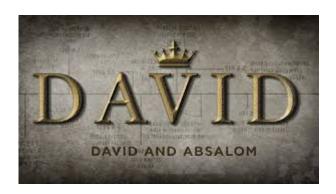


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David Battles Absalom Second Samuel 17:24 to 19:8a



David's army and **Absalom's** army were about to engage in a battle that neither one would win, but both could lose. If **David** won, it meant the death of **his son Absalom** and **his** friend **Ahithophel**; if **Absalom** won, it would mean the death of **his father** and other members of **his** family. It was a no-win situation. No matter how it came out, **he** was going to be in pain. 435

Just as in the earlier narrative an adversary of **David (Shim'i)** curses **him (Second Samuel 16:5-14)**, so also here an adversary of **David (Absalom)** opposed **him** in battle **(Second Samuel 18:6-8)**; just as in the earlier account **David** demands that **Shim'i** be spared **(Second Samuel 16:11)**, so here **David** demands that **Absalom** be spared **(Second Samuel 18:5** and **12)**; and just as in the earlier episode a **son** of **Zeruiah (Abishai)** is ready to kill **Shim'i (Second Samuel 16:9)**, so also here a **son** of **Zeruiah (Joab [verse 21])** is ready to kill **Absalom** – and indeed mortally wounds **him (Second Samuel 18:14-15)**.

By the end of this section **David** is a wreck because of **Absalom's** death. Incapable of governing, **Joab** had to step in and take charge or **David** might have even lost **his** authority to rule. I do not doubt that deep natural affection played its part. But there was an even deeper dimension to **David's** grief. As we must use **Second Samuel 17:14b** to control our overall view of **18:1** to **19:8**, we must also allow **12:10-12** to shed a light on **David's** sorrow. How **Nathan's** words must have echoed in **David's** conscience: **The sword will never depart from your house.** It was **David's** guilt that inflamed **his** grief. **Nathan** had



assured **David** that **he** would **not die** but that **his** infant **son** would **die** (**Second Samuel 12:14**). And **his infant son** did **die**. Then **Amnon** was murdered (**2 Samuel 13**), and now **Absalom** was gone.

David knew that his sin had set the sword in motion. If only I had died instead of you! Though David's sin brought consequences. . . yet Absalom suffered the consequences of his own sinful heart. There was that time when unlike his chesed-ways with Mephibosheth (Second Samuel 9) and Hanun (Second Samuel 10), David acted as the king without chesed or pity (Second Samuel 12:6) because he wanted sex with Bathsheba and didn't blink at having Uriah murdered. Perhaps David wished he had died instead of Absalom because he knew he deserved to die. Guilt had magnified his grief. So we end with a paradox: a safe Kingdom and a despondent king. Maybe there's a reason why, at the last, ADONAI Himself must wipe away every tear from our eyes (Isaiah 25:8; Revelation 21:4).

First and Second Samuel clearly show us that as the anointed king, David was a suffering servant. Here, however, he sheds tears for his own griefs and over his own guilt. But David and we, will have to wait for his Descendant, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, to return again (see the commentary on Isaiah, to see link click Kg - The Second Coming of Jesus Christ to Bozrah) and inaugurate His thousand year reign of peace from the Temple in Yerushalayim (see the commentary on Revelation Fh - The Dispensation of the Messianic Kingdom).