

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning

Week 25 (June 12-18, 2016)

God loves David, but He has allowed His chosen vessel to suffer grave consequences due to his affair with Bathsheba. David has buried two sons and experienced the rape of his beautiful daughter. In this week's study, David will mourn the loss of a third son. "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23a).

Sunday, June 12 (read 2 Samuel 18:1-8)

"Be gentle with the young man Absalom for my sake." And all the troops heard the king giving orders concerning Absalom to each of the commanders. (2 Samuel 18:5b)

David musters his makeshift army for a battle against the much better army of his son Absalom. One of his commanders is Ittai the Gittite, a newcomer who remains loyal to King David (v. 1-2; see 15:19-22). Spiritually speaking, loyalty to our King Jesus will also lead to increased responsibilities and trust. The king wants to accompany his men, but the soldiers understand their leader's value to the country, so they insist that he remain in a safe area (v. 3). David listens to them, but he issues specific instructions concerning his son, the leader of the opposing army (v. 4-5). Casualties are great, but the army of David prevails against the army of Absalom (v. 6-7). God's sovereign hand is at work against all odds as the dense forest claims more lives than the sword, slowing Absalom's army down so that David's men could catch up to them (v. 8). We'll see tomorrow what happens to Absalom.

Monday, June 13 (read 2 Samuel 18:9-13)

But the man replied, "Even if a thousand shekels were weighed out into my hands, I would not lift my hand against the king's son." (2 Samuel 18:12a)

No one in the kingdom is as handsome as Absalom and certainly no one has a head of hair to match the king's son. When the young man's hair got too heavy, he would have five pounds of it cut off (see 14:25-26). It isn't surprising that God uses the main source of Absalom's pride to end his life of earth. The soldier who witnesses the king's son hanging by his hair reports it to his commander, but he is severely rebuked for not killing him (v. 10-11). The soldier defends his decision by saying that he would not lift his hand against the king's son (v. 12). Likewise, wouldn't it be great if our government would make the same declaration regarding the Son of God?

Tuesday, June 14 (read 2 Samuel 18:14-18)

During his lifetime, Absalom had taken a pillar and erected it in the King's Valley as a monument to himself . . . (2 Samuel 18:8)

Today's printed verse is a sad testimony to Absalom, a young child of the king who had so much to offer. In today's society, many preachers have followed his ungodly pattern. They start out leading a church for God's glory, but they end up having built a huge ministry as a monument to themselves. Certainly, there is nothing wrong with large ministries, but we must be careful that the Main Thing (Jesus) remains the main thing! In today's text, Joab ignores David's orders concerning Absalom and plunges three javelins into the young man's heart (v. 14) while he is hanging helplessly from a tree, being held there by his beautiful hair (v. 9). Are you guilty of building a monument to yourself? Are you allowing your married children to establish homes apart from your parental authority? Are you allowing young church leaders to accomplish their tasks without criticizing their methods? God has something to say to you!

Wednesday, June 15 (read 2 Samuel 18:19-19:4)

"O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you—O Absalom, my son, my son!" (2 Samuel 18:33b)

Read the entire passage today, but please focus on the printed verse above. Compare this verse to

2 Samuel 12:23 when David, concerning the death of his infant son, concludes, "I will go to him, but he will not return to me." Why is there such a drastic difference in David's acceptance of the death of a son? Great question! The infant son died in the innocence of a baby, so David was sure that he went to Heaven. The older son, however, died in rebellion against his father's will, leaving uncertainty about eternal life. That's why I preach the gospel and issue invitations to all who have not received Jesus as their Savior and Lord! Everyone must die, but those who are born again or who die before the age of accountability, will never experience the Second Death (see Revelation 20:14). Rejoice in the fact that you have received forgiveness of sins through belief in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Everything else in life pales when compared to this marvelous gift of life!

Thursday, June 16 (read 2 Samuel 19:15-23)

"For I your servant know that I have sinned, but today I have come here as the first of the whole house of Joseph to come down and meet my lord the king." (2 Samuel 19:20)

Following Absalom's death, King David heads back to Jerusalem upon the request of the elders of Judah (v. 8-15). The first two men to come out to him (v. 16-18) are Shimei (the man who had cursed him and thrown dirt and rocks at him) and Ziba (the servant of Mephibosheth who had lied about his master's absence). Shimei confesses his sins against King David and pleads for forgiveness (19-20). Abishai, the brother of Joab, demands justice for the one who cursed God's anointed, but David extends mercy instead (v. 21-23; see also James 2:13). This is a beautiful picture of Jesus returning to His earthly throne in Jerusalem to begin His reign of a thousand years. We, by our sinful lifestyles, have cursed the King and showered Him with dirt and rocks. We deserve to be put to death, but instead, He extends mercy and grace and welcomes us into His eternal kingdom. Glory to His Name!

Friday, June 17 (read 2 Samuel 19:24-30)

"All my grandfather's descendants deserved nothing but death from my lord the king, but you gave your servant a place among those who sat at your table." (2 Samuel 19:28a)

The story of Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, is one of the great love stories in the Word of God. (Review the devotions of May 13 and 14 as well as June 9 if you want to understand the entire story.) Mephibosheth has been so distraught over the departure of King David that he has not taken care of his own physical needs since the king went into exile (v. 24). David's pointed question (v. 25) is met with the sad story of betrayal on the part of Ziba (v. 26-27). The lame grandson of Saul could have been bitter because of his circumstances, but instead, he acknowledges that his family deserves death, but he has, instead, been given a place of honor at the king's table (v. 28). David orders that the land previously given to Ziba be divided equally, but Mephibosheth states that he needs nothing other than the honor of dining with the king (v. 29-30). What a beautiful picture of our relationship with God through Jesus Christ! What more could we ask for other than the right to sit at His table at the Lamb's Supper?

Saturday, June 18 (2 Samuel 19:31-40)

"Let your servant return, that I may die in my own town near the tomb of my father and mother. But here is your servant Kimham. Let him cross over with my lord the king. Do for him whatever pleases you." (2 Samuel 19:37)

We will conclude the week with one more beautiful example of mercy and grace. Barzillai, a rich man who had furnished David with supplies during his exile (17:27-29), also comes out to meet the king (v. 31-33). David offers the old man a new home in Jerusalem, but Barzillai chooses to die in his own homeland (v. 34-36). He does make a request of David, however. He wants his son Kimham to be allowed to live on the other side of the Jordan and to be supplied with daily provisions from the king (v. 37). Don't miss the application pictured here! Like Barzillai, I have been given more than I could possibly deserve on this earth. My prayer now is for my children to receive mercy and grace from my Father, so that they also will spend eternity in the presence of their earthly father and their Heavenly Father. "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household" (Acts 16:31). Praise Him today!