

2 Samuel Chapter 19 Commentary

2Sa 19:1 ¶ "And it was told Joab, Behold, the king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom. 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. 3 And the people gat them by stealth that day into the city, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle."

They bring word to Joab that King David has gone to his chamber and is weeping over his son Absalom who is dead. Because of David's actions the people are stealing away and going home, for they perceive that the king would rather he and all they had died than his son Absalom.

There is a lesson here for us. Whether in victory or loss, it is very needful that we have the correct reaction to the circumstances. King David is mourning over his insurrectionist son that has been killed instead of giving thanks to God and congratulating his faithful defenders. Thus, the king is losing the very support that gave him the victory.

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! 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; 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. 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."

Why would King David mourn so for his son who has rebelled against him? Three reasons come to mind: One: Absalom is his own flesh and blood. Two: We have no indication from scripture that Absalom is a saved person, and he has no hope of ever seeing him again, as he does the child God took because of his adultery. Remember what the king said in: **2Sa 12:23** "*But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.*" King David expects to see the child in the resurrection. Whereas, we have no indication from scripture that Absalom was anything but a godless and evil man, who had no care or respect for God. Three: King David knows that Absalom's death is part of the four-fold penalty that he required, and God required of him. In other words: David knows Absalom is dead because of David's sins.

Joab comes to King David and sets him straight on what he should be doing. He does not sugar coat anything and lays out the bare facts of what is happening, and the result, if David doesn't step up and do his God given duty. Joab tells King David; you think it is bad that your son is dead? What will you do when the morning comes, and all Israel have deserted you, and you are by yourself? Joab, though a hardened war general, is doing what any good friend should do. He is putting it all on the line in proper order.

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. 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. 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?"

The king sits in the gate and the people return unto him. However, the king's actions have caused much distress in Israel, and they are not sure they want to bring him back to Jerusalem. His actions have sown seeds of doubt in all Isreal. Therefore, Israel is not speaking of bringing King David back to Jerusalem.

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. 12 Ye are my brethren, ye are my bones and my flesh: wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king? 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. 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. 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."

King David sees the conundrum he has created and sends word to the men of Judah, his brethren, and ask them "*Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house? 12 Ye are my brethren, ye are my bones and my flesh: wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king?*" This is a good reminder to us of our position in Christ: "*ye are my bones and my flesh:*" When we have fallen out of the good graces of our Saviour by rebelling against him: we should be the first to seek his return as our king, when he has beaten us at our own game, because we are his kinsman.

He also adds that he will make Amasa, whom Israel has been following under Absalom, captain of the host in the place of Joab. The king's words humble the hearts of the men of Judah, and they send the king word to come home. This is a political maneuver to win the hearts of Israel at large, and probably David's punishment of Joab, for disobeying the king's commandment of not to hurt Absalom. However, it will wound the pride of his faithful servant Joab, which we shall see come to fruition in the following chapter.

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. 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. 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; 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. 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. 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? 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? 23 Therefore the king said unto Shimei, Thou shalt not die. And the king sware unto him."

The king and his congregation are escorted back across Jordan. Shimei is the first to come to the king confessing his sins in cursing the king, and begging forgiveness for his actions. Abishai states the truth: Shimei should be put to death for cursing the Lord's anointed. David says: shall any man be put to death this day? Surely, I know that I am King over all Israel, and this is not a time to be dealing out death sentences, but a time for rejoicing, for I am returning to my home and throne. King David tells Shimei that he shall live.

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

Next, Mephibosheth comes to meet King David. The king asks him why he did not go with him when he fled Jerusalem. Mephibosheth tells King David that Ziba deceived him and instead of bringing him an ass to ride along with the king, Ziba, in his covetousness, left Mephibosheth and carried King David the gifts we read of earlier, and told a scandalous lie on Mephibosheth. King David overturns his gift to Ziba, gained by deceit, and tells Mephibosheth that he and Ziba are to divide the land, which is returning the possession of the land to

Mephibosheth, and the split of one half of the profits to the original arrangement. Mephibosheth tells king David, let him have it all as long as I have favor in thy sight, which shows the trueness of Mephibosheth's heart to King David.

31 ¶ "And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim, and went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him over Jordan. **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. **33** And the king said unto Barzillai, Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem. **34** And Barzillai said unto the king, How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem? **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? **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? **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. **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. **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."

We learn now that Barzillai the Gileadite has been providing sustenance for the King and his people while they were at Mahanaim, for he was a very wealthy man. King David invites him to come to Jerusalem and eat at his table for this great favor that Barzillai has done for King David. Barzillai tells king David that I am old and cannot enjoy the pleasures of life any longer. He requests to be allowed to return home, die, and be buried with his family. He further requests that King David take Chimham, who is his son, in his place, to which David agrees. King David says, whatever you desire of me to do for him is your command. The agreement being made, the king kisses and blesses Barzillai, and he returns home.

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. **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? **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? **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."

The king and his escort of the tribe of Judah, along with one half of Israel, continue their journey to Jerusalem and come to Gilgal. Then the rest of Israel begin an argument that it is not Judah's place to bring the king home but that of all Israel. They make out like Judah has stolen the king away from Israel.

The men of Judah answer that King David is their near kinsman, and that is why we are escorting him back to Jerusalem. They further declare that they have not eaten from the king's expenses, but furnished their own needs, nor has the king given them any gift for what they are doing.

The Israelites answer saying: we have ten parts in the king, which gives us a larger portion to the king, and we should have been consulted before the king was brought back. The men of Judah gave a fiercer answer than the Israelites.

However, the ten tribes, by their words of accusation about not being consulted first, demonstrate that they do not want King David back as king. And they shall prove this truth in the following chapters.

There is one prophetic picture that appears, in the way this chapter lays out the ways of how men conduct themselves without the leading of the Spirit of God. What do you mean? Let's look at the scripture in: **Joh 6:49-71; 49** "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. **50** This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. **51** I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will

give for the life of the world. 52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? 53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. 54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. 58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live forever. 59 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. 60 ¶ Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? 61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? 62 What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? 63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. 64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. 65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. 66 From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. 67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? 68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. 69 And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. 70 Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? 71 He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve."

As the men of Israel do not truly believe in King David any longer: they will turn away from him once again, as they have already in insurrection with Absalom. So, we see in this text of John; many that followed Jesus, when presented with the truth that he was indeed the Son of God, the true bread of life, and that one must eat his flesh and drink his blood to have a part in eternal life in Christ; therefore, many turn away from following Jesus. Jesus questions his disciples, asking if they will go away also? They answer there is nowhere else to go, for Jesus has the words of eternal life, and is the only way to get to the eternal heaven in the resurrection of the dead in Christ.

We are thankful that King David has a forgiving heart. We are even more thankful that Jesus has granted us eternal forgiveness of sins, even if we, like King David, may bear God's judicial judgment for sins here, when our sins give occasion for the enemy to blaspheme the name of our God. Thank you, King Jesus, for your rich forgiving love, and your abundant mercy and grace. Hallelujah! Amen!