

2 Samuel 19 - Joab Rebukes David; David Reinstated As King; David Demonstrates Forgiveness; Seeds of the Divided Kingdom

III. David's foes (13:1—20:26)

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2 Samuel 19

(2) Turmoil surrounding David's return to power (19:1—20:26)

(A) David listens to Joab's advice (19:1-8)

- 1 Then it was reported to Joab, "Behold, the king is weeping and he mourns for Absalom."
- 1 Then it was told Joab, "Behold, the king is weeping and mourns for Absalom."
- 1 Someone informed Joab, "The king is weeping bitterly, mourning for Absalom."
- 1 And it was told Joab, Behold, the king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom.

2 So the victory that day was turned into mourning for all the people, because the people heard *it* said that day, "The king is in mourning over his son."

2 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."

2 The victory had become an occasion for the army to mourn, because on that very day the troops heard the announcement, "The king is grieving for his son!"

2 And the victory that day was turned into mourning unto all the people: for the people heard say that day how the king was grieved for his son.

- David's elation at having regained the kingdom was undercut by his despair at having lost a son

3 And the people entered the city surreptitiously that day, just as people who are humiliated surreptitiously flee in battle.

3 So the people went by stealth into the city that day, as people who are humiliated steal away when they flee in battle.

3 So men snuck into the city that day like men do who are ashamed after they've run away from a battle.

3 And the people got them by stealth that day into the city, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle.

- David's soldiers expected joyful celebration of their victory; instead, grief overwhelmed their leader

— David's soldiers were ashamed to enter Mahanaim as the conquering victors because of David's mourning

— David again responded like a parent, not a king

— How painful for a father to know his own sins had laid the foundation for his son's downfall

4 And **the king** covered his face and cried out with a loud voice, "My son Absalom, Absalom, my son, my son!"

4 The king covered his face and cried out with a loud voice, "O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

4 Meanwhile, the king veiled his face and kept on crying loudly, "My son Absalom! Absalom my son, my son!"

4 But the king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!

- "...the king" - to highlight how David's emotions conflicted with his duties, the text speaks only of "the king" instead of "David"

- This was the customary way of expressing one's grief. The muffled head marked the grief which shut one from the external world. Perhaps it symbolized the sorrow unto death that David felt for his son Absalom.

— His vocal expression suggested to the people that the king wished that he might die and be with Absalom

David's self-absorbed grief blinded him to truth and duty. In mercy, God limited the destruction of David's sin had brought on the nation. Absalom's death meant families could rebuild. Instead of fighting, farmers could plant crops. Other fathers' sons would now live and not die. God had graciously saved the king and restored the kingdom, yet David had not thanked God or his soldiers.

5 Then Joab came into the house to the king and said, "Today you have shamed all your servants, who have saved your life today and the lives of your sons and daughters, the lives of your wives, and the lives of your concubines,

5 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,

5 Joab went up to the palace and rebuked the king: "Today you've humiliated your entire army who just saved your life, the lives of your sons and daughters, and the lives of your wives and mistresses!

5 And Joab came into the house to the king, and said, Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons and of thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines;

- David was right to grieve over Absalom's death, but Joab was also correct to warn David of the consequences for failing to thank his soldiers for saving his life and the kingdom

6 by loving those who hate you, and by hating those who love you. For you have revealed today that commanders and servants are nothing to you; for I know today that if Absalom were alive and all of us were dead today, then it would be right as far as you are concerned.

6 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.

6 You love those who hate you and hate those who love you! You've made it abundantly clear today that your officers and the men under them mean nothing to you! I've learned today that you would rather have Absalom alive today and all the rest of us dead!

6 In that thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends. For thou hast declared this day, that thou regardest neither princes nor servants: for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well.

7 Now therefore arise, go out and speak kindly to your servants, for I swear by the LORD, if you do not go out, no man will stay the night with you, and this will be worse for you than all the misfortune that has happened to you from your youth until now!"

7 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."

7 Now get up and restore the morale of your army. I swear by the LORD that if you don't get out there, you won't have a single man left in your army by nightfall! You'll be in more trouble today than all the disasters you've been through from your boyhood until now!"

7 Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak comfortably unto thy servants: for I swear by the LORD, if thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee this night: and that will be worse unto thee than all the evil that befell thee from thy youth until now.

- Joab, who had known before the frustration of doing what he felt was right only to have the king turn it against him (Cf. 3:27-39; 14:28-33), confronted David and rebuked him for his insensitivity toward his officers and people

— It appeared, Joab said, that David would have been more satisfied if Absalom had lived and all of them had died

— In order to salvage what little morale was left, Joab urged David to appear before the troops and assure them that he appreciated their selfless service to him

The severe military discipline of Joab hindered his understanding the grief of a father for his son. David viewed the events as they related to himself, and felt keenly the loss of his son Absalom. Joab viewed the same events in the light of their meaning to the people of Judah and the family of David. He urged the king to conceal his personal feelings in the best interests of the political situation. Joab feared the reaction of the populace to the expressed sentiment of David for Absalom. Consequences more serious than Absalom's rebellion might follow if the mob were stirred to anger by their king's lack of appreciation for their bravery on his behalf.

8 So the king got up and sat at the gate. When they told all the people, saying, "Behold, the king is sitting at the gate," then all the people came before the king.

Now Israel had fled, each to his tent.

8 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.

8 So the king got up and took his seat in the gateway. When the army was informed, "The king is sitting in the gateway!" they all gathered together in his presence.

Meanwhile, the Israelis had run away back to their own homes.

8 Then the king arose, and sat in the gate. And they told unto all the people, saying, Behold, the king doth sit in the gate. And all the people came before the king: for Israel had fled every man to his tent.

(B) Resistance to David's return in the North (19:9-10)

9 And all the people were quarreling throughout the tribes of Israel, saying, "The king rescued us from the hands of our enemies and saved us from the hands of the Philistines, but now he has fled out of the land from Absalom.

9 All the people were quarreling throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "The king delivered us from the hand of our enemies and saved us from the hand of the Philistines, but now he has fled out of the land from Absalom.

9 Throughout the tribes of Israel, everyone was quarreling with one another:

"The king delivered us from the domination of our enemies...."

"He's the one who rescued us from Philistine control...."

"Now he's fleeing the country because of Absalom...!"

9 And all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, The king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines; and now he is fled out of the land for Absalom.

- The short-lived rebellion had failed to gain its objective, and the element of discontent spread throughout the country

- The movement to restore David to power was not unanimous: some felt that he had lost his ability to rule; others looked upon him as having earned the right to rule by his past service

10 However, Absalom, whom we anointed over us, has died in battle. Now then, why are you silent about bringing the king back?"

10 However, Absalom, whom we anointed over us, has died in battle. Now then, why are you silent about bringing the king back?"

10 "The very same Absalom we anointed to rule just died in battle...!"

"Now then, why remain silent about bringing the king back...?"

10 And Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?

- The remnants of Absalom's army had made their way home and together with the rest of Israel found themselves in a quandary

— They had rallied behind Absalom, but now he was dead. Moreover, David had provided effective leadership in the past. So why were the elders not bringing the king back?

(C) David promises Amasa that he could lead David's army in the place of Joab (19:11-15)

11 Then King David sent *word* to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, saying, “Speak to **the elders of Judah**, saying, ‘Why are you the last to bring the king back to his house, since the word of all Israel has come to the king, *even* to his house?’

11 Then King David sent to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, saying, “Speak to the elders of Judah, saying, ‘Why are you the last to bring the king back to his house, since the word of all Israel has come to the king, *even* to his house?’

11 So King David sent this message to Zadok and Abiathar, the priests: “Ask the elders of Judah, ‘Why are you the last to bring the king back to his palace, considering that what’s being reported throughout all of Israel has come to the king at his palace?’

11 And king David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying, Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying, Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house? seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, even to his house.

- “...the elders of Judah” - these were the men who could win the tribe of Judah back to the cause of David; Absalom had found widespread support among the people of Judah — Their reticence derived from the fact that Judah had played a prominent part in the insurrection

— David commissioned the religious leaders, Zadok and Abiathar, to make his appeal to Judah through the tribal elders

12 You are my brothers; you are my bone and my flesh. Why then should you be the last to bring back the king?’

12 You are my brothers; you are my bone and my flesh. Why then should you be the last to bring back the king?’

12 You’re my relatives! You’re my own flesh and blood! So why are you the last to bring back the king?’

12 Ye are my brethren, ye are my bones and my flesh: wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king?

- Sensing the local officials’ indecision, David sent Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, to them to ask why they were so reluctant to restore David when it was clear that the people were willing and ready to do so

— The text of their message is too brief to disclose what approaches these two religious delegates made. Perhaps they reminded the elders of the movement of Israel to restore David and hinted that there might also be a movement started to make a northern city the capital instead of Jerusalem.

— David had once before moved his capital from Hebron to Jerusalem, and another move could happen again. David’s action in turning to his own tribe was natural and essential in his return to power.

— However, some looked upon his conciliatory action toward Judah as a deed breeding fresh rebellion

13 And say to Amasa, 'Are you not my bone and my flesh? May God do so to me, and more so, if you will not be commander of the army for me continually, in place of Joab!'"

13 Say to Amasa, 'Are you not my bone and my flesh? May God do so to me, and more also, if you will not be commander of the army before me continually in place of Joab!'"

13 Then ask Amasa, 'Aren't you my own flesh and blood? So may God deal with me, no matter how severely, if from this day forward you don't take Joab's place as commander of my army.'

13 And say ye to Amasa, Art thou not of my bone, and of my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not captain of the host before me continually in the room of Joab.

- No doubt to shore up his support from Judah especially, David told the priests to promise Amasa, his nephew (Cf. 17:25; 1 Chr 2:17), that he would succeed Joab as commander of the army (2 Sam 19:13)

— In another conciliatory move toward the rebels, David replaced Joab as army commander. However, David took no steps to protect Amasa from Joab, although he knew how deadly Joab's ambition could be (2 Sam 3:38-39).

— Joab, also David's nephew through another half-sister (1 Chr 2:16), had by now become completely discredited in David's eyes because of his open disagreements with David's policies

— Joab's execution of Absalom cost him his position, at least temporarily; nevertheless, his rebuke of the king (v5-7) was good and needed

This course of action was a bold stroke of military policy to secure the loyalty of the general of the rebel army. By so doing, David hoped to secure the allegiance of the rebel army and at the same time to demote Joab for his murder of Absalom. The move has also been questioned as hardly prudent, for Joab was not the type of man to acquiesce quietly, nor had the loyalty of Amasa been proved.

14 So he turned the hearts of all the men of Judah as one man, so that they sent *word* to the king, *saying*, "Return, you and all your servants."

14 Thus he turned the hearts of all the men of Judah as one man, so that they sent *word* to the king, *saying*, "Return, you and all your servants."

14 By doing things like this, he persuaded all the men of Judah to unite in support of him. They sent the king this message: "Come on back, you and all of your army!"

14 And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as the heart of one man; so that they sent this word unto the king, Return thou, and all thy servants.

15 The king then returned and came as far as the Jordan. And *the men of* Judah came to Gilgal in order to go to meet the king, to escort the king across the Jordan.

15 The king then returned and came as far as the Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal in order to go to meet the king, to bring the king across the Jordan.

15 So the king returned to Israel as far as the Jordan River.

15 So the king returned, and came to Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to conduct the king over Jordan.

- The mission of Zadok and Abiathar was successful: with one accord the people of Judah not only invited David to return to rule over them, but they also sent a delegation to the Jordan River to meet him and help him cross over the river.

(D) David accepts the Benjamites and forgives Shimei (19:16-20)

16 Then Shimei the son of Gera, the Benjaminite who was from Bahurim, hurried and came down with the men of Judah to meet King David.

16 Then Shimei the son of Gera, the Benjamite who was from Bahurim, hurried and came down with the men of Judah to meet King David.

16 while Gera's son Shimei, a descendant of Benjamin from Bahurim, accompanied them to meet King David.

16 And Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite, which was of Bahurim, hastened and came down with the men of Judah to meet king David.

17 And there were a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they rushed to the Jordan before the king.

17 There were a thousand men of Benjamin with him, with Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they rushed to the Jordan before the king.

17 Ziba, the steward in charge of Saul's household, and 1,000 descendants of Benjamin accompanied him, along with Ziba's fifteen sons and 20 servants. They rushed toward the Jordan River ahead of the king

17 And there were a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they went over Jordan before the king.

18 Then they crossed the shallow places *repeatedly* to bring over the king's household, and to do what was good in his sight. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king as he was about to cross the Jordan.

18 Then they kept crossing the ford to bring over the king's household, and to do what was good in his sight. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king as he was about to cross the Jordan.

18 and forded it to assist the king at the crossing so he could do whatever he wished. Just as the king was about to ford the Jordan River, Gera's son Shimei fell down in front of the king

18 And there went over a ferry boat to carry over the king's household, and to do what he thought good. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, as he was come over Jordan;

- Josephus stated that those who went out to meet David, including the tribe of Judah, laid a bridge of boats over the river so the king, and those with him, might pass with ease over it [Josephus, 7:11:2]

19 And he said to the king, "May my lord not consider me guilty, nor call to mind what your servant did wrong on the day when my lord the king went out from Jerusalem, so that the king would take *it* to heart.

19 So he said to the king, "Let not my lord consider me guilty, nor remember what your servant did wrong on the day when my lord the king came out from Jerusalem, so that the king would take *it* to heart.

19 and addressed him, "May your majesty not hold me guilty. Don't remember how your servant did wrong the day your majesty the king left Jerusalem. May the king not let it burden his heart,

19 And said unto the king, Let not my lord impute iniquity unto me, neither do thou remember that which thy servant did perversely the day that my lord the king went out of Jerusalem, that the king should take it to his heart.

20 For your servant knows that I have sinned; so behold, I have come today, the first of all **the house of Joseph** to go down to meet my lord the king."

20 For your servant knows that I have sinned; therefore behold, I have come today, the first of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king."

20 because your servant knows that I have sinned, but today I have come here as the first one from the entire house of Joseph to meet your majesty the king."

20 For thy servant doth know that I have sinned: therefore, behold, I am come the first this day of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king.

- Included in the delegation were Shimei (v16), who had cursed David on his way into exile (16:5-8), and Ziba (19:17), Mephibosheth's servant, who had refreshed David along the way (16:1-4)

— Shimei, realizing the peril in which he now found himself because of David's restoration, prostrated himself before the king and sought his forgiveness, a favor David temporarily granted over the objections of Abishai (19:21-23; David later instructed Solomon to execute Shimei, 1 Kings 2:8-9).]

- "...the house of Joseph" - the 10 tribes of Israel were distinguished from Judah by the title of the most powerful tribe among them—Ephraim, son of Joseph

(E) David prevents Abishai from killing Shimei (19:21-23)

21 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah responded, "Should Shimei not be put to death for this, the fact that he cursed the LORD'S anointed?"

21 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah said, "Should not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD's anointed?"

21 But Zeruiah's son Abishai asked, "Why shouldn't Shimei be put to death for this? After all, he cursed the LORD's anointed!"

21 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said, Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD'S anointed?

- Joab's brother Abishai had earlier wanted to execute Shimei for his curses (16:9-10), now he again suggested death for Shimei

22 David then said, "What is there between you and me, you sons of Zeruiah, that you should be an **adversary** to me today? Should anyone be put to death in Israel today? For do I not know that I am king over Israel today?"

22 David then said, "What have I to do with you, O sons of Zeruiah, that you should this day be an adversary to me? Should any man be put to death in Israel today? For do I not know that I am king over Israel today?"

22 David replied, "What do you sons of Zeruiah have in common with me? You've become my enemies today! Should anyone be executed in Israel today? Don't you know that I've been reinstated as king over Israel today?"

22 And David said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries unto me? shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? for do not I know that I am this day king over Israel?

- David refused Abishai's suggestion, using the same words he had previously (16:10): "What does this have to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah?" (including Joab in his reply) - "...adversary" - *satan*, Abishai had become an adversary to David in the sense that he opposed David's purpose in pardoning Shimei

23 So the king said to Shimei, "You shall not die." The king also swore to him.

23 The king said to Shimei, "You shall not die." Thus the king swore to him.

23 Then the king addressed Shimei, "You won't die!" affirming his promise with an oath.

23 Therefore the king said unto Shimei, Thou shalt not die. And the king swore unto him.

- The large number of Benjamites who accompanied Shimei (v17) and who were identified by him (v20) as elements of the whole house of Joseph (i.e. Israel) indicates the first steps taken by the tribe of Benjamin to link itself with Judah

(F) David accepts Mephibosheth's explanation about remaining in Jerusalem and allows Ziba to keep half of the estate in an attempt to win over Benjamin (19:24-30)

24 Then Mephibosheth the grandson of Saul came down to meet the king; but he had neither tended to his feet, nor trimmed his mustache, nor washed his clothes since the day the king departed until the day he came *home* in peace.

24 Then Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king; and he had neither cared for his feet, nor trimmed his mustache, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came *home* in peace.

24 Meanwhile, Saul's grandson Mephibosheth also went out to greet the king. He had not taken care of his feet, trimmed his mustache, or washed his clothes from the day the king left until the day he returned safely.

24 And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace.

- Ziba had received all of Mephibosheth's property by persuading David that Jonathan's son was loyal to Absalom (16:3-4)

- The neglect of his appearance was the outward sign of extreme grief

25 And it was when he came *from* Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said to him, "Why did you not go with me, Mephibosheth?"

25 It was when he came from Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said to him, "Why did you not go with me, Mephibosheth?"

25 When he arrived from Jerusalem to greet the king, the king asked him, "So why didn't you come with me, Mephibosheth?"

25 And it came to pass, when he was come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto him, Wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth?

26 So he said, "My lord the king, my servant betrayed me; for your servant said, 'I will saddle the donkey for myself so that I may ride on it and go with the king,' since your servant cannot walk.

26 So he answered, "O my lord, the king, my servant deceived me; for your servant said, 'I will saddle a donkey for myself that I may ride on it and go with the king,' because your servant is lame.

26 He replied, "Well, your majesty, since your servant is lame, I told myself, 'I'll have my donkey saddled and I'll ride on it so I can leave with the king.' But my servant Ziba deceived me

26 And he answered, My lord, O king, my servant deceived me: for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king; because thy servant is lame.

27 Furthermore, he has slandered your servant to my lord the king; but my lord the king is like the angel of God, therefore do what is good in your sight.

27 Moreover, he has slandered your servant to my lord the king; but my lord the king is like the angel of God, therefore do what is good in your sight.

27 by slandering your servant to your majesty. But your majesty the king is like an angel from God: so do what you think is best.

27 And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but my lord the king is as an angel of God: do therefore what is good in thine eyes.

28 For all my father's household was only people *worthy* of death to my lord the king; yet you placed your servant among those who ate at your own table. So what right do I still have, that I should complain anymore to the king?"

28 For all my father's household was nothing but dead men before my lord the king; yet you set your servant among those who ate at your own table. What right do I have yet that I should complain anymore to the king?"

28 Everyone from my grandfather's household deserved nothing but death from your majesty the king, but you provided a place for your servant among those who have been eating from your table. So what right do I have to ask for anything more from the king?"

28 For all of my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king: yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table. What right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the king?

- Next came Mephibosheth who protested to David that Ziba had lied about Mephibosheth's motive for remaining in Jerusalem when the king was forced to leave — Saul's grandson said he had not tried to use the occasion as an opportunity to bring his grandfather's dynasty back into control, as Ziba had reported (Cf. 16:3)

29 So the king said to him, "Why do you still speak of your affairs? I have decided, 'You and Ziba shall divide the land.'"

29 So the king said to him, "Why do you still speak of your affairs? I have decided, 'You and Ziba shall divide the land.'"

29 In response, the king told him, "What's the point of us talking anymore? My decision is that you and Ziba divide the fields."

29 And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land.

- Whether this was true or not cannot be determined, but David at least was somewhat convinced by Mephibosheth, and agreed to return at least half of the estate he had threatened to withdraw from him (Cf. 16:4)

— Solomon followed a similar procedure and threatened to divide a living baby to determine which of two mothers was telling the truth (1 Kings 3:24-25)

30 And Mephibosheth said to the king, "Let him even take it all, since my lord the king has come safely to his own house."

30 Mephibosheth said to the king, "Let him even take it all, since my lord the king has come safely to his own house."

30 But Mephibosheth told the king, "Let him take all of it, now that your majesty the king has returned safely to his palace."

30 And Mephibosheth said unto the king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house.

- Mephibosheth offered the entire estate to Ziba; his action argued for his innocence

(G) David invites Barzillai for his earlier hospitality although he turned the offer down (19:31-39)

31 Now Barzillai the Gileadite had come down from Rogelim; and he went on to the Jordan with the king to escort him over the Jordan.

31 Now Barzillai the Gileadite had come down from Rogelim; and he went on to the Jordan with the king to escort him over the Jordan.

31 Barzillai the Gileadite also had come down from Rogelim to cross the Jordan River with the king and to see him on his way from there.

31 And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim, and went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him over Jordan.

32 Barzillai was very old: eighty years old; and he had provided the king food while he stayed in Mahanaim, for he was a very great man.

32 Now Barzillai was very old, being eighty years old; and he had sustained the king while he stayed at Mahanaim, for he was a very great man.

32 Now Barzillai was a very old man at the age of 80 years. A very wealthy man, Barzillai had provided for king David during his sojourn in Mahanaim.

32 Now Barzillai was a very aged man, even fourscore years old: and he had provided the king of sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim; for he was a very great man.

- Barzillai the Gileadite, who had provided David with supplies when he had crossed into Transjordan (17:27-29), presented himself to the king

33 So the king said to Barzillai, "You cross over with me, and I will provide you food in Jerusalem with me."

33 The king said to Barzillai, "You cross over with me and I will sustain you in Jerusalem with me."

33 So the king invited Barzillai, "Cross the Jordan River with me, live with me in Jerusalem, and I'll provide for you there."

33 And the king said unto Barzillai, Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem.

- Grateful to the 80-year-old for all his goodness, David urged him to move to Jerusalem and live out his days on government sustenance

34 But Barzillai said to the king, "How long do I still have to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem?"

34 But Barzillai said to the king, "How long have I yet to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem?"

34 "How many more years do I have to live," Barzillai replied to the king, "that I should move to Jerusalem with the king?"

34 And Barzillai said unto the king, How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem?

35 I am now eighty years old. Can I distinguish between good and bad? Or can your servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Or can I still hear the voice of men and women singing? Why then should your servant be an added burden to my lord the king?

35 I am now eighty years old. Can I distinguish between good and bad? Or can your servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Or can I hear anymore the voice of singing men and women? Why then should your servant be an added burden to my lord the king?

35 I'm now 80 years old! I can hardly tell the difference between what tastes good or bad! I can't tell what I eat or drink! I can't hear the voice of men and women when they sing! So why should your servant be an added burden to your majesty the king?

35 I am this day fourscore years old: and can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and

singing women? wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king?

36 Your servant would merely cross over the Jordan with the king. So why should the king compensate me *with* this reward?

36 Your servant would merely cross over the Jordan with the king. Why should the king compensate me *with* this reward?

36 Your servant will cross the Jordan River with the king for a short distance, but why should the king offer me this reward?

36 Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king: and why should the king recompense it me with such a reward?

37 Please let your servant return, so that I may die in my *own* city near the grave of my father and my mother. However, here is your servant Chimham; let him cross over with my lord the king, and do for him what is good in your sight."

37 Please let your servant return, that I may die in my own city near the grave of my father and my mother. However, here is your servant Chimham, let him cross over with my lord the king, and do for him what is good in your sight."

37 Please let your servant return so I can die in my own home town near the grave of my father and mother. Meanwhile, here is your servant Chimham! Let him accompany your majesty the king. Please do for him whatever seems best to you."

37 Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and of my mother. But behold thy servant Chimham; let him go over with my lord the king; and do to him what shall seem good unto thee.

- Barzillai likely represented that of others in the Transjordan, who were benevolent to David

— He protested that he was too old to make such a move and preferred to die in his own land

— By honoring Barzillai and Chimham, David cemented good relations with the transjordan tribes

- "...Chimham" - perhaps his son [LXX, Josephus], was nominated to take his place and be similarly rewarded

— David was more than happy to do this (Cf. 1 Kings 2:7)

38 And the king answered, "Chimham shall cross over with me, and I will do for him what is good in your sight; and whatever you require of me, I will do for you."

38 The king answered, "Chimham shall cross over with me, and I will do for him what is good in your sight; and whatever you require of me, I will do for you."

38 So the king answered, "Chimham will accompany me, and I'll do for him whatever seems best to you! I'll do anything for you that you want!"

38 And the king answered, Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem good unto thee: and whatsoever thou shalt require of me, that will I do for thee.

39 All the people crossed over the Jordan and the king crossed *too*. The king then kissed Barzillai and blessed him, and he returned to his place.

39 All the people crossed over the Jordan and the king crossed *too*. The king then kissed Barzillai and blessed him, and he returned to his place.

39 Then all the people crossed the Jordan River, followed by the king. The king embraced Barzillai, blessed him, and then Barzillai returned to his home.

39 And all the people went over Jordan. And when the king was come over, the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him; and he returned unto his own place.

(H) Judah pressed greater claim to David and Israel at Gilgal (19:40-43)

40 Now the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him; and all the people of Judah and also half the people of Israel accompanied the king.

40 Now the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him; and all the people of Judah and also half the people of Israel accompanied the king.

40 As the king crossed over the Jordan River to Gilgal, Chimham accompanied him, as did all the troops of Judah and half the troops of Israel.

40 Then the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him: and all the people of Judah conducted the king, and also half the people of Israel.

- David and his entourage crossed the Jordan and arrived at Gilgal where they were met by a throng of citizens from both Judah and Israel

41 And behold, all the men of Israel came to the king and said to the king, "Why have our brothers, the men of Judah, abducted you and brought the king and his household and all David's men with him, over the Jordan?"

41 And behold, all the men of Israel came to the king and said to the king, "Why had our brothers the men of Judah stolen you away, and brought the king and his household and all David's men with him over the Jordan?"

41 Not long afterward, all the men of Israel started coming to the king, complaining to him, "Why did our relatives in Judah's army sneak you away, taking the king and his household over the Jordan River, along with David's army?"

41 And, behold, all the men of Israel came to the king, and said unto the king, Why have our brethren the men of Judah stolen thee away, and have brought the king, and his household, and all David's men with him, over Jordan?

- The men of Israel were upset that the Judeans claimed David as one of their own to the exclusion of the other tribes
- They started a “who loves the king most” contest with the Judahites, which illustrates the widespread support David received upon his return
- This support was a blessing from God

42 Then all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, “Because the king is a close relative to us. Why then are you angry about this matter? Have we eaten at all at the king’s expense, or has anything been taken for us?”

42 Then all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, “Because the king is a close relative to us. Why then are you angry about this matter? Have we eaten at all at the king’s expense, or has anything been taken for us?”

42 Everybody from Judah shouted to the men from Israel, “We did this because the king is closely related to us. So why are you angry about this? Have we lived off the king’s expense? Have we appropriated anything for ourselves?”

42 And all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, Because the king is near of kin to us: wherefore then be ye angry for this matter? have we eaten at all of the king’s cost? or hath he given us any gift?

Seeds of the Divided Kingdom

The northern tribes felt slighted that the men of Judah had “stolen” the king and brought David across the Jordan without them. Judah only added to the anger of the others by arguing that “the king is closely related to us.” The 10 tribes responded that they had “ten shares in the king.” Their claim that the king belonged to all of Israel simply made Judah argue more.

43 But the men of Israel answered the men of Judah and said, “We have ten parts in the king, therefore we also *have* more *claim* on David than you. Why then did you treat us with contempt? Was it not our advice first to bring back our king?” Yet the words of the men of Judah were harsher than the words of the men of Israel.

43 But the men of Israel answered the men of Judah and said, “We have ten parts in the king, therefore we also have more *claim* on David than you. Why then did you treat us with contempt? Was it not our advice first to bring back our king?” Yet the words of the men of Judah were harsher than the words of the men of Israel.

43 But the men from Israel answered the men from Judah: “We represent ten of the tribes of Israel! So we have more right to David than you do! Why haven’t you taken us seriously? Weren’t we the first to talk about bringing back our king?” But what the people of Judah had to say was harsher than what the people of Israel were saying.

43 And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more right in David than ye: why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king? And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

- When the Judeans replied that David was part of their own flesh, the Israelite counter-response was that there were 10 tribes of them and therefore their claim was much more weighty

— Besides, they said, they had been the first to insist that David return to rule over the nation, a claim for which, incidentally, there is an apparent basis in the preserved narrative (v9-10)

This section is a remarkable testimony to the power of forgiveness (Cf. Matt 6:12,14-15; 18:21-22; Luke 7:47; 17:3). David had not really forgiven Absalom, and perhaps the consequences of his lack of forgiveness encouraged him to take a different approach with his subjects after Absalom's death. We see in David's dealings with Amasa (v11-15) that forgiveness wins over former enemies. We see in his dealings with Shimei (v16-23) that forgiveness gives time for people to change. We see in his treatment of Mephibosheth and Ziba (v24-30) that forgiveness placates irreconcilable adversaries. We see in the section revealing the final reactions of the Israelites and the Judahites (v40-43) that forgiveness lays a strong foundation for the future.