

- I) V1-2 INTRO: And David numbered the people who were with him, and set captains of thousands and
  - a) David once again finds himself in need of entering in to war
    - 1) Eccl 3:1, 8: To everything there is a season; a time for every purpose under heaven...a time of war and a time of peace
    - 2) THIS WAS: All too common in the life of David
- II) SADLY: In the life of David, war seemed to be something he was constantly involved in
  - a) THIS TIME: His war was not against Philistines, Ammonites, Moabites, or Syrians
    - 1) To his deep pain, he is battling Israelites led by his own son: David is fighting a *civil war*
- III) AS A BATTLE TRIED KING: David begins to prepare for battle
  - a) He begins by organizing his troops into companies and divisions
    - 1) Absalom was busy gathering troops from the north to the south giving David needed time
    - 2) He used this time to organize his men, and to prepare them for the battles before them
- IV) V2 THEN: David sent out 1/3 of the people under the hand of Joab 1/3 under the hand of Abishai
  - a) Normally, armies are divided into divisions and often are divided into three
    - 1) HERE: It is divided in to three because of Ittai the Gittite: he was a Philistine, leading his troops
    - 2) The Israelites would not have followed Ittai, and his troops may not have followed an Israelite
    - 3) KEY: This would have resulted in troops actually competing for honor on the battlefield
- V) AS DAVID PREPARES THE TROOPS: He makes it clear that he intends to go with them
  - a) He had made the mistake of staying behind before, and is not about to willingly do so again
    - 1) As their leader, he felt the great responsibility of risking his life along with his men
- VI) V3-4 BUT: The people answered you shall not go out For if we flee away they will not care about us
  - a) Their answer only reminds us of the advice that had been given by Ahithophel (17:2-3)
    - 1) They may well have understood how difficult it would have been for him to go out to battle
    - 2) He would have had to fight against his dearly loved son
- VII) ALSO: There would undoubtedly be warriors who were delegated to kill him
  - a) By remaining behind, his soldiers would be able to concentrate on their present situation
    - 1) Knowing that he and a group of soldiers were in reserve would provide encouragement to them
- VIII) V4 THEN: The king said to them Whatever seems best to you I will do So the king stood beside the gate
  - a) Some believe that, as the men filed past him that he gave his blessings and best wishes
    - 1) He may have recited one of his psalms as they passed by
    - 2) Ps 20:1-2 May the LORD answer you in the day of trouble! May the name of the God of Jacob set you on high! May He send you help from the sanctuary and support you from Zion!
    - 3) V7 Some boast in chariots and some in horses but we will boast in the name of the Lord our God
- IX) V5 NOW: The king had commanded Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, saying Deal gently for my sake wit the
  - a) As each division passes by David, he loudly tells his commanders to deal gently with Absalom
    - 1) IN SPITE: Of all that Absalom had done, David still had a deep love for his rebellious son
- X) KEY: This was something that many heard, and for those who did not, it was passed on to them

- a) Some understood, and others would have been upset because they were risking their lives
- I) V6-8 SO: The people went out into the field of battle against Israel And the battle was in the woods
  - a) At one time, a thick forest existed east of the Jordan River, where the battle took place
    - 1) It is rocky, with cliffs, tree stumps, and gorges and the panicked soldiers were overwhelmed
- II) V9-10 THEN: Absalom met the servants of David Absalom rode on a mule The mule went under the
  - a) Absalom was trying to escape, riding his mule as quickly as it would run
    - 1) He went under the boughs of a tree, and his neck got stuck between branches, entangled
    - 2) Remember, Absalom's hair would grow quickly and weighed 5 lbs. when cut yearly (14:26)
    - 3) One of David's men saw it, and reported it to Joab
- III) V11-13 SO JOAB SAID: To the man who told him You just saw him! And why did you not strike him
  - a) POINT: I would have given you a pay raise and a belt (honor):
    - 1) BUT: This soldier had heard what David had said, and his respect for the king held him back
    - 2) ALSO: There is no telling what Joab might have done if he heard that he had killed Absalom
    - 3) REMEMBER: David executed the Amalekite who claimed to have killed King Saul (2 Sa 1:15)
- IV) V14 -16 THEN: Joab said I cannot linger with you and he took three spears in his hand and thrust them
  - a) Joab takes three short spears, and plunges them into the center of Absalom's body
    - 1) He did not die immediately, so Joab's armor bearers finished him off
    - 2) When Absalom died, Joab knew that victory was complete and reassembled the army
- V) V17-18 AND: They took Absalom and cast him into a large pit in the woods and laid a very large heap
  - a) INTERESTINGLY: After he died he was buried under a very large heap of stones
    - 1) This is a symbolic reminder of how an unrepentant rebellious son was to die
    - 2) Dt 21:18-21 If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and *who*, when they have chastened him, will not heed them, then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city, to the gate of his city. And they shall say to the elders of his city, This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.' Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones; so you shall put away the evil from among you, and all Israel shall hear and fear.
- VI) REMEMBER: Absalom had three sons (14:27) who apparently did not grow into adulthood
  - a) He had built a memorial to himself, apparently just outside of Jerusalem east of the Kidron Valley
    - 1) There is a site called the Tomb of Absalom that we see when we are in Jerusalem
    - 2) Rebellious children were taught in Judaism to throw stones at the shrine of Absalom to learn what rebellion leads to. "If any one in Jerusalem has a disobedient child, he shall take him out to Absalom's Monument, and force him, by words or stripes, to hurl stones at it, and to curse Absalom; meanwhile telling him the life and fate of that rebellious son."
- VII) V19 THEN: Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said Let me run now and take the news to the king how the
  - a) Ahimaaz had remained with the army after he and Jonahan had brought Hushai's message to David
    - 1) He now wants to bring a message of victory to David, which he thinks is a great thing
    - 2) It would seem his youthfulness has not equipped him with mature understanding
- VIII) V20 AND: Joab said to him You shall not take the news this day for you shall take the news another day

- a) Joab actually wants to protect Ahimaaz from such a terrible duty:
  - 1) I will send you with a message in the future, when the news is only joyful
- I) V21 THEN: Joab said to the Cushite (so. Ethiopia-Sudan) Go tell the king what you have seen
  - a) Joab sends the message with the Cushite because he was of a lower rank than the priest
    - 1) A man of lower rank would normally be the bearer of bad news
- II) V22-23 AND: Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said again to Joab But whatever happens please let me also
  - a) THOUGHT: Why do you want to go, seeing that you are bringing news that will upset David
    - 1) Ahimaaz is insistent that he runs, even if he has nothing to say and takes a shorter route
- III) V24-25 NOW: David was sitting between the two gates And the watchman went up to the roof over the
  - a) A runner running alone was a good sign: if the army were defeated, many would be running
    - 1) Because he was alone, David expected to hear good news
- IV) V26-27 THEN: The watchman saw another man running and the watchman called to the gatekeeper
  - a) Again, a second runner running alone would be interpreted as a runner bringing additional news
    - 1) Ahimaaz was a priest and was David's messenger: surely he brought good news!
- V) V28 SO: Ahimaaz called out and said to the king *All is well* Then he bowed down with his face to
  - a) ALL IS WELL: Shalom (peace) as he respectfully approaches his king
    - 1) Your enemies have been overcome and defeated
- VI) V29 NOTICE: The king said Is the young man Absalom safe (shalom, is there peace to him?)
  - a) You have greeted me with shalom, but does that peace extend to my son?
    - 1) Is he well, is he safe, is he alive? His concern for Absalom is greater than for his army
    - 2) He dodges the question, though he knew that Absalom was dead
- VII) V30 AND: The king said Turn aside and stand here So he turned aside and stood still
  - a) David knew there was a second messenger, so he has him stand quietly to the side
- VIII) V31 JUST THEN: The Cushite came and the Cushite said There is good news my lord the king
  - a) The Cushite had been sent to bring bad news about Absalom, so he phrases the answer gently
    - 1) He prepares him by first informing him that his enemies have been vanquished: Good news!
- IX) V32 AND: The king said to the Cushite Is the young man Absalom safe
  - a) The news he is most interested in is more basic: is my son alive?
    - 1) David is now alarmed, as he has not yet received a straight answer for his greatest concern
    - 2) He diplomatically informs David that Absalom has died
- X) V33 THEN: The king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept
  - a) The pain and grief over such losses overwhelmed this great warrior, and he broke down
    - 1) Ps 38:4-5 my iniquities have gone over my head; Like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me. My wounds are foul *and* festering because of my foolishness.
- XI) KEY: His pain is a mere shadow compared to God's pain over people who reject Him
  - a) He has justice, and He loves: the two are revealed at the cross of Jesus
    - 1) Ps 85:10 Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed