

## Survey of the Bible part 12

**2 Samuel 19:1-6** <sup>NAU</sup> Then it was told Joab, "Behold, the king is weeping and mourns for Absalom." <sup>2</sup> The victory that day was turned to mourning for all the people, for the people heard *it* said that day, "The king is grieved for his son." <sup>3</sup> So the people went by stealth into the city that day, as people who are humiliated steal away when they flee in battle. <sup>4</sup> The king covered his face and cried out with a loud voice, "O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!" <sup>5</sup> Then Joab came into the house to the king and said, "Today you have covered with shame the faces of all your servants, who today have saved your life and the lives of your sons and daughters, the lives of your wives, and the lives of your concubines, <sup>6</sup> by loving those who hate you, and by hating those who love you. For you have shown today that princes and servants are nothing to you; for I know this day that if Absalom were alive and all of us were dead today, then you would be pleased.

We need to keep the context in mind here. Absalom, David's son, has turned against his father and now has an army gathered to destroy his father, David. But when the servants of David fought against Absalom and Israel, David's servants prevailed against Absalom.

**2 Samuel 18:5-8** <sup>5</sup> The king charged Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, "*Deal* gently for my sake with the young man Absalom." And all the people heard when the king charged all the commanders concerning Absalom. <sup>6</sup> Then the people went out into the field against Israel, and the battle took place in the forest of Ephraim. <sup>7</sup> The people of Israel were defeated there before the servants of David, and the slaughter there that day was great, 20,000 men. <sup>8</sup> For the battle there was spread over the whole countryside, and the forest devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.

The problem that David's servants ran up against, however, is that they were told not to deal harshly against Absalom, but to deal kindly with him if there was an encounter with him.

**Well, how might this hamstring the servants of David fighting against Absalom?**

It could cause them to be too cautious which in turn would put their own lives in jeopardy. To fight timidly is not to fight at all. But there were those who feared David, especially in light of his

attitude toward Saul when he learned that an individual took Saul's life and then reported that to David.

The man thought he was doing David a favor by destroying David's enemy. But it turned out that David killed the young man because he had killed "God's anointed". And so, when David tells his servants to deal kindly with his son Absalom the message was clear; don't kill him.

And in the course of the battle the opportunity arises to kill Absalom.

**2 Samuel 18:9-12** <sup>9</sup> Now Absalom happened to meet the servants of David. For Absalom was riding on *his* mule, and the mule went under the thick branches of a great oak. And his head caught fast in the oak, so he was left hanging between heaven and earth, while the mule that was under him kept going. <sup>10</sup> When a certain man saw *it*, he told Joab and said, "Behold, I saw Absalom hanging in an oak." <sup>11</sup> Then Joab said to the man who had told him, "Now behold, you saw *him*! Why then did you not strike him there to the ground? And I would have given you ten *pieces* of silver and a belt." <sup>12</sup> The man said to Joab, "Even if I should receive a thousand *pieces* of silver in my hand, I would not put out my hand against the king's son; for in our hearing the king charged you and Abishai and Ittai, saying, 'Protect for me the young man Absalom!'

But, not surprisingly, the men who were under Joab would not kill him. But Joab doesn't share their attitude. In fact, Joab has a history with David. Joab was a warrior and one of David's commanders. A man by the name of Abner was once a friend of David's, but turned against him at some point and fought against him.

Joab and his brothers pursued Abner and Abner ends up killing the brother of Joab. His name was Asahel. Of course Joab wants revenge but David wants no part of killing one of his old friends and warns Joab against such a thing.

But Joab pays no attention to David's warning and when the opportunity comes he kills Abner. David wasn't happy about this, but knows the importance of such a warrior as Joab, but makes it clear to Israel that he had nothing to do with Abner's death.

And so, essentially, Joab doesn't care about what David thinks, and doesn't seem to fear him as the others do. And this is made clear after David's warning not to harm Absalom. Though others

will not kill Absalom Joab has no problem with that, because he is an enemy.

**2 Samuel 18:14-18** <sup>14</sup> Then Joab said, "I will not waste time here with you." So he took three spears in his hand and thrust them through the heart of Absalom while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak. <sup>15</sup> And ten young men who carried Joab's armor gathered around and struck Absalom and killed him. <sup>16</sup> Then Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing Israel, for Joab restrained the people. <sup>17</sup> They took Absalom and cast him into a deep pit in the forest and erected over him a very great heap of stones. And all Israel fled, each to his tent. <sup>18</sup> Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and set up for himself a pillar which is in the King's Valley, for he said, "I have no son to preserve my name." So he named the pillar after his own name, and it is called Absalom's Monument to this day.

**By the way, how do you thrust 3 spears through the heart of a man and not kill him, to where 10 other men come behind that attack and finally strike and kill Absalom?**

The word heart here in 14 is a Hebrew word that could also be translated inner man. It is very likely that what Joab did was to take each spear, one at a time, and thrust it through the belly of Absalom.

Joab was a warrior and knew how to kill people. If he had wanted to kill Absalom with one spear he could easily have done it, especially in light of the fact that Absalom was hanging defenseless from a tree. But he takes three spears and places them strategically through the belly of Absalom.

**What was he in essence doing to Absalom?**

Making him suffer. Even in those days they knew what vital organs needed to be hit to kill someone instantly. If you look at the anatomy of a person all of the vital organs are in the middle of the chest and upper abdomen.

So, if you could impale someone without hitting the vital organs you could cause irreversible damage without killing someone instantly. And the way you do that is to move below the vital organs and pierce the intestines. And in all likelihood this is exactly what Joab did.

So, now Absalom is hanging from this tree with three spears completely through his body, suffering tremendous pain as he slowly bleeds out. And as this is happening Joab's armor bearers gather around Absalom and take their turns, probably with swords and spears and slowly kill Absalom.

This was an execution that could have take several minutes. There is a sense in which Joab had disdain for David's request to deal kindly with Absalom, but he had even more disdain for Absalom who had the audacity to raise a hand against his father, David, the anointed King of Israel.

Well, David finally gets the news that Absalom is dead and we read about it at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> chapter.

**2 Samuel 18:33** <sup>33</sup> The king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And thus he said as he walked, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

It's obvious that David loved his son and would have done anything to turn him back, but Absalom was unwilling.

But this isn't over. Joab is incensed over David's attitude about this whole incident with the death of Absalom. Keep in mind that many of David's servants fell in battle because of Absalom's treason. These people put their lives on the line for David. But David, mourns not for them, but only for his son, who hated him and wanted to kill him and his family.

**2 Samuel 19:5-8** <sup>5</sup> Then Joab came into the house to the king and said, "Today you have covered with shame the faces of all your servants, who today have saved your life and the lives of your sons and daughters, the lives of your wives, and the lives of your concubines, <sup>6</sup> by loving those who hate you, and by hating those who love you. For you have shown today that princes and servants are nothing to you; for I know this day that if Absalom were alive and all of us were dead today, then you would be pleased. <sup>7</sup> "Now therefore arise, go out and speak kindly to your servants, for I swear by the LORD, if you do not go out, surely not a man will pass the night with you, and this will be worse for you than all the evil that has come upon you from your youth until now." <sup>8</sup> So the king arose and sat in the gate. When they told all the people, saying, "Behold, the king is sitting in the gate," then all the people came before the king. Now Israel had fled, each to his tent.

Now that the rebellion of Absalom was over, the sons of Israel who followed him humble themselves to accept David as the Lord's anointed King over Israel and David is allowed to come back to Jerusalem to take his rightful place on the throne in Jerusalem.

Well, you would think that after all of the bloodshed between the tribes of Israel that they would be ready for peace and accept David as their king. Well, you would think wrong. Because as soon as David comes back to Jerusalem there is another faction not willing to follow him. This faction is led by a man by the name of Sheba.

**2 Samuel 20:1-2** <sup>NAU</sup> Now a worthless fellow happened to be there whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite; and he blew the trumpet and said, "We have no portion in David, Nor do we have inheritance in the son of Jesse; Every man to his tents, O Israel!" <sup>2</sup> So all the men of Israel withdrew from following David *and* followed Sheba the son of Bichri; but the men of Judah remained steadfast to their king, from the Jordan even to Jerusalem.

**Well, David knew that Sheba was going to be a problem with the peace in the land and knew he had to be destroyed. Well, who in your army would you trust to destroy an enemy of David, a man who has been faithful to David even when David couldn't see through his love to hold back from destroying one of his enemies even his son, Absalom?**

It sound like a job for Joab. And it was.

**2 Samuel 20:6-7** <sup>6</sup> And David said to Abishai, "Now Sheba the son of Bichri will do us more harm than Absalom; take your lord's servants and pursue him, so that he does not find for himself fortified cities and escape from our sight." <sup>7</sup> So Joab's men went out after him, along with the Cherethites and the Pelethites and all the mighty men; and they went out from Jerusalem to pursue Sheba the son of Bichri.

Well, they pursued Sheba and found him holed up in a town called Abel. Joab was ready to raze the town to kill Sheba but a woman in the town pleaded with Joab not to destroy everyone to get one man, and he agreed. She told him to wait outside the city and that the people of the city would deal with the problem.

**2 Samuel 20:22** <sup>22</sup> Then the woman wisely came to all the people. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri and threw it to Joab. So he blew the trumpet, and they were dispersed from the city, each to his tent. Joab also returned to the king at Jerusalem.

Chapter 21 deals with David avenging the Gibeonites. You might remember that when Joshua came in the land of the Canaanites they were on a mission to destroy all of the inhabitants of the land.

The Gibeonites knew that God was with Israel and they knew that God would destroy them and so they trick the leaders of Israel to make a covenant with them not to destroy them and in turn they would serve Israel.

**Joshua 9:22-27** <sup>22</sup> Then Joshua called for them and spoke to them, saying, "Why have you deceived us, saying, 'We are very far from you,' when you are living within our land?" <sup>23</sup> "Now therefore, you are cursed, and you shall never cease being slaves, both hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God." <sup>24</sup> So they answered Joshua and said, "Because it was certainly told your servants that the LORD your God had commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land before you; therefore we feared greatly for our lives because of you, and have done this thing." <sup>25</sup> "Now behold, we are in your hands; do as it seems good and right in your sight to do to us." <sup>26</sup> Thus he did to them, and delivered them from the hands of the sons of Israel, and they did not kill them. <sup>27</sup> But Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, to this day, in the place which He would choose.

And so, Joshua made a covenant with them never to harm them. They lived with Israel for many years in peace as they served Israel. But that covenant would be broken by Saul and he put the Gibeonites to death. David wanted to honor that covenant when the Gibeonites approached him.

He asked them what would appease their wrath and they said the only thing they wanted was the death of 7 of Saul's sons.

**2 Samuel 21:4-9** <sup>4</sup> Then the Gibeonites said to him, "We have no *concern* of silver or gold with Saul or his house, nor is it for us to put any man to death in Israel." And he said, "I will do for you whatever you say." <sup>5</sup> So they said to the king, "The man who consumed us and who planned to exterminate us from remaining within any border of Israel, <sup>6</sup> let seven men from his sons be given

to us, and we will hang them before the LORD in Gibeah of Saul, the chosen of the LORD." And the king said, "I will give *them*." <sup>7</sup> But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of the oath of the LORD which was between them, between David and Saul's son Jonathan. <sup>8</sup> So the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, Armoni and Mephibosheth whom she had borne to Saul, and the five sons of Merab the daughter of Saul, whom she had borne to Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite. <sup>9</sup> Then he gave them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the mountain before the LORD, so that the seven of them fell together; and they were put to death in the first days of harvest at the beginning of barley harvest.

As we come to the end of 2Samuel we find that it doesn't end well, for David will sin against the Lord by numbering the house of Israel so as to puff himself up.

**2 Samuel 24:1-4** <sup>NAU</sup> Now again the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and it incited David against them to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah." <sup>2</sup> The king said to Joab the commander of the army who was with him, "Go about now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and register the people, that I may know the number of the people." <sup>3</sup> But Joab said to the king, "Now may the LORD your God add to the people a hundred times as many as they are, while the eyes of my lord the king *still* see; but why does my lord the king delight in this thing?" <sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, the king's word prevailed against Joab and against the commanders of the army. So Joab and the commanders of the army went out from the presence of the king to register the people of Israel.

Nevertheless, the king's word prevailed against Joab and against the commanders of the army. So Joab and the commanders of the army went out from the presence of the king to register the people of Israel.

Once again, Joab is by David's side and once again he's trying to watch David's back by putting caution to this thing, but David doesn't listen. Finally, after the census is taken David realizes his sin.

**2 Samuel 24:10-25** <sup>10</sup> Now David's heart troubled him after he had numbered the people. So David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have acted very foolishly." <sup>11</sup> When David arose in the morning, the word of the LORD came

to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, <sup>12</sup> "Go and speak to David, 'Thus the LORD says, "I am offering you three things; choose for yourself one of them, which I will do to you.'"" <sup>13</sup> So Gad came to David and told him, and said to him, "Shall seven years of famine come to you in your land? Or will you flee three months before your foes while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days' pestilence in your land? Now consider and see what answer I shall return to Him who sent me." <sup>14</sup> Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let us now fall into the hand of the LORD for His mercies are great, but do not let me fall into the hand of man." <sup>15</sup> So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning until the appointed time, and seventy thousand men of the people from Dan to Beersheba died. <sup>16</sup> When the angel stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD relented from the calamity and said to the angel who destroyed the people, "It is enough! Now relax your hand!" And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. <sup>17</sup> Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was striking down the people, and said, "Behold, it is I who have sinned, and it is I who have done wrong; but these sheep, what have they done? Please let Your hand be against me and against my father's house." <sup>18</sup> So Gad came to David that day and said to him, "Go up, erect an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." <sup>19</sup> David went up according to the word of Gad, just as the LORD had commanded. <sup>20</sup> Araunah looked down and saw the king and his servants crossing over toward him; and Araunah went out and bowed his face to the ground before the king. <sup>21</sup> Then Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?" And David said, "To buy the threshing floor from you, in order to build an altar to the LORD, that the plague may be held back from the people." <sup>22</sup> Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take and offer up what is good in his sight. Look, the oxen for the burnt offering, the threshing sledges and the yokes of the oxen for the wood. <sup>23</sup> "Everything, O king, Araunah gives to the king." And Araunah said to the king, "May the LORD your God accept you." <sup>24</sup> However, the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will surely buy *it* from you for a price, for I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God which cost me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. <sup>25</sup> David built there an altar to the LORD and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. Thus the LORD was moved by prayer for the land, and the plague was held back from Israel.