

# 2 Samuel 18 - The Battle Begins; Absalom Defeated; Joab Kills Absalom; David Learns of Absalom's Death

III. David's foes (13:1—20:26)

(1) Turmoil in David's immediate family (13:1—18:33)

(B) Absalom's rebellion (14:1—18:33)

(d) Absalom's murder (18:1-33)

## 2 Samuel 18

(d) Absalom's murder (18:1-33)

1 Then David took a count of the people who were with him and **appointed over them commanders** of thousands and commanders of hundreds.

1 Then David numbered the people who were with him and set over them commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds.

1 David mustered his forces and appointed officers in charge of regiments and companies.

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.

- David, now in security and with his supplies replenished, quickly took measures to reorganize his troops and prepare them for the inevitable encounter with Absalom. This means not merely that he counted his forces but that he mustered and reviewed them.

- "...appointed over them commanders" - this was the usual military arrangement, and it corresponds to the civil arrangement suggested by Moses (Ex 18:25)

2 And David sent the people out, a third under the command of Joab, a third under the command of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a third under the command of Ittai the Gittite. And **the king** said to the people, "I myself will certainly go out with you also."

2 David sent the people out, one third under the command of Joab, one third under the command of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and one third under the command

of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said to the people, "I myself will surely go out with you also."

2 Dividing his forces into three groups, he set Joab as commander of one third of his army, Zeruiah's son Abishai, Joab's brother, as commander of another third, and Ittai from Gath as commander of another third. The king informed the army, "I'm going out to battle with you, too."

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.

- "...the king" - the writer refers to David in this way 5x in this section, leaving no doubt as to who was the legitimate ruler and who was really in charge

- A third of his troops he assigned to Joab, a third to Abishai, Joab's brother, and a third to Ittai

— It is interesting that David gave one third of the army to Ittai, a man of Gath, who had proved loyal to the cause of the king in the exile

3 But the people said, "You should not go out; for if in fact we flee, they will not care about us; and if half of us die, they will not care about us. But you are worth ten thousand of us; so now it is better that you will be *ready* to help us from the city."

3 But the people said, "You should not go out; for if we indeed flee, they will not care about us; even if half of us die, they will not care about us. But you are worth ten thousand of us; therefore now it is better that you *be ready* to help us from the city."

3 "No way!" his army responded. "If we have to retreat from the battle, Absalom's men won't care about us. Even if half of us die, they won't care about us. But you are worth 10,000 of us. The best thing you can do for us is to remain in the city."

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 succour us out of the city.

- David determined that he would lead the attack personally, but his comrades dissuaded him

— David was worth 10,000 of them, they said. If half of them died, all would go on, but if David died, the whole cause would be lost.

4 Then the king said to them, "Whatever seems best to you I will do." So the king stood beside the gate, and all the people went out by hundreds and thousands.

4 Then the king said to them, "Whatever seems best to you I will do." So the king stood beside the gate, and all the people went out by hundreds and thousands.

4 So David responded, "I'll do what you think best." Then he stood alongside the city gate as the army went out in battle array by hundreds and thousands.

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.

- Absalom had stood by the gate in Jerusalem and attacked his father (15:1-6); now David stood at a city gate and instructed soldiers to go easy on Absalom (v5)

5 But the king commanded Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, saying, "*Deal* gently with the young man Absalom for my sake." And all the people heard when the king commanded all the commanders regarding Absalom.

5 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.

5 As they were going out, the king ordered Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, "Treat young Absalom gently for my sake." Everyone heard what the king had ordered his commanders about Absalom.

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.

- Apparently David still looked upon Absalom as but a boy. He treated the rebellion as a youthful escapade which he could forgive rather easily. However, Joab and the army regarded the insurrection as having serious portents.

The truth was that David acted as a father but not as a king—as if he and Absalom had had some minor domestic quarrel which could be put right by an apology and a handshake. He failed to see Absalom as a traitor and a rebel, whose actions had caused a great deal of harm to the stability and welfare of the kingdom, to say nothing of the great loss of life in the civil war (v7). Yet every parent will feel a good deal of sympathy with David's viewpoint.

[Payne]

6 Then the people went out to the field against Israel, and the battle took place in the forest of Ephraim.

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6 David's army left for the battlefield to fight Absalom and his Israeli followers, and they also fought in the Ephraim forest,

6 So the people went out into the field against Israel: and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim;

- The location of the forest of Ephraim is unknown, but it was probably in Gilead (Cf. Judges 12:1-5)

7 The people of Israel were defeated there by the servants of David, and the slaughter there that day was great, twenty thousand *men*.

7 The people of Israel were defeated there before the servants of David, and the slaughter there that day was great, 20,000 men.

7 where David's army of servants defeated the Israelis. Many died that day—20,000 men.

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.

8 For the battle there was spread over the whole countryside, and **the forest devoured** more people that day than the sword devoured.

8 For the battle there was spread over the whole countryside, and the forest devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.

8 The battle spread throughout the entire countryside, and the forest claimed more casualties that day than did the sword fighting.

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.

- As terrible as Absalom's losses were by the swords of David's heroes (v7), they were even greater from the elements of that inhospitable terrain

- "...the forest devoured" - a great multitude of Absalom's army perished in the pits and precipices in the forest of Ephraim

— The thick forest of oaks and terebinths, by obstructing the flight, greatly aided the victors in the pursuit

— It's also very possible that *Yahweh* assisted David's men by using the forest to somehow give him the victory

It is interesting how, throughout history, God has exercised His sovereignty by controlling natures and its forces.

9 Now Absalom encountered the servants of David. Absalom was riding on *his* mule, and the mule went under the branches of a massive oak. Then **his head** caught firmly in the oak, and he was left hanging between the sky and earth, while the mule that was under him kept going.

9 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.

**9** Absalom happened to run into David's soldiers. While Absalom was trying to get away on his mule, it ran under the thick branches of a giant oak tree, and Absalom's head got caught in the tree! As his mule ran out from under him, Absalom was left hanging above the ground.

**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.

- Absalom himself, in a frantic attempt to escape on his mule, rode beneath a large oak tree and became tangled in its branches, suspended in midair

— To ride a mule was a mark of royalty (1 Kings 1:33,38); this mule may have belonged to David

- "...his head" - the tradition that Absalom was caught by his hair comes from Josephus (and perhaps the reference to it in 14:26)

**10** When a certain man saw *him*, he informed Joab and said, "Behold, I saw Absalom hanging in an oak."

**10** When a certain man saw *it*, he told Joab and said, "Behold, I saw Absalom hanging in an oak."

**10** When one of the soldiers saw what had happened, he told Joab, "I saw Absalom stuck in an oak tree!"

**10** And a certain man saw it, and told Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak.

**11** Then Joab said to the man who had informed him, "So behold, you saw *him*! Why then did you not strike him there to the ground? And *it would have been* my duty to give you ten *pieces* of silver and a belt."

**11** 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."

**11** Joab asked the man who was reporting to him, "What! You saw him? Why didn't you kill him right then and there? I would've given you ten pieces of silver and a warrior's sash!"

**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.

- The soldier who found Absalom wisely obeyed David's orders

12 But the man said to Joab, "Even if I were to 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 commanded you, Abishai, and Ittai, saying, 'Protect the young man Absalom for me!'

12 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!'

12 But the soldier replied to Joab, "I wouldn't have touched the king's son even if you dropped 1,000 pieces of silver right into my hands, because we heard the king command you, Abishai, and Ittai, 'Watch how you treat the young man Absalom!'

**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.

13 Otherwise, if I had dealt treacherously against his life (and there is nothing hidden from the king), then you yourself would have avoided *me*."

13 Otherwise, if I had dealt treacherously against his life (and there is nothing hidden from the king), then you yourself would have stood aloof."

13 If I had taken his life, the king would have uncovered everything about it, and you would never have protected me!"

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.

14 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 still alive in the midst of the oak.

14 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.

14 "There's no reason to wait for you!" Joab retorted. Then he took three spears in his hand and stabbed Absalom in the heart while he was still alive, dangling from the branches of the oak tree.

**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.

- Joab ignored his king's orders and did what seemed right in his own eyes: he thrust Absalom in the heart with three javelins

— The deed, initially done by Joab, was completed by his bodyguard (v15)

— Being a violation of the expressed wish, as well as of all the fond paternal feelings of David, it must have been deeply offensive to the king, nor was it ever forgotten (1 Kings 2:5)

— Yet there is a strong reason for believing that Joab, in doing it, was actuated by a sincere regard to the interests of David, both as a man and a monarch

15 And ten young men who carried Joab's armor gathered around and struck Absalom and killed him.

15 And ten young men who carried Joab's armor gathered around and struck Absalom and killed him.

15 Ten young men who served as Joab's personal assistants then surrounded Absalom, striking him repeatedly and killing him.

15 And ten young men that bare Joab's armour compassed about and smote Absalom, and slew him.

- Ten of Joab's bodyguards struck Absalom to make sure he died; this to ensure that no one man could be blamed as Absalom's executioner

**16** Then Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing Israel, for Joab restrained the people.

**16** Then Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing Israel, for Joab restrained the people.

**16** At this, Joab sounded his battle trumpet and his troops stopped pursuing the other Israelis.

**16** And Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing after Israel: for Joab held back the people.

- Knowing that by the death of the usurper (Absalom) there was no occasion for further bloodshed, Joab ended the pursuit

— However harsh and unfeeling to the king Joab may appear, there can be no doubt that he acted the part of a wise statesman in regarding the peace and welfare of the kingdom more than his master's private inclinations, which were opposed to strict justice and his own interests

— Absalom deserved to die by the divine law (Deut 21:18,21), as well as being an enemy to his king and country; and no time was more fitting than when he met that death in open battle

17 And they took Absalom and threw him into a **deep pit** in the forest, and erected over him a very large pile of stones. And all Israel fled, each to his *own* tent.

17 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.

17 Meanwhile, Joab's army grabbed Absalom's body, tossed it into a large pit in the forest, and filled it up with a huge pile of rocks. Then the Israelis ran away back to their homes.

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.

- "...a deep pit" - this may have been a cave or an unused cistern

— Some think the heaping of stones on Absalom's grave was symbolic of the stoning which was the legal penalty due a rebel son (Deut 21:20-21)

— It is still a custom in the East for passers-by to cast stones on the grave of a criminal

- God cut Absalom off because he rebelled against the Lord's anointed, rather than blessing him because he was David's eldest son

— This was the third son that David had lost because of his sins against Bathsheba and Uriah

— Instead of having a line of kings succeed him, all Absalom left behind was a stone monument (*stèle*, "marble pillar") that he had erected to himself (v18)

18 Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and set up for himself a memorial stone, which is in the King's Valley, for he said, "I have no son to continue my name." So he named the memorial stone after his own name, and it is called Absalom's Monument to this day.

18 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.

18 While Absalom had been living, he had erected a pillar as a monument to himself in King's Valley because he had been telling himself, "I don't have a son to carry on my family name." So he named the pillar after himself—it's called Absalom's Monument even today.

**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.

- Evidently, Absalom's three sons (14:27) died prematurely

- The 52-foot high tomb or pillar of Absalom visible today, just east of the temple area, is an early first century AD Roman sepulcher

— It is not the same memorial referred to here, though it may have been erected in the same location

Absalom's *coup* was doomed from the start, because he was rebelling against the will of God. Solomon was God's choice to succeed David (1 Chr 22:9-10; 1 Kings 1:13,17,30).

Absalom was David's third son (after Amnon and Chileab [Daniel]). Absalom sought to perpetuate traditional succession. As Israel's true sovereign, God had the right to select whomever He wished to lead His nation.

Amnon and Absalom both were willful, cunning, obstinate, immoral, followed counsel, and experienced violent deaths. Amnon repeated David's passionate sexual sin and was hedonistic, whereas Absalom repeated David's cold-blooded murder and was militarily and politically ambitious.

Absalom's attempt to usurp David's throne proves again that disobedience to God's covenant (i.e., the Mosaic Law) resulted in lack of fertility (blessing) in Israel. The enemies of the Lord's anointed will never succeed. Because of his sin, David had to flee Jerusalem, and he experienced much heartache. Because of his sins, Absalom died without honor. Nevertheless, in spite of David's sin, God restored him to power because of God's elective choice of him, and because of David's heart for God.

God had promised to punish David for his disregard of the Mosaic Covenant and the Lord. Still, He did not say He would cut him off as He had cut Saul off (12:10-12). The following chapters (18:19-19:43) record Yahweh's restoration of His anointed after discipline.

**19** Then Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said, "Please let me run and bring the king news that the LORD has freed him from the hand of his enemies!"

**19** Then Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said, "Please let me run and bring the king news that the LORD has freed him from the hand of his enemies."

**19** Zadok's son Ahimaaz told Joab, "Let me run over to King David and take him the news. I'll mention that the LORD has delivered him from his enemies."

**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.

- Ahimaaz (David's courier, 15:36; 17:17) wanted to relay the news of victory to David because messengers often received a reward for bringing good news

**20** But Joab said to him, "You are not the man *to bring* news this day, but you shall bring news another day; however, you shall bring no news this day, because the king's son is dead."

**20** But Joab said to him, "You are not the man to carry news this day, but you shall carry news another day; however, you shall carry no news today because the king's son is dead."

**20** But Joab answered Ahimaaz, "You're not the man to deliver news today. Do it any other time, but not today, because the king's son is dead."

**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.

- Joab stepped in to do what he thought was best for David; he believed murdering Absalom was for David's good, now he planned how David should receive the news of his son's death

— Joab forbade Ahimaaz from bringing the message to spare the king unnecessarily early grief over his son's death

— Joab may also have been concerned for the well-being of the young messenger for the bearer of such bad news might not be well received

21 Then Joab said to the Cushite, "Go, tell the king what you have seen." So the Cushite bowed to Joab and ran.

21 Then Joab said to the Cushite, "Go, tell the king what you have seen." So the Cushite bowed to Joab and ran.

21 So Joab ordered a man from Ethiopia, "Go tell the king what you've seen." So the Ethiopian saluted Joab and then ran to tell David.

21 Then said Joab to Cushite, Go tell the king what thou hast seen. And Cushite bowed himself unto Joab, and ran.

- Instead Joab dispatched an unnamed Cushite (an Ethiopian) who was obviously known to David

— He was either considered more knowledgeable as to what had happened to Absalom (see 18:29) or was more expendable

22 However, Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said once more to Joab, "But whatever happens, please let me also run after the Cushite." And Joab said, "Why would you run, my son, since you will have no messenger's reward for going?"

22 Now Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said once more to Joab, "But whatever happens, please let me also run after the Cushite." And Joab said, "Why would you run, my son, since you will have no reward for going?"

22 "Please," Zadok's son Ahimaaz continued, "No matter what happens, let me follow the Ethiopian!"

Joab asked him, "Why this request to run, my son? There's no reward in it for you."

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

23 "But whatever happens," *he said*, "I will run." So he said to him, "Run." Then Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain and passed by the Cushite.

23 "But whatever happens," *he said*, "I will run." So he said to him, "Run." Then Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain and passed up the Cushite.

23 "No matter what, I'm running," Ahimaaz replied.

So Joab told Ahimaaz, "Run!" And Ahimaaz ran, taking the Jordan Valley road, passing the Ethiopian.

**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 Cushite.

- Ahimaaz was not to be denied, however, and finally received permission to go
- Taking a shortcut, he outran the Cushite

**24** Now David was sitting between the two gates; and the watchman went to the roof of the gate by the wall, and raised his eyes and looked; and behold, a man was running by himself.

**24** Now David was sitting between the two gates; and the watchman went up to the roof of the gate by the wall, and raised his eyes and looked, and behold, a man running by himself.

**24** Meanwhile, David was sitting between the inner and outer gates of the city. The watchman was up on the roof of the gateway near the walls, looking around, and there was a man running by himself!

**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.

25 So the watchman called out and told the king. And the king said, "If he is by himself there is good news in his mouth." And he came nearer and nearer.

25 The watchman called and told the king. And the king said, "If he is by himself there is good news in his mouth." And he came nearer and nearer.

25 So the watchman called out his news to the king.

The king responded, "If he's alone, he's bringing some news to report." As the man continued to draw near and approach the palace,

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.

26 Then the watchman saw another man running; and the watchman called to the gatekeeper and said, "Behold, *another* man is running by himself." And the king said, "This one also is bringing good news."

26 Then the watchman saw another man running; and the watchman called to the gatekeeper and said, "Behold, *another* man running by himself." And the king said, "This one also is bringing good news."

26 the watchman observed another man running. So he called out to the gatekeeper, "There's another man running by himself!"

The king replied, "He's also bringing some news to report!"

**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.

27 The watchman said, "I think the running form of the first one is like the running form of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok." And the king said, "This is a good man, and he is coming with

good news."

27 The watchman said, "I think the running of the first one is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok." And the king said, "This is a good man and comes with good news."

27 Then the watchman observed, "It looks to me that the runner out in front is running like Zadok's son Ahimaaz!"

The king replied, "This is a good man bearing good news!"

**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.

- Both runners were seen from a distance, and when David understood that the nearer was Ahimaaz, he assumed that the message he would convey was good because Ahimaaz himself was good

**28** Then Ahimaaz called out and said to the king, "All is well." And he prostrated himself before the king with his face to the ground. And he said, "Blessed is the LORD your God, who has turned over the men who raised their hands against my lord the king."

**28** Ahimaaz called and said to the king, "All is well." And he prostrated himself before the king with his face to the ground. And he said, "Blessed is the LORD your God, who has delivered up the men who lifted their hands against my lord the king."

**28** "Everything's fine!" Ahimaaz announced to the king. He bowed low with his face to the ground before the king and said, "Praise be to the LORD your God! He has handed over the men who rebelled against your majesty the king."

**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.

- The assumption was unfounded, however, for when Ahimaaz finally was able to deliver his message, all he could do was speak in general terms of the victory over Absalom

29 But the king said, "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" And Ahimaaz answered, "When Joab sent the king's servant, and your servant, I saw a great commotion, but I did not know what *it was*."

29 The king said, "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" And Ahimaaz answered, "When Joab sent the king's servant, and your servant, I saw a great tumult, but I did not know what *it was*."

29 "Are things fine with respect to the young man Absalom?" the king asked.

Ahimaaz answered, "I saw a lot of confusion about the time Joab was getting ready to send the king's courier and me, your servant, but I'm not sure what was going on."

**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.

30 Then the king said, "Turn aside and stand here." So he turned aside and stood still.

30 Then the king said, "Turn aside and stand here." So he turned aside and stood still.

30 The king replied, "Stand here at attention and wait." So he stepped to the side and stood there waiting.

**30** And the king said unto him, Turn aside, and stand here. And he turned aside, and stood still.

**31** Then behold, the Cushite arrived, and the Cushite said, "Let my lord the king receive good news, for the LORD has freed you this day from the hand of all those who rose up against you."

**31** Behold, the Cushite arrived, and the Cushite said, "Let my lord the king receive good news, for the LORD has freed you this day from the hand of all those who rose up against you."

**31** Just then the Ethiopian arrived. He reported, "Good news, your majesty the king! The LORD has delivered you from the control of everyone who rebelled against you!"

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

32 Then the king said to the Cushite, "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" And the Cushite answered, "May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise up against you for evil, be like *that* young man!"

32 Then the king said to the Cushite, "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" And the Cushite answered, "Let the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise up against you for evil, be as *that* young man!"

32 The king asked the Ethiopian, "Is the young man safe?"

The Ethiopian answered, "May the enemies of your majesty the king—including everyone who rebels and tries to harm you—become like *that* young man..."

**32** And the king said unto Cushite, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Cushite answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do *thee* hurt, be as *that* young man *is*.

- The details were left to the Cushite who presently arrived and shared with the king the grisly news that Absalom and his confederates were dead

*Someone has defined "tact" as "the knack of making a point without making an enemy"; the Cushite had tact. [Wiersbe]*

**33** Then the king trembled and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And this is what he said as he walked: "My son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you, Absalom, my son, my son!"

**33** 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!"

**33** Deeply shaken, the king went up to the chamber overlooking the city gate, weeping bitterly and crying out as he went along, "My son Absalom! My son! My son Absalom! I wish I had died instead of you, Absalom my son, my son!"

**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!

- Overwhelmed, the king retired to an upper room where he privately poured out his heart before God in unremitting grief

— The depths of his love for his rebel son are couched in his lament, "If only I had died instead of you."

— Two of David's sons, Amnon (13:28-29) and Absalom (18:15), died violent deaths as a consequence of David's sin (12:10)

### **Absalom: A Type of the Antichrist?** [as suggested by [AW Pink-The Antichrist](#)]

(1) The meaning of his name is very significant. "Absalom" means "father of peace." A careful reading of his history reveals the fact that, again and again, he posed as a man of peace, while war was in his heart. So the Antichrist will pose as the promised prince of peace, and for a time it will appear that he has actually ushered in the Millennium. But before long, his violent and bloody character will be revealed.

(2) Absalom was the son of David, and therefore a Jew.

(3) Absalom was a son of David by Maacah, the daughter of the Gentile king of Geshur (2 Sam 3:3).

(4) The wild nature of Absalom accords with the wild home and stock from whence he sprang; there he fled after murdering Amnon

(5) Absalom was a man of blood (2 Sam 13, etc.).

(6) Absalom sought to obtain the kingdom by flatteries (2 Sam 15:2-6; Cf. Dan 11:21,23).

(7) He cloaked his rebellion by a pretense of religion (2 Sam 15:7-8).

(8) He was the immediate cause of the faithful followers of David being driven from Jerusalem into the wilderness (2 Sam 15:14-16).

(9) He reared up a pillar unto himself (2 Sam 18:18).

(10) He met with a violent end (2 Sam 18:14).