

12/13/09

Life Is Sweet And Bitter**2Sam. 18:1-19:8**

David has fled from Jerusalem, with all his loyal subjects, as a broken man, as his First-born Absalom attempted to overthrow him.

1. David ascended up the Mount of Olives weeping, his head covered and barefoot, when he was told the Ahithophel was a conspirator with Absalom. 2Sam. 15:30-31

2. When he reached the top of the Mount of Olives, he worshipped God and Hushite the Arckite came to him, whom he sent back to defeat the council of Ahithophel. 2Sam. 15:32-34

3. Hushite was to inform David's spies, Zadok and Abiathar, who also were sent back with the ark to the city, then they were to have their sons, Ahimaaz and Jonathan bring him news in the wilderness. 2Sam. 15:35-37

4. So David received the news that he was to cross over the Jordan, in the event that Ahithophel's council would be chosen and David did so, arriving at the city of Mahanaim. 2Sam. 15:22, 24
* It means two camps, the place that Jacob encounters angels, as he is returning home and Esau was coming.

5. The council of Ahithophel having been defeated by God through Hushai, resulted now in Absalom

crossing over the Jordan in pursuit of his father to kill him, encamping in Gilead. 2Sam. 15:25-26

In view of all this, we want to examine the battle between Absalom against his father David, which falls into three movements: 2Sam. 18:1-19:8

- I.** The battle and the death of Absalom. 2Sam. 18:1-18
- II.** The battle victory report and the death of Absalom. 2Sam. 18:19-32
- III.** The bitter grief of David over the death of Absalom. 2Sam. 18:33-19:8

I. The battle and the death of Absalom. vs. 1-18

- A.** The commanders for the battle were appointed by David. vs. 1-2
 - 1.** David numbered the people and appointed captains for the battle. vs. 1
 - a.** Captains over thousands.
 - b.** Captains over hundreds.
 - 2.** David divided the army between three captains. vs. 2
 - a.** One third under Joab. vs. 2a
 - b.** One third under Abishi, Joab's brother. vs. 2b
 - c.** One third under Ittai the Gittite. vs. 2c
 - * From Gath, an old salty soldier and body-guard of David, who refused to return to Jerusalem but rather fight with David. 2Sam. 15:21

- d. David expressed his desire to go to battle with them. vs. 2d-e
- B.** The objection over David going to battle and the instructions regarding Absalom were stated by David. vs. 3-4
1. The men refused David's request to go into battle. vs. 3
 - a. They strongly refused him, "But the people answered, "You shall not go out!" vs. 3a-b
 - b. They stated he would be the focus of the battle, "For if we flee away, they will not care about us; nor if half of us die, will they care about us." vs. 3c-f
 - c. They stated David was irreplaceable and more valuable staying in the city, "But you are worth ten thousand of us now. For you are now more help to us in the city." vs. 3g-h
 2. The king conceded to the men. vs. 4
 - a. He humbly submitted, "Then the king said to them, "Whatever seems best to you I will do." vs. 4a-b
 - b. He intensely watched them ride off to battle, "So the king stood beside the gate, and all the people went out by hundreds and by thousands." vs. 4c-d
 3. The intercession of David for Absalom in view of the battle. vs. 5

- a. This was an order, "Now the king had commanded Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, saying, "Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom." vs. 5a-e
 - b. This was witnessed by all, "And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains orders concerning Absalom." vs. 5f
- C.** The destruction of the army of Absalom in the battle by the men of David. vs. 6-8
1. The field of the battle took place in the woods of Ephraim. vs. 6
 - * Israel indicates all the opposing tribes that had conspired with Absalom.
 2. The army of Absalom was destroyed by the servants of David. vs. 7
 - * 20,000 of the rebels fell that day, a great slaughter.
 3. The battle was dispersed over all the countryside but the treacherous woods, killed more than the sword. vs. 8
 - * The army of Absalom were familiar with the terrain nor experienced with the kind of fighting!
- D.** The adversary Absalom is killed by Joab, one of the commanders of David. vs. 9-18
1. The odd event that overtook Absalom. vs. 9

- a. Absalom encounter David's men and as he rode his mule, his head caught a tree by his hair. vs. 9a-d
 - 1) Kings rode mules, a sign of royalty but not in war, a horse was best!
 - 2) His glory was his hair and it hung him!
- b. Absalom hung between heaven and earth, as his mule rode off. vs. 9e-f
 - * Josephus is the first to indicate he hung by his hair. (Antiquities VII. 239)
- 2. The news of Absalom reached Joab. vs. 10-13
 - a. One of the men told Joab about Absalom hanging by his head, "I just saw Absalom hanging in a terebinth tree!" vs. 10
 - b. Joab rebuked the man, for not killing him. vs. 11
 - 1) His astonishment, "So Joab said to the man who told him, "You just saw him! vs. 11a-b
 - 2) His outrage, "And why did you not strike him there to the ground?" vs. 11c
 - 3) His enticement, "I would have given you ten shekels of silver and a belt." vs. 11d

- * Some believe Joab had offered a reward, but there is nothing in the text to indicate this.
- c. The man reprovved Joab back. vs. 12-13
 - 1) Money was no temptation, "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." vs. 12a-c
 - 2) He had heard David, "For in our hearing the king commanded you and Abishai and Ittai, saying, 'Beware lest anyone touch the young man Absalom!' vs. 12d-e
 - 3) He would of sign his own death sentence, "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." vs. 13
 - * Joab was a very rugged warrior!
- E. The death of Absalom by the hand of Joab was contrary to the orders of David. vs. 14-18
 - a. Joab did not want to lose time, so he went taking three spears in his hand and

thrust them through Absalom's heart, as he hung by the tree. vs. 14

* Joab had been responsible for restoring Absalom back to David, this was payback!

- b. Ten young men of Joab then surrounded Absalom also struck Absalom. vs. 15
 - 1) These ten men were under Joab's command.
 - 2) They were loyal to Joab and this way no one man could be blamed for the death of Absalom!
- c. The victory trumpet was sounded for retreat. vs. 16
 - 1) Joab blew the trumpet. vs. 16a
 - 2) The people returned from pursuing Israel. vs. 16b
 - 3) Joab held back the people. vs. 16c
- d. The end of the rebellion of Absalom was a tragic one. vs. 17
 - 1) One of dishonor, "And they took Absalom and cast him into a large pit in the woods, and laid a very large heap of stones over him." vs. 17a-b
 - * The burial of a cured man. Duet. 21:20-21, Josh. 7:26
 - 2) One of shame, "Then all Israel fled, everyone to his tent." vs. 17c

- f. Absalom was a very vain person. vs. 18
 - 1) He had set up a pillar for himself, in the King's Valley. vs. 18a-b
 - * The one present today is not it, it is from the days of the Herods, but it is still called Absalom's pillar.
 - 2) Reason being, he had no son to keep his name in remembrance." vs. 18c-d
 - * His daughter and three son must of died. 2Sam. 14:27
 - 3) He called the pillar after his own name and to that day it is called Absalom's Monument. vs. 18e-f

Illustration

The rebellion of Lucifer, against God in heaven was due to pride, leading one third of the angels to be cast out of heaven.

* Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before the fall. Prov. 16:18

Application

- 1. The question of war in one that is misunderstood by some Christians.
 - a. Some believer that as a Christian, a person can not go to war, but the Bible does not teach this.
 - b. Some believe that the sixth commandment, "You shall not kill", justifies their belief,

when in reality the commandment is a prohibition against murder.

- c. For even in the Old Testament, the law permitted a person to defend their life against someone attempting to injure or kill them, as well as Jesus. Lk. 22:36
* Jesus said to the disciples, “But now, he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no **sword**, let him sell his garment and buy one.”
- d. But premeditated murder was punished by the execution of the one committing the crime, as well as in the New Testament.
- e. War is to defend one’s nation against the intrusion and evil imposition of another and as long as we live in this world, this danger exist.
 - 1) To not go to war against evil men and nations, would be irresponsible for the perpetuation of the evil.
 - 2) To not see this, would be to accuse God of doing evil by war, for He commanded Israel to go to war and giving them the victory.
* “The LORD is a man of **war**; The LORD is His name.” Ex. 15:3
 - 3) Jesus will make war with the saints against the nations gathered in the Valley of Megiddo, who will attempt to stop

Him from setting up the His kingdom.
Rev. 13:7; 17:14, ; 19:11, 19

* “Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.” Ecccl. 8:11

2. The only way this world makes sense, is if a person believes the fall.
 - a. People verify the effects of the fall, we live in a fallen world and evil is ever-present.
 - b. People lie, cheat, deceive and steal.
 - c. People are immoral and unethical.
 - d. People are cruel and inhuman to other human beings, raping, physically beating them and at times murdering them for a mere 20 dollars.
* “As it is written: “There is **none** righteous, no, not one; There is **none** who understands; There is **none** who seeks after God.” Rom. 3:10-11
3. The Millennial Kingdom will also experience war at the end by Satan’s deception.
* “Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came

down from God out of heaven and devoured them.” Rev. 20:7-9

The battle and the death of Absalom was through selfish rebellion!

II. The battle victory report, and the death of Absalom. vs. 19-32

- A.** The news of Absalom’s death was sent to David. vs. 19-23
- 1.** Ahimaaz the son of Zadok asked to announce the news but Joab said no, apparently he was the messenger of bad news. vs. 19-20
 - a.** Ahimaaz was the same one that took to David the news to cross over the Jordan, that Absalom not overtake him.
 - b.** Ahimaaz was not to be the one to run and deliver this particular news, on that day.
 - 2.** Joab ordered the Cushite to take the message and he took off running. vs. 21
 - a.** He was an Ethiopian, a descendant of Cush, the grandson of Noah by Ham.
 - b.** He bowed respectfully.
 - c.** He obeyed and ran.
 - 3.** Ahimaaz kept insisting that he run. vs. 22
 - a.** He was zealous, “And Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said again to Joab, “But

whatever happens, please let me also run after the Cushite.” vs. 22a-c

- b.** He was unprepared, “So Joab said, “Why will you run, my son, since you have no news ready?” vs. 22d-e
 - 4.** Ahimaaz continued to insist. vs. 23
 - a.** He was relentless, “But whatever happens,” he said, “let me run.” vs. 23a-c
 - b.** He was fast, “So he said to him, “Run.” Then Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain, and outran the Cushite.” vs. 23d-f
 - * Possibly, a shorter distance!
- B.** The messengers of the news reached David. vs. 24-33
- 1.** David was waiting anxiously in the city. vs. 24
 - a.** David was sitting between the two gates. vs. 24a
 - * There were two gates to cities, an inner and outer gate, for security against the enemy.
 - b.** 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.” vs. 24b-f
 - 2.** The watchman announce what he saw. vs. 25

- a. The watchman cried out and told the king. vs. 25a
- b. The king said, “If he is alone, there is news in his mouth.” And he came rapidly and drew near.” vs. 25b-e
- 3. The watchman gave further information to the King. vs. 26
 - a. The watchman saw another runner and called to the gatekeeper, “There is another man, running alone!” vs. 26a-c
 - b. The king said, “He also brings news.” vs. 26d-e
- 4. The watchman identified the first runner. vs. 27
 - a. The watchman said, “I think the running of the first is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok.” vs. 27a-b
 - b. The king said, “He is a good man, and comes with good news.” vs. 27c-e
- 5. Ahimaaz arrived but he had inaccurate news. vs. 28-30
 - a. He was courteous, “And 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!” vs. 28

- b. He was uniformed, “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.” vs. 29
- c. He had run for nothing, “And the king said, “Turn aside and stand here.” So he turned aside and stood still.” vs. 30
- 6. The Cushite then arrived. vs. 31-32
 - 1) He had the news of victory, “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.” vs. 31
 - 2) He informed David of Absalom’s death, “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!” vs. 31

Illustration

The victory of America in WWII is filled with battle events that have no natural explanation, except for the hand of God.

Application

1. The body of the church is an incredible organism, in that there are so many individuals and they are all part of the body. Rom. 12, 1Cor. 12
 - a. Some are hands.
 - b. Others feet, etc.
 - c. but there is only one head, Christ.
2. The gifts of the Spirit are endowed to each for the edification of the saints in love. Rom 12, 1Cor. 12
 - a. The gifts of revelation, word of knowledge, wisdom, discerning of spirits, etc.
 - b. The gifts of power, faith, miracles, the gifts of healings.
 - c. The gifts of inspiration, prophecy, tongues, interpretation of tongues.
3. The efficiency of my service to God will depend on my knowing my part in the body and my gifts. Eph. 4:9-16
 - a. Being grounded in the word.
 - b. Being able to discern deception.
 - c. Being mature for the sake of the body in love, which stops strife.

The battle victory report and the death of Absalom, put an end to the rebellion!

III. The bitter grief of David over the death of Absalom. 2Sam. 18:33-19:8

- A. The lamentation of David over the death of Absalom. vs. 33
 1. The news devastated David. vs. 33a-b
 - a. He was immediately affected mentally and physically, “Then the king was deeply moved.” vs. 33a
 - 1) The phrase deeply moved “ragaz” means to tremble and quake.
 - 2) The reality hit David.
 - b. He was compelled to be alone, “and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept. vs. 33b
 - 1) The word wept “bakah” means bitterly, bewailing.
 - 2) The mental and emotional outburst unbearable.
 2. The news cause David to wish he had died. vs. 33c-j
 - a. He expressed this as he went to be alone, “And as he went, he said thus: “O my son Absalom--my son, my son Absalom.” vs. 33c-g
 - 1) Perhaps reflecting on his foolishness?
 - 2) Perhaps on his own failure towards Absalom?
 - b. He expressed his deep love for Absalom, “if only I had died in your place! O Absalom my son, my son!” vs. 33h-j

- 1) The three-fold repetition of Absalom's name marked the regret of David over his son's life.
 - 2) The four-fold repetition of "my son", marks the depth of pain and sorrow with the reality of his death, gone forever.
 - 3) David's grievous lament marked his own guilt and regret, over his own sin and the consequences to his family.
 - 4) David had suffered a four-fold loss, according to the parable of Nathan, "you shall restore four-fold, the death of the baby, Tamar, Amnon and Absalom.
- B.** The lamentation of David for Absalom, resulted in confusion to the people. vs. 1-4
1. The news of David's mourning for Absalom reached Joab, "And Joab was told, "Behold, the king is weeping and mourning for Absalom." vs. 1
 - a. Remember Joab killed Absalom.
 - b. Remember Joab is not emotionally attached.
 2. The commentary regarding the behavior of David. vs. 2-3
 - a. The people felt guilty, "So the victory that day was turned into mourning for all the people. For the people heard it

- said that day, "The king is grieved for his son." vs. 2
- * David was sending mixed messages!
- b. The people felt ashamed, "And the people stole back into the city that day, as people who are ashamed steal away when they flee in battle.
 - * As if they had lost the battle!
 - c. The people were disheartened through the prolonged conduct of David, "But the king covered his face, and the king cried out with a loud voice, "O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!" vs. 4
 - 1) The word "but" marks the lack of awareness by David, on how he was affecting the people.
 - 2) The conduct of David was a betrayal to the people.
- C.** The lamentation of David for Absalom was confronted by Joab. vs. 5-8
1. Joab told David he was ungrateful to the people. vs. 5
 - a. By shaming the people, "Then Joab came into the house to the king, and said, "Today you have disgraced all your servants." vs. 5a-b
 - b. By pointing out their accomplishment, "who today have saved your life, the

lives of your sons and daughters, the lives of your wives and the lives of your concubines.” vs. 5c-e

* Kind of like those who say we provoked the 911, so now we have become a nation of apologies, shaming out military soldiers.

2. Joab told David he was unnatural towards the people, vs. 6
 - a. He was acting like a traitor, “in that you love your enemies and hate your friends.” vs. 6a
 - b. He was declaring, he wished they had been defeated, “For you have declared today that you regard neither princes nor servants; for today I perceive that if Absalom had lived and all of us had died today, then it would have pleased you well.” vs. 6b-d
3. Joab told David he was to under gird the people. vs. 7
 - a. He commanded David, “Now therefore, arise, go out and speak comfort to your servants.” vs. 7a-b
 - b. He communicated by an oath, if he did not, they would all abandon him, “For I swear by the LORD, if you do not go out, not one will stay with you this night.” vs. 7c-e

- c. He communicated the severity of the outcome, “And that will be worse for you than all the evil that has befallen you from your youth until now.” vs. 7f
4. Joab succeeded in his words to David. vs. 8
 - a. The king, David, took his rightful place as king, “Then the king arose and sat in the gate.” vs. 8a
 - 1) The gate was the place of judgment, to declare victory.
 - 2) The gate was reigning authority, as the victorious and ruling king.
 - b. The people heard the news. vs. 8b-f
 - 1) David was pointed out, “And they told all the people, saying, “There is the king, sitting in the gate.” vs. 8b-e
 - 2) David was approached by the people, “So all the people came before the king. For everyone of Israel had fled to his tent.” vs. 8f-g

Illustration

During the war in Irak, many of our own politicians and news personalities accused our troops of being guilty of killing women and children, instead of recognizing they liberated a nation, from a tyrannical dictator and gave freedom to the people.

Application

1. There will be many tragedies in our lives but we must meet them with the steadfast resolve of the truth of the Scriptures.

- a. The loss of loved ones.
- b. The loss of children.
- c. The loss of good friends.
- d. The loss of jobs.
- e. The loss of a home.
- f. The loss of retirement.
- g. The loss of one's health.

1) Listen to the words of Job, "Man who is **born** of woman is of few days and full of trouble." Job 14:1

2) "And he said: "**Naked** I came from my mother's womb, And **naked** shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD." Job 1:21

3) "Though He **slay** me, yet will I trust Him." Job 13:15a-b

2. The times that we are in a low spiritual state and overwhelmed by our emotions, we have to refuse to look inward.

- a. We will be completely consumed with ourselves and see no way out.
- b. We must look to God, who is on the throne and aware of all things.
- c. We must let people exhort us and if need be rebuke us for our carnality.

1) There is nothing wrong with mourning or being grieves over certain things but we must never allow them to overwhelm us, to be hopeless!

2) "Moreover the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah a second time, while he was still shut up in the court of the prison, saying, "Thus says the LORD who made it, the LORD who formed it to establish it (the LORD is His name): 'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.'" Jer. 33:1-3

3) "For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil. And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled." 1Pet. 3:12-14

3. The greater position we hold in life, God's grace will demand of each of us a greater commitment to be selfless, in times of personal tragedies.

- a. As a parent suffering the loss of a child is one of the worst things that can be imagined, but as that parent, I must think of the others in my family that are looking at me for strength and encouragement.

* Like my wife and the other children.

- b. As business owner, you must not get so overwhelmed by a situation, that you lose sight of your responsibility to those who work for you and depend on you for their livelihood.
- c. As a leader of a nation, you must endure, ignore all opposition, to provide the best leadership to the people.
 - 1) Paul said, “He who calls you is **faithful**, who also will do it.” 1Thess. 5:24
 - 2) Paul declared, “But the Lord is **faithful**, who will establish you and guard you from the evil one.” 2Thess. 3:3

The bitter grief of David over the death of Absalom was betrayal to the people, who fought against the rebellion!

Conclusion

The battle between Absalom against his father David, falls into three movements:

- I. The battle and the death of Absalom was through selfish rebellion!
- II. The battle victory report and the death of Absalom put an end to the rebellion!
- III. The bitter grief of David over the death of Absalom was betrayal to the people, who fought against the rebellion!