

2 Samuel 17:24 – 19:4

THE EXILE OF DAVID

PART 3

- I. The Battle Approaches (2 Samuel 17:24 – 18:5)
- A. Psalm 3
 - B. After a good night's rest, David and his company came to Mahanaim which he made his base of operations.
 - C. In the meantime, Absalom raised a mighty army and, under the leadership of Amasa (Joab's cousin), they crossed the Jordan River and camped in Gilead.
 - D. David and his loyal followers were supported by faithful men – Shobi, Machir, and Barzillai.
 - 1. Shobi was the son of Nahash who had been a friend of David (10:2).
 - 2. Machir had taken care of Mephibosheth before he was brought to Jerusalem to dwell with the King (9:4).
 - 3. Some have tried to ridicule the Bible by claiming it contains unnecessary information, like "David's grocery list."
 - 4. Yet, this record of support for David teaches that God provides for His faithful servants (cf. Psalm 23:5).
 - E. David numbered and set in order his soldiers, dividing them into three groups.
 - F. He planned to go out to battle with his men, but they persuaded him to remain in the city.
 - 1. Wisely, they understood that this battle had only one purpose – the death of the King.
 - 2. Wisely, David recognized this and submitted to their request.
 - G. Before they departed to engage the enemy, David made one last request: "Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom."
 - 1. It is true that David loved and cared for his son, in spite of his rebellion.
 - 2. He also thought of his role as a King conducting himself toward a defeated enemy.
 - 3. Ultimately, he desired the salvation of his son's soul.
- II. The Battle Fought (2 Samuel 18:6-8)
- A. The record is brief and to the point.
 - B. David had positioned himself so the tactical advantage would be for his smaller force.
 - C. They would fight in the Wood of Ephraim.
 - 1. This would eliminate the use of horses and chariots.
 - 2. This would make it difficult for a strong attack by a large army.
 - D. Thus, the battle became scattered – many smaller skirmishes instead of one great meeting of opposing forces.
 - E. Absalom's army became disoriented and lost in the forest and were easily defeated by David's men.
 - F. Twenty thousand rebellious Israelites died on that day.
- III. The Defeat of Absalom (2 Samuel 18:9-18)
- A. Absalom himself became separated from his forces and ran into a group of David's soldiers.
 - B. Surprised and hurrying to get away, he prodded his mule to move quickly.

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- C. The mule ran under the thick boughs of a tree and Absalom's head was caught in the branches as the mule escaped from beneath him!
 - 1. The Bible does not say that he was caught by his hair.
 - 2. It is likely that he was caught by his neck, jammed between the entangled branches.
 - D. Word came to Joab who took 10 men with him and they slew Absalom.
 - E. Joab sounded the shofar, announcing that the battle was at an end.
 - F. Absalom's body was cast into a pit and covered with a mound of stones (cf. Deut. 21:18-21)
 - G. Absalom had created for himself a monument, that his name might be remembered in Israel.
 - H. Instead, he would be remembered for his vanity, pride, and rebellion against man and God.
- IV. The Bitterness of Victory (2 Samuel 18:19 – 19:4)
- A. When word came to David of victory, his concern was for the safety of his son.
 - B. When he learned that Absalom was dead, David wept bitterly.
 - 1. Compare this with 2 Samuel 12:23.
 - 2. Why the difference in reactions?
 - 3. One son was safe with God in death: the other died unrepentant in rebellion.
 - C. A day of physical victory was also a day of spiritual sorrow.