the men of Israel came to the king, and said unto the king, Why have our brethren the men of Judah stolen thee away, and have brought the king, and his household, and all David's men with him, over Jordan?

2Samuel 19:42 And all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, Because the king *is* near of kin to us: wherefore then be ye angry for this matter? have we eaten at all of the king's *cost*? or hath he given us any gift?

2Samuel 19:43 And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more *right* in David than ye: why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king? And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

When the king crossed over to Gilgal (about six miles from Jerusalem), Chimham went with him. All the men of Judah and half the people of Israel accompanied the king. Some commentators note that the discord that follows is a result of the procession beginning before the rest of the men of Israel had arrived.

It seems that the men of Israel were jealous and thought that the men of Judah had been allowed to do more for David than they. The men of Judah declared that it was only right since David was part of their tribe. They explained that they had not received any type of reward for their service.

The men of Israel then explained that they had more right to serve the king than Judah since they comprised ten parts of his kingdom. They also had been the first to express their desire to have David return as their king.

The men of Judah answered with harsh words and refused to apologize.

For some reason, David did not try to intervene in this dispute.

It seems that the seeds for the future split of the kingdom had already been planted and trouble will soon erupt as recorded in the next chapter.