

I. REBELLIONS AGAINST KING DAVID

A. Overview

1. God had warned David through the prophet Nathan
 - a. The sword would never pass from his house
 - b. Result of his sin with Bathsheba
2. So far
 - a. Rape of his daughter, Tamar by her half brother, Amnon
 - b. Murder of Amnon by her brother, Absalom
3. Now we will see that this is not finished
 - a. Two rebellions by his sons
 - b. A third revolt by a Benjamite

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(Comment)

E. Absalom's death

1. The armies move

a. David's (17.24a,27-29)

1). David moved his group to Mahanaim in Gilead

a.) This was the old capital of Ish-bosheth

- He was a son of Saul
- Made king of Israel by Abner after Saul's death

b.) This became his Transjordan HQ

c.) The people of this region were solid backers of David, and brought provisions for his army and people

b. Absalom's (17.24b - 26)

1). Absalom appointed Amasa as the head of the Israelite army, instead of Joab, who leading David's forces

- a.) Amasa was Joab's illegitimate cousin, since his Ishmaelite father seduced Joab's aunt, sister of his mother
- b.) Both Joab and Amasa are David's nephews

2). The Israelite army under Amasa moved to Gilead across the Jordan

2. David organizes his forces (18.1-5)

a. He appointed commanders over hundreds and over thousands

b. He appointed a commander over each third of these

- 1). Joab
- 2). Abishai, Joab's remaining brother
- 3). Ittai, the Gittite commander of the 600 who had followed David from Gath

c. David was going to go with the army to fight, but the people denied him

- 1). They wanted him to stay in Manahaim as a rear guard
- 2). They also didn't want to lose his leadership

d. As the army departed, David requested that the commanders "Deal gently..." with Absalom

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3. The battle (18.6-8)

- a. The two armies met in the Forest of Ephraim

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MAP

b. Israelites lost 20,000 men

- 1). The forested region was loaded with hidden physical dangers, pits, entanglements, and morasses
- 2). Absalom's followers weren't disciplined soldiers, more died in this hostile environment than were killed by David's soldiers

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4. Absalom is executed (18.9-15)

- a. Absalom tried to flee on his donkey, but his head was caught in the fork of an oak
- b. David's men saw him, and told Joab
- c. Joab wanted him killed, but the men refused, remembering David's charge to treat Absalom gently
- d. Joab killed Absalom with spears, and his armor bearers also struck him

5. Joab ceases hostilities (18.16-18)

- a. With Absalom dead, Joab blew the trumpet to recall David's army
- b. Absalom's body was thrown in a deep pit, and a great heap of stones thrown on it
- c. Footnote - Absalom had erected a monument to himself
 - 1). Actual location of monument in Kidron Valley unproven, but some scholars hold to it
 - 2). Absalom's Pillar/Tomb was constructed at intersection of Kidron and Tyropeon Valleys, was constructed in Greco-Roman times
 - a.) Jews traditionally pelted it with stones to scorn Absalom's rebellion

F. David's grief

1. The messenger chosen (18.19-23)

- a. The priest's son, Ahimaaz, wanted to bring David the news of victory
 - 1). Word for "freed" in NASAB is Heb for vindicated
- b. But Joab inexplicably denied him this opportunity
- c. Instead he sent a Cushite to deliver the news to David
- d. Ahimaaz persisted and Joab said he could run after
 - 1). Ahimaaz passed the Cushite by a faster route

2. David hears of the runners' approach (18.24-27)

- a. David is waiting for news between the gates of Mahanaim
- b. The watchman spots one man running, then the second
 - 1). Since the men are running singly, David expects good news
 - 2). Bad news would have sent many men fleeing the battleground
- c. The watchman thinks the first man runs like Ahimaaz
 - 1). David reasons that Ahimaaz is a good man, and would be bringing good news

3. The bad news (18.28-33)

- a. Ahimaaz arrives 1st
 - 1). He announces victory over David's rebellious enemies
 - 2). When David inquires about Absalom, he dodges the question, stating there was a great tumult
 - 3). As David awaits the 2nd runner's arrival, he tells Ahimaaz to step aside
- b. The Cushite arrives
 - 1). He also announces the victory
 - 2). When asked about Absalom's fate, the Cushite states that all of David's enemies should meet the same end
 - 3). David went to a chamber over the gate and wept for his son's passing

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4. Joab's rebuke of David

a. David's grief turns the victory to mourning (19.1-4)

- 1). When the people learned of David's heavy mourning, they entered the city grieving as well
- 2). They also acted as though they had done something shameful (vs 3)
- 3). This was related to Joab

b. Joab confronts David with the problem (19.5-8a)

1). He sees this as a morale problem

- a.) David is failing to praise those who fought for him, and families who followed him
- b.) Instead, they feel they must have done something wrong to him
 - He appeared to love those who hated him, and hate those who love him

2). Then he rebukes David sternly

- a.) He says David appeared as though he wanted everyone else to die so that Absalom could live
- b.) He further said that if David didn't snap to the truth, he would face troubles far greater than any other of his life

3). David reacts to Joab's words

- a.) He goes to sit in his leadership position at the gate
- b.) His supporters surround him



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G. David restored as king

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1. David is waiting at Mahanaim for the people to reclaim him as king
 - a. (vs 19.8b) Note that the rebellious Israel army had fled to their tents, which included many of the people who were not soldiers
2. The Israelites debated what to do (19.9-10)
 - a. The man they anointed as king was dead
 - b. David had protected them before from enemies like the the Philistines ... who would now ??
 - c. Why were they waiting to recall David ?
3. There were various reactions to the situation
 - a. The reluctant (19.11-15)
 - 1). Israel (the northern tribes) debated, but Judah said nothing
 - 2). So David made contact with loyal supporters
 - a.) He requested that Zadok and Abiathar, the loyal high priests in Jerusalem, urge the elders to act on his behalf
 - 3). He also sent word to Amasa, Absalom's army commander
 - a.) He would be accepted back, and made commander of the army, replacing Joab
 - b.) Amasa's appointment would unite the Judahite army behind David
 - 4). The moves caused all Judah to call for David's return
 - a.) They met David at the Jordan to assist his crossing
 - b. Some were desperate (19.16-23)
 - 1). Two men feared David would punish them for what they did, and rushed to help his retinue cross the Jordan
 - 2). Ziba feared retribution for manipulating the truth about his master's support in Jerusalem for his personal advantage
 - 3). Shimei
 - a.) He was the one who cursed David as he fled Jerusalem
 - b.) Now he flung himself down before David at the crossing
 - He confessed that he had sinned against David
 - He then asked David to forget his sin
 - c.) Abishai, David's nephew, and one of his Mighty Men. raised the legal issue
 - Cursing the Lord's anointed was a capital crime
 - But David renounced retribution, saying he would use his judicial prerogative to forgive Shimei



c. One still mourned his situation (19.24-30)

1). Remembering ...

a.) Previously

- Mephibosheth was Saul's grandson
- He was lame because he had been dropped by his nurse
- When Saul died, and David took over, he was the only one left of Saul's household
- David took him into his court as a son, and restored Saul's lands to him

b.) Now

- Mephibosheth's servant, Ziba, had lied to David that his master was staying in Jerusalem with Absalom to regain his dynasty
- David then gave Ziba all of Mephibosheth's lands, thinking he had betrayed him

2). Mephibosheth now comes to David as he crosses the Jordan

a.) His condition was ragged, because he hadn't cared for himself from the time David had fled Jerusalem in mourning for him

b.) David asked why he hadn't fled Jerusalem with him

- Mephibosheth explained that he was attempting to mount his donkey to come with David, but his lameness prevented it
- He also told David that he new Ziba had slandered him to David
- But he was willing for David to decide whatever fate he thought fair, including letting Ziba keep all of the lands

c.) David makes a decision

- It is apparent that he is not sure who is telling the truth, or to what degree in either Mephibosheth's or Ziba's case
- So he divides the lands equally among them

d. Note David's approach in these decisions

- 1). He is not praying for the Lord's guidance
 - 2). There is no evidence in the text of the Spirit's guidance
 - 3). David is taking the human approach of being a peace maker, and consolidating his power base
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e. David's benefactor (19.31-39)

1). Barzillai came to see David cross the Jordan

- a.) He resided in Rogelim, close by Mahanaim, where David resided in exile
- b.) He was rich, and supplied David while he was there
- c.) He now came to pay tribute to the king's return

2). David urged him to come to stay at Jerusalem with him in return

- a.) Barzillai was 80, and replied that he neither would be use to David anymore, nor could he enjoy being in the capital
- b.) Instead, he offered for his son, Chimham, to return with David
 - David should decide how to treat him in his court
- c.) David accepted his offer, and kissed and blessed Barzillai, allowing him to return to Gilead to finish his remaining years

f. A childish feud (19.40-43)

- 1). David and his party crossed the Jordan and went to Gilgal, accompanied by the people of Judah and half of Israel
- 2). An accusation arose from the Israelites that the Judahites were keeping David to themselves
 - a.) The Judahites pointed out that he was of their tribe, a son of Jesse
 - b.) But the Israelites countered this argument
 - They were 10 tribes vs the two of Judah and Benjamin, so they had more weight in the kingdom
 - They were the first to call David back to be king again
 - They conveniently left out that they had joined Absalom in his rebellion !
- 3). Unfortunately, we are seeing the rift between the two groups that eventually led to two kingdoms in the land

H. Sheba's rebellion

1. Sheba announces the revolt (2 Sam 20.1-2)

- a. He was a Benjaminite
- b. Note that he is mentioned as a "worthless fellow", a troublemaker
- c. Apparently this occurs because of the argument between the two camps
 - 1). He blew a horn, and announced that all of Israel was withdrawing from supporting David as king
 - 2). The Israelites withdrew to their lands, but the Judahites stuck with David

2. David returned to Jerusalem

- a. His first order of business was to deal with the ten concubines that Absalom had defiled
- b. (20.3) He decided to declare them as widows
 - 1). Absalom was dead
 - 2). He shut them off from society and provided for them until their deaths

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3. David now deals with Sheba and his rebellion

a. (20.4-5) He orders Amasa to raise an army in three days max

- 1). But Amasa does not succeed
- 2). Maybe the Judahites thought they had seen enough war

b. (20.6-7) David orders a different approach

- 1). He knows they must cut off Sheba before he can withdraw into fortified cities
- 2). He orders Abishai, Joab's brother, to raise the army immediately
 - a.) Abishai takes Joab's army and David's castle guard, the mercenary mighty men
 - b.) David left himself unprotected as a sign of the urgency he felt to cut Sheba off from sanctuary

c. Amasa joins the force (20.8-10)

- 1). When Abashai's forces reach Gibeon, Amasa joins them
- 2). Joab is present, and fakes his sword dropping as he rushes to give Amasa a cordial kiss
 - a.) As he picks it up and reaches for Amasa, he disembowels him
 - b.) This apparently is Joab's revenge for losing his position as head of the kingdom's army
 - c.) Particularly bad, since Joab and Amasa are cousins, sons of two of David's half-sisters

3). Nathan's prophecy from God continues
(2 Sam 12.10)

'Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.'

4). Joab and Abishai pursue Sheba (20.11-13)

- a.) But Amasa is lying on the road, dying a bloody death
- b.) The troops are shocked at the bloody deed they just witnessed, and are reluctant to move on
- c.) Joab's servant pulls Amasa off the road, and urges them to follow Joab out of loyalty to David

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d. Death of Sheba (20.14-22)

- 1). Joab and Abishai pursued him through Israelite cities until he took refuge in Abel-beth-maacah, 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee and four miles west of Dan
- 2). The army laid siege to the city to tear a wall down
- 3). A wise woman called for a conference with Joab
 - a.) She chided him for waging war on an Israelite city
 - This was a city of Abel with a reputation for wisdom
 - It was substantially peaceful and loyal to Israel
 - It was a "mother in Israel", i.e. it had produced many offspring for the country
 - The city was an inheritance given by God
 - Why would he destroy such a city ?
 - b.) Joab told her they wanted Sheba for rebelling
 - She replied that his head would be thrown over the wall
 - She persuaded the people to execute him, and throw his head over the wall
- 4). Joab then signaled a cessation to the war, and the army returned to their homes

I. Tidying up

1. Now that peace had been restored, the author pauses to restate the officials in David's court (20.23-26)

A PAUSE > DAVID'S THOUGHTS THROUGH KEY PSALMS

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I. PSALM 12 - TURMOIL WITHIN JERUSALEM BEFORE CIVIL WAR

A. David is asking the Lord for help because of evil around him

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- . (12.1-2) Evil doers abound with treacherous speech
 - a. Their goal is to deceive and oppress others
 - b. A key danger is how they use their words to do this
 - 1). (vs 3) They boast
 - 2). (vs 4) They sneer at authority and truth
 - c. (11.3) Builds on this
 - 1). Destruction of society's foundation is their goal
- 2. They are working against authority in four ways
 - a. They **lie**
 - 1). The Hebrew word means emptiness, insincerity and irresponsibility
 - b. They **flatter**
 - 1). Flattery has the additional element of a corrupt or an evil motive
 - 2). The Hebrew word actually means "smooth,"
 - c. They **Deceive**
 - 1). The Hebrew says literally, "They speak with a heart and a heart" (v. 2) > double talk
 - d. They **Boast**
 - 1). outward expression of the deadly sin of pride
- 3. David is right to turn to the Lord for help in this turmoil
(vs 1)
 - a. David feels isolated by these evil attempts against the kingdom
 - b. He is surrounded by people dedicated to the lie
 - 1). They use words not to advance truth but to advance their own evil ends

B. These are the conditions besetting David before Absalom struck

II. PSALM 55 - DAVID IS BETRAYED BY A CLOSE FRIEND

A. Who is this close friend ?

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Many think it is Ahitophel

- a. David's trusted advisor who joined Absalom in the rebellion
- b. But David writes from Jerusalem, and learned of Ahitophel's treachery only after David had left the city
- c. It is likely this is a close friend not described in scripture

B. Note David's words of anguish

1. "distraught" (v. 2)
2. "anguish" (v. 4)
3. "terrors of death" assail him (v. 4)
4. "Fear and trembling", "Horror" overwhelms him (v. 5)

C. The feelings are so intense that David wants to flee entirely (6-8)

1. He is no longer pursued by Saul
2. He has been established as king for some time
3. But nowhere in his other psalms does he express the need to flee from evil besetting him

D. David then calls God's attention to the evil in the city (9-11)

1. He asks that God confuse the evil doers

E. David is beset by evil among the people & even from a best friend

1. These are the conditions he is dealing with as Absalom works his treachery over four years

III. PSALM 3 - DAVID IS FLEEING FROM ABSALOM

A. David's foes have increases (vs 1-2)

1. The unrest of Psalms 12 and 55 have been stirred and set on fire by Absalom's four years of stoking
2. Absalom's carefully groomed following has now increased to much of David's formerly loyal subjects

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Despite this, David expresses confidence in God's care (vs 3-8)

1. God is his shield
2. In spite of being in flight, he has been able to sleep confidently
3. He is confident that God will provide the solution

IV. PSALM 63 - DAVID WAITS CONFIDENTLY FOR GOD'S RESCUE

A. He has now fled to the desert of Judea

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Note David expresses two things needed in such a trial (vs 1)

1. He knows God is his personal Lord
2. He is earnestly seeking after God, His guidance and solutions
 - a. He's in the desert and he thirsts for God !
 - b. He is separated from Jerusalem's sanctuary and the ark, he longs for that personal presence of God he felt there

C. David does feel God's presence with him in this trial (2-8)

1. vs 2: He remembers God's presence felt in the past
2. vs 3: He feels God's presence now
3. vs 5: He will continue to feel God's presence in the future

D. David is so satisfied by God's assuring presence that he praises him

1. with his lips (v. 3)
2. with his tongue and with his hands (v. 4)
3. with his will and with his mouth (v. 5)
4. with his memory and thinking (vs 6)

E. In spite of the turmoil and personal danger, David places his confidence in whatever God's will decides for him

These notes were originally written as I composed this study for our Faculty & Staff Bible Study at the local university. It is important to note that they follow the narrative in *Old Testament Survey Series: The Books of History* by James E. Smith (1995, College Press Publishing Company) very closely. It is the best summary I found, so it is the foundation for the study. In many cases, I used Dr. Smith's words directly, sometimes paraphrased them for clarity, sometimes enlarged on them with other resources. Since I didn't expect to publish the notes, I did not cite them at the time. It is now difficult to distinguish quotes from Dr. Smith, material from other resources, or what thoughts the Spirit gave me. Suffice to say that, if it is insightful to your spiritual growth, give all the glory to the Spirit, some credit to Dr. Smith, and none to me. I'm just the Spirit-led editor and teacher.

Bob Kostrubanic, November 5, 2021