

2 Samuel Chapter 18

Verses 1-2

Absalom had miscalculated David's continued popularity and support (17:27-29).

"David" had not forgotten how to fight.

David's campaign strategy called for the employment of the traditional military maneuver of dividing one's forces into three attacking units (see the note on 1 Sam. 11:11).

The victory went to David and his experienced veterans (verse 7).

2 Samuel 18:1 "And David numbered the people that [were] with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them."

The hardy mountaineers of Gilead came in great numbers at the call of their chieftains, so that, although without money to pay any troops, David soon found himself at the head of a considerable army.

A pitched battle was now inevitable.

But so much depending on the life of the king, he was not allowed to take the field in person.

And he therefore divided his forces into three detachments under Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, the commander of the foreign guards.

David viewing the armies in their march gives them orders regarding Absalom (2 Sam. 18:1-5).

Whose men are smitten: and he, hanging by his hair on an oak, is slain by Joab, and then he was cast into a pit.

His pillar and monument (2 Sam. 18:6-18).

David hearing hereof (2 Sam. 18:19-32), mourns for Absalom (2 Sam. 18:33).

"The people that were with him":

Which flocked to him; so as to make up a small army.

Before the battle with Absalom began, David divided his men up into groups of hundreds and thousands and put leaders over them.

Some of the men, who had been with him before and were skilled in war, were put over the men who were not trained.

Now, there was order in David's army.

2 Samuel 18:2 "And David sent forth a third part of the people under the hand of Joab, and a third part under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said unto the people, I will surely go forth with you myself also."

A 3-pronged attack was a customary military strategy (see Judges 7:16; 1 Sam. 11:11; 13:17).

David knew that he could trust these three men to run their share of the war, as if he were right there with them.

In fact, David said that he would go with them and lead them into battle.

These three, Abishai, and Joab, who were David's nephews, led one group each, and the Gittite, Ittai, who volunteered to be with David, led the third group.

This was a well-organized army.

David was a skilled commander-in-chief.

2 Samuel 18:3 "But the people answered, Thou shalt not go forth: for if we flee away, they will not care for us; neither if half of us die, will they care for us: but now [thou art] worth ten thousand of us: therefore now [it is] better that thou succor us out of the city."

“Thou shalt not go forth”:

David desired to lead his men into the battle; however, the people recognized that the death of David would mean sure defeat and Absalom would then be secure in the kingship.

The people's words echo what Ahithophel had earlier pointed out to Absalom (17:2-3).

So David was persuaded to remain at Mahanaim.

In addition to protecting Israel from Absalom's ascent to the throne if David was killed, David's men gave him a way to avoid the battle and save face.

He was an old man by this time, and certainly his battle skills had declined.

This confidence in David, by his men, has to make David proud.

They probably took into consideration that David, as a father, would find it hard to go against his own son.

David had been told by the priests, that the army of Absalom really wanted to kill David so the war would stop.

The three captains convince David to stay in the background, where it would be relatively safe.

If some of the soldiers get killed, David can still lead the others.

But if David is killed, Absalom is king.

2 Samuel 18:4 "And the king said unto them, What seemeth you best I will do. And the king stood by the gate side, and all the people came out by hundreds and by thousands."

Which was an instance of great condescension in him; and it was his wisdom and prudence to yield to them at such a time as this, and especially as their sentiments were founded on affection and loyalty to him.

"And the king stood by the gate side":

Of the city of Mahanaim.

"And all the people came out by hundreds, and by thousands":

And passed by him, to whom no doubt he gave his blessing and best wishes; and, as Abarbanel thinks, now it was he composed and said the twentieth psalm, "The LORD hear thee in the day of trouble" (Psalm 20:1).

David did not like having to wait behind, but they had a legitimate reason why he should not go to battle.

Verses 5, 12, 14

David wished for Absalom's life to be spared, but Joab feared that he would seize the opportunity to kill him.

There are 12 proverbs in the Old Testament that warn of children rebelling against their parents. A son or daughter who rebels against godly parents will not prosper.

2 Samuel 18:5 "And the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, [Deal] gently for my sake with the young man, [even] with Absalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom."

"Deal gently":

David ordered his 3 commanders not to harm Absalom.

The 4 uses of "the young man Absalom" (verses 5, 12, 29, 32) imply that David sentimentally viewed Absalom as a youthful rebel who could be forgiven.

Even though this is war, Absalom is still David's son.

David still loves Absalom, as a father does a son.

He is giving the leaders instructions not to kill his son.

2 Samuel 18:6 “So the people went out into the field against Israel: and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim;”

“The wood of Ephraim”:

A dense forest existed east of the Jordan River and north of the Jabbok River in Gilead, where the battle was waged.

2 Samuel 18:7 "Where the people of Israel were slain before the servants of David, and there was there a great slaughter that day of twenty thousand [men]."

That is, the people of Israel that were under Absalom, these were beaten by David's army.

"And there was a great slaughter that day of twenty thousand men":

Including both those that fell in the field of battle, and that were slain in the pursuit; and this is to be understood only of Absalom's party.

We see a terribly bloody battle.

The LORD is with David, and 20,000 of those who opposed David died.

The army that attacked David was several times the size of David's army of 20,000, but God was with David.

2 Samuel 18:8 "For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country: and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured."

“The wood devoured more”:

Amazingly, because of the density of the trees and the rugged nature of the terrain, the pursuit through the forest resulted in more deaths than the actual combat (see verse 9).

This was in some very rough country.

It appears it was so rough that the terrain itself, in the heat of battle, killed some of the men.

2 Samuel 18:9 “And Absalom met the servants of David. And Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the

oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that [was] under him went away."

When his army was routed, he was in such a fright that he knew not which way to flee, and instead of flying from David's men, he fled in the way of them; but none of them attempted to slay him, nor even try to stop him, but they let him pass by them, knowing David's charge concerning him.

"And Absalom rode upon a mule": As was common for great personages to do in those days (see 2 Samuel 13:29).

The image of Absalom hanging from a tree by his hair is pathetic; from a literary standpoint, it is poetic justice that the mischievous and prideful troublemaker ended up in such an undignified predicament.

This event was foreshadowed (in 14:26).

"Mule":

One of David's soldiers, who refused to disobey the order of the king recorded (in verse 5), to treat Absalom "gently," had done nothing for the suspended prince.

This seems to be saying, that Absalom was in the battle with the men and suddenly finds himself surrounded by David's men.

He is on a mule, which tells everyone who he is.

It was the custom for the king's sons to ride mules.

This forest was very thick and in his hurry to get away, he rides into a very thick oak tree with many limbs.

His neck is caught between two limbs. The mule rides on, and leaves him hanging in the tree.

2 Samuel 18:10 "And a certain man saw [it], and told Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak."

"It is necessary to be continually on one's guard against the branches of trees; and when the hair is worn in large locks floating down the back, any thick boughs interposing in the path might easily dislodge a rider from his seat, and catch hold of his flowing hair" [Hartley].

The mule that was under him went away.

The Orientals, not having saddles as we do, do not sit so firmly on the beasts they ride.

Absalom quitting his hold of the bridle, apparently to release himself when caught in the oak, the mule escaped.

His head caught hold of the oak, in which probably he was entangled by the hair of the head, which being very long and thick, might easily catch hold of a bough, especially when the great God directed it.

Either he wore no helmet, or his helmet was such as left much of his hair visible; or he had thrown away his helmet as well as his other arms, to hasten his flight, or because of the heat of the season.

Thus, the matter of his pride was the instrument of his ruin, as also Asahel's swiftness (2 Sam. 2:18), and Ahithophel's policy (2 Sam. 17:23), were the occasions of their destruction.

This man who comes and tells Joab is afraid to have anything to do with this matter, for fear of what David would do to him.

He did not help him or kill him.

He just left him hanging in the tree.

Verses 11-12

"Ten ... thousand":

Four ounces and 25 pounds respectively.

2 Samuel 18:11 "And Joab said unto the man that told him, And, behold, thou sawest [him], and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? And I would have given thee ten [shekels] of silver, and a girdle."

That gave the above account of him.

"And, behold, thou sawest him": In reality; or, "didst thou see him?" is it a fact?

"And why didst thou not smite him there to the ground":

Kill him on the spot so that he might have dropped from the tree to the ground.

"And I would have given thee ten shekels of silver":

On the news of it, for doing it.

"And a girdle?":

Which was a mark of great honor, and a token of a commission under him, and of investing: him with a military office (see 1 Sam. 18:4); it used to be given as an honorary reward to soldiers that behaved well, as on the contrary it was reckoned a reproach to be ungirded, or the girdle to be taken away.

Joab wanted Absalom dead in spite of what David had ordered about him.

He would have paid the silver to this man to kill him.

The man was wise enough to know that David would have killed him for killing Absalom.

David told them at the beginning, not to kill Absalom.

The girdle he offered him was an emblem of importance among his fellows.

The silver would have made his position better financially.

2 Samuel 18:12 "And the man said unto Joab, Though I should receive a thousand [shekels] of silver in mine hand, [yet] would I not put forth mine hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Beware that none [touch] the young man Absalom."

Disdaining his proposal.

"Though I should receive a thousand shekels of silver in mine hand":

Or if such a sum should be offered to me.

The Arabic version is a million.

"Yet would I not put forth my hand against the king's son":

To smite him, and slay him.

"For in our hearing the king charged thee, and Abishai, and Ittai": His three generals.

"Saying, beware that none touch the young man Absalom":

So as to slay him; they were charged to abstain from it themselves, and to watch and observe others, and keep them from doing it.

There was not enough money to cause this man to raise his hand against Absalom, because David had given specific orders not to kill him.

The man was not afraid of Absalom.

He was afraid of David.

He even reminds Joab of what king David had said.

2 Samuel 18:13 "Otherwise I should have wrought falsehood against mine own life: for there is no matter hid from the king, and thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against [me]."

Or "soul": he should not only have exposed his life to danger, but acted falsely to the king, by going contrary to his orders.

Yea would have done that which was contrary to his own conscience; and if he had buoyed himself up with the hope of impunity, or of a reward, he should have found himself mistaken.

The textual reading is, "against his life", or "soul", the life of Absalom, by taking it away.

"For there is no matter hid from the king":

This, though done ever so secretly, would have come to his knowledge by some means or another, and then I should have incurred his displeasure, and suffered for it.

"And thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against me":

To accuse and bring him to justice; he would have been so far from protecting him, that he would have been the first man that would have insisted on it that he should be punished for it.

Or why dost not thou thyself set thyself against him, and smite him?

Thou mayest if thou pleases, yonder he hangs, go and smite him.

He knows that he would not have lived very long if he had killed Absalom.

In fact Joab himself might have killed him, on orders from David.

Verses 14-15

Despite David's instruction of mercy for "Absalom" (verses 5, 12), "Joab" would not give Absalom another chance to work his deceptions.

Perhaps Joab's desire for revenge had also simmered long (compare 14:29-33).

2 Samuel 18:14 "Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he [was] yet alive in the midst of the oak."

“Alive”:

The spears of Joab killed Absalom while Joab’s armor bearers struck him to make sure that he was dead (verse 15).

In this action, Joab disobeyed the explicit order of David (verse 5).

Absalom was hopelessly hanging in the limbs of the tree.

He was unable to defend himself.

He could have been easily captured.

Joab had some personal desire to kill Absalom, hoping it might improve his position.

It is Joab himself that shoots darts through the heart of Absalom and kills him while he helplessly hangs there.

2 Samuel 18:15 "And ten young men that bare Joab's armor compassed about and smote Absalom, and slew him."

That waited upon him in the battle, to carry his armor, and supply him with it as he should have occasion; these, by his orders.

"Compassed about, and smote Absalom, and slew him; they enclosed him that none might rescue him, and smote him with their spears or swords, or whatsoever armor they had, until it was a clear case that he was really dead.

Joab in this disobeyed the king's order, but provided for the good of the nation, and the safety of the king.

The Jews observe, that measure for measure was given to Absalom; he was proud of his hair (2 Sam. 14:25), and therefore was hanged by it (2 Sam. 18:9).

He lay with ten concubines of his father (2 Sam. 16:21), and therefore was smitten with ten lances or spears by ten young men.

And he stole three hearts, the heart of his father, the heart of the Sanhedrim, and the heart of the men of Israel, and therefore three darts were fixed in him (2 Sam. 18:14).

The type of darts that Joab shot through the heart of Absalom would have killed him, but without more attacks on his body, it would have been a prolonged death.

It appears these ten men, also smote Absalom to hurry up his death.

2 Samuel 18:16 "And Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing after Israel: for Joab held back the people."

“Blew the trumpet”:

Joab recalled his soldiers from the battle (compare 2:28).

At the death of Absalom, there is no longer need to fight for Absalom's right to the throne.

The blowing of the trumpet stops the battle.

The men of David come back to where the trumpet is blown, therefore to see why they are to stop the fighting.

Verses 17-18

The ironic contrast between Absalom's tomb, a “large heap of stones”, and the “pillar” he erected to himself is striking.

He did not follow the advice of (Proverbs 25:6-7), and wait until the king exalted him.

Instead, he exalted himself against the king and was brought down.

2 Samuel 18:17 "And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him: and all Israel fled every one to his tent."

“Great heap of stones”:

Absalom was buried in a deep pit that was covered over with stones, perhaps symbolic of stoning, which was the legal penalty due to a rebel son (Deut. 21:20-21).

A heap of stone often showed that the one buried was a criminal or enemy (Joshua 7:26; 8:29).

It is the followers of Absalom, who are called "all Israel" here.

It appears that all of Absalom's people quickly knew what had happened and they went home to their tents.

The battle is over.

Absalom is buried in a deep pit, and rocks are piled high as a memorial to where he lay.

2 Samuel 18:18 “Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and reared up for himself a pillar, which [is] in the king's dale: for he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance: and he called the pillar after his own name: and it is called unto this day, Absalom's place.”

“Reared up for himself a pillar”:

Absalom had memorialized himself by erecting a monument in his own honor (Saul’s action in 1 Sam. 15:12).

There is today a monument, a tomb in that area, called Absalom’s tomb (perhaps on the same site), on which orthodox Jews spit when passing by.

“King’s dale”:

Traditionally, the Kidron Valley immediately east of the city of Jerusalem.

“No son”:

According to 14:27, Absalom had 3 sons, unnamed in the text, all of whom had died before him.

There was no son to carry on the name of Absalom.

Now two of David's sons are dead.

The punishment that the LORD had spoken on David through his children has occurred again.

Absalom had three sons who, we remember, died in infancy.

This pillar, erected by Absalom was truly the memorial that was left for Absalom.

This grave of stones was truly a sign of his defeat.

The memorial he had set up was in memory of his victories.

The memorial even bore his name, to help remember why it was erected.

2 Samuel 18:19 “Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, Let me now run, and bear the king tidings, how that the LORD hath avenged him of his enemies.”

To Joab; for it seems he stayed with the army when he with Jonathan brought the message from Hushai to David.

"Let me now run, and bear the king tidings how that the LORD hath avenged him on his enemies":

Which he thought would be very acceptable to hear of as soon as possible; and to be a messenger with tidings of a victory, as it was honorable, so likewise profitable then as now.

Though perhaps Ahimaaz might have no respect to the reward, as indeed none could be expected; since the death of Absalom would be so disagreeable to the king.

But was desirous that the king be told of the event of the battle as soon as could be.

“Ahimaaz”:

See note on 17:17.

2 Samuel 18:20 "And Joab said unto him, Thou shalt not bear tidings this day, but thou shalt bear tidings another day: but this day thou shalt bear no tidings, because the king's son is dead."

Because Joab knew the tidings of Absalom's death would not be acceptable to the king.

And Ahimaaz being a good man, and the son of a priest, for whom Joab had a respect, he would not send the tidings by him, which he was sensible, would not recommend him to the king.

"But thou shalt bear tidings another day”:

When any salvation is wrought, or victory obtained, the tidings of which will be welcome.

"But this day thou shall bear no tidings, because the king's son is dead”:

And thou must carry the news concerning his death, which it is not proper thou shouldst, being a priest, nor will it be to thine advantage.

Zadok was the acting high priest.

It would be a very good idea for him to be with the king when he hears this terrible news of his son's death.

Zadok is convinced that the death of Absalom is the doing of the LORD.

In honor of the king's son Absalom, Joab says Zadok should not go the first day of his death.

2 Samuel 18:21 Then said Joab to Cush, Go tell the king what thou hast seen. And Cush bowed himself unto Joab, and ran.

This area was in the south of Egypt.

The real reason that Joab delayed Zadok was so he could get credit for sending David the news. He immediately sends one of his men to tell David.

2 Samuel 18:22 "Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok yet again to Joab, But howsoever, let me, I pray thee, also run after Cush. And Joab said, Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou hast no tidings ready?"

He could not be easy, even though a messenger was dispatched, but pressed Joab still.

"But howsoever, let me, I pray thee, also run after Cush": Only permit me to go after him, though not as a messenger.

"And Joab said, wherefore wilt thou run, my son?"

Having a great affection for him, and concerned that he should take trouble on him to no purpose.

"Seeing thou hast no tidings ready":

No news to carry, but what Cush is gone with, and so can have no audience of the king, nor any reward from him.

He has no more news except the news sent by Joab's man, so why would he want to go at all and repeat the same message?

This was the whole idea of not allowing Zadok to go.

2 Samuel 18:23 "But howsoever, [said he], let me run. And he said unto him, Run. Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and overran Cush."

Be it as it may, I beg I may have leave; and being so very importunate, it was granted.

"And he said unto him, run":

Since he would take no denial.

"Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and overran Cush; who ran by the way of the mountains; which though the shorter way, that through the plain was easiest, and soonest run, though the longest.

The LORD was with Ahimaaz, and he ran swiftly.

The LORD strengthened him so much, that he ran past Joab's messenger, Cush.

2 Samuel 18:24 "And David sat between the two gates: and the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold a man running alone."

It is probable the gates of cities then were, as they now generally are, large and thick, and that, for greater security, they had two gates, one more outward, and the other inward.

Here the king sat, that he might hear tidings as soon as they came to the city.

They had left David at the gate of the city.

There was a watchman who looked in the direction of the war, to tell David of anyone coming toward him.

The watchman sees just one man running toward David.

2 Samuel 18:25 "And the watchman cried, and told the king. And the king said, If he [be] alone, [there is] tidings in his mouth. And he came apace, and drew near."

Called with a loud voice from the roof of the watchtower to the king, sitting between the gates, and informed him what he saw.

"And the king said, if he be alone there is tidings in his mouth":

For if the army was routed and fled, and were pursued, there would be more in company, or several running one after another; but being but only one, it was highly improbable that he was sent express.

"And he came apace, and drew near":

Which was another sign of his being a messenger, the haste he made towards the city.

2 Samuel 18:26 "And the watchman saw another man running: and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold [another] man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings."

At a further distance.

"And the watchman called unto the porter":

That kept the gate, under which the watchtower was.

"And said, behold, another man running alone":

As the other, and has the same appearance of a messenger.

"And the king said, he also bringeth tidings":

It being usual then, as now, to dispatch one messenger after another, as fresh accounts coming in made it necessary.

David knew if they were coming to kill him, there would have been a number of men.

One man would not have been sent against this very powerful lion of a king.

The watchman sees the other man running behind.

David is immediately aware, that they are both messengers with news of the war.

2 Samuel 18:27 "And the watchman said, Me thinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. And the king said, He [is] a good man, and cometh with good tidings."

"Good man ... good tidings":

David believed that the choice of the messenger was indicative of the content of the message.

David is, saying that Ahimaaz would have never fled from the battle, so he is bringing good news about the war.

2 Samuel 18:28 "And Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king, All is well. And he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king, and said, Blessed [be] the LORD thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king."

As soon as he came so near as to be heard by him, before he came up to him, he said with a loud voice.

"All is well":

The king's army has had success, beat the rebels, and obtained a complete victory: or "peace"; for it is but one word in the original, which signifies all happiness and prosperity, and this he wished the king.

And so it is the same as if he had said, God save the king, may all happiness attend him.

"And he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king":

When he came nearer to him, not only in reverence of him, but in thankfulness to God.

"And said, blessed be the LORD thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king":

In which he ascribes the victory, not to Joab and his army, but to the LORD, to whom he gives thanks; and this agreeably to his character as a good man, and a priest of the LORD.

Ahimaaz gives the good news that the battle is over first.

He shows respect for David by throwing himself upon the ground before him.

Ahimaaz is praising God for the victory.

2 Samuel 18:29 "And the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, and [me] thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what [it was]."

"I knew not":

Ahimaaz concealed his knowledge of Absalom's death as Joab requested (verse 20).

David's great concern was his son, Absalom.

Poor David was remembering the statement made by the LORD in judgment against David's sin.

The judgment was "the sword shall never depart from thy house".

Ahimaaz refused to tell David the sad news of the death of Absalom.

He knew Absalom was dead, but he would not tell. He knew the runner from Joab would be there soon, and he would let him tell the bad news to David.

Notice the distinction between Joab's servant and David's servant here.

2 Samuel 18:30 "And the king said [unto him], Turn aside, [and] stand here. And he turned aside, and stood still."

On the side of him, not far from him, until the other messenger came, that he might learn from them both the true state of the case.

"And he turned aside, and stood still":

Saying nothing more to the king, nor he to him.

2 Samuel 18:31 "And, behold, Cushie came; and Cushie said, Tidings, my lord the king: for the LORD hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee."

A little after.

"And Cushie said, tidings, my lord the king":

News is sent and brought by me, and good news it is.

"For the LORD hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee; they are either killed or dispersed; there is an entire victory over them, and deliverance from them.

This servant is careful to say that the judgment in the battle was from the LORD.

The one who had risen up against David was his own son, Absalom.

2 Samuel 18:32 "And the king said unto Cush, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Cush answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do [thee] hurt, be as [that] young man [is]."

“As that young man”:

The Cushite’s reply was not so much indirect as culturally phrased (1 Sam. 25:26).

The same question that was put to Ahimaaz (2 Samuel 18:29); which shows what lay nearest his heart, and was uppermost in his mind.

"And Cush answered, the enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is":

Which was tacitly saying he was dead, and so David understood it.

And he expressed it in such a manner, that David could not be displeased with the messenger; though the message was grievous to him.

This is an indirect way of telling David that his son Absalom is dead. Notice he speaks of the entire army of Absalom being either killed, or disbanded.

David's worst fears have come to be, Absalom is dead.

2 Samuel 18:33 “And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!”

The phrase “was much moved” means literally “quaked” or “quivered.”

David grieved both the loss of a son whom he loved and the loss of any hope of reconciliation with that son.

Grieving is a healthy thing to do, but David’s mistake was that he allowed his grief to keep him from fulfilling his duties to the troops (19:1-8).

“My son”:

Repeated 5 times in this verse, David lamented the death of Absalom, his son (19:5).

In spite of all the harm that Absalom had caused, David was preoccupied with his personal loss in a melancholy way that seems to be consistent with his weakness as a father.

It was such an unwarranted zeal for such a worthless son, and also of a warning about the pitiful results of sin.

David truly loved his children, and he loved “Absalom”, in particular (13:39; 14:33; 18:5; 19:4).

The sorrow over the death of a son is always great, even if the son has rebelled against his father.

David went to the chamber over the gate away from the eyes of the people to weep.

I am sure he looked in the direction of where his son had been, and cried out his name.

David would have willingly died in his son's place, as any parent would.

It appeared that David's grief was so great, that he shook all over.

Notice also, my son is mentioned five times.

David feels that his own sin has caused this terrible thing.

His grief is mixed with terrible guilt.

The joy over the victory is gone in the sorrow of losing his son.

2 Samuel Chapter 18 Questions

1. How did David prepare for the war in verse 1?
2. Who led the three different groups of the army of David?
3. What did David want to do, that his men were not in favor of?
4. How valuable did they say that David's life was?
5. What would David find it very hard to do in this particular war?
6. Where did David stay?
7. What special instructions did David give Joab, Abishai, and Ittai about Absalom?
8. Where was the battle fought?
9. How many men were killed that day?
10. What killed more than the swords?
11. What was Absalom riding?

12. What happened to Absalom at the big, thick oak?
13. What happened to the mule?
14. How did Joab find out about Absalom?
15. Why did the man leave him hanging in the tree?
16. What question did Joab ask him?
17. What was the girdle an emblem of?
18. The man said to Joab, he would not have killed him for even a _____ shekels.
19. Why had he been so afraid to kill him?
20. What did Joab do immediately?
21. Why did the ten men smite Absalom, after Joab had smitten him?
22. When Absalom died, what did Joab do to stop the war?
23. What happened to Absalom's body?
24. What happened to Absalom's army?
25. Why had Absalom made a memorial of stone to himself earlier?
26. Why was there no son of Absalom to carry on his name?
27. Who asked to carry the news to David?
28. Who stopped him from doing so?
29. Who did Joab send with the news?
30. Who, then, insisted on going, also?
31. Who got to David first with the news?
32. What did he tell David?
33. Who told David of the death of his son?
34. On learning of Absalom's death, what did David do?
35. Where did David go to weep?