

SECOND SAMUEL

Chapter 19

Joab Rebukes David

It was told Joab, “Behold, the king is weeping and mourning for Absalom.” 2 So the victory that day was turned into mourning for all the people, for the people heard that day, “The king is grieving for his son.” 3 And the people stole into the city that day as people steal in who are ashamed when they flee in battle. 4 The king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, “O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!” 5 Then Joab came into the house to the king and said, “You have today covered with shame the faces of all your servants, who have this day saved your life and the lives of your sons and your daughters and the lives of your wives and your concubines, 6 because you love those who hate you and hate those who love you. For you have made it clear today that commanders and servants are nothing to you, for today I know that if Absalom were alive and all of us were dead today, then you would be pleased. 7 Now therefore arise, go out and speak kindly to your servants, for I swear by the LORD, if you do not go, not a man will stay with you this night, and this will be worse for you than all the evil that has come upon you from your youth until now.” 8 Then the king arose and took his seat in the gate. And the people were all told, “Behold, the king is sitting in the gate.” And all the people came before the king.

19:3 *stole into the city.* Entered secretly, in humility, not as triumphant conquerors. (TLSB)

19:5 *Joab went ... to the king.* Apparently confident that the king was unaware of his part in Absalom’s death. David never indicates that he learned of it (see 1Ki 2:5). (CSB)

you have humiliated all your men. Joab boldly rebukes David for allowing his personal grief to keep him from expressing his appreciation for the loyalty of those who risked their lives to preserve his throne. Joab warns David that his love for Absalom can still undo him. (CSB)

19:6 *hate those who love you.* By continually mourning for Absalom, David seemed to place more value on the rebels than on his loyal followers. (TLSB)

19:7 *speak kindly.* To thank his supporters and congratulate them on their victory. Cf Is 40:1–2. (TLSB)

not a man will stay with you. An implied threat that Joab would lead the troops against the king. (TLSB)

worse. David needed to move beyond his mourning and leave behind his self-pity to continue living as king, the vocation God had given him. (TLSB)

19:8 *sitting in the gate.* Sign that David had publicly resumed his royal office and honored their victory over Absalom (TLSB)

the people came before the king. To present themselves and honor David as their king. (TLSB)

19:1–8c David’s grief over Absalom threatens to undo all that has been accomplished on his behalf. His mourning borders on self-pity and despair, which is neither expedient nor faithful. Sometimes our sin is manifested in pride and self-righteousness, other times in despondency and defeatism. Like Joab, the Law confronts us with what we must do. But God our King speaks kindly to us. He did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all. • Dear Father in heaven, we pray “that the devil, the world, and our sinful nature may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice.” Give us the victory by the death and resurrection of Your only-begotten Son. Amen. (TLSB)

David Returns to Jerusalem

Now Israel had fled every man to his own home. 9 And all the people were arguing 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, and now he has fled out of the land from Absalom. 10 But Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why do you say nothing about bringing the king back?” 11 And King David sent this message to Zadok and Abiathar the priests: “Say to the elders of Judah, ‘Why should you be the last to bring the king back to his house, when the word of all Israel has come to 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?’ 13 And say to Amasa, ‘Are you not my bone and my flesh? God do so to me and more also, if you are not commander of my army from now on in place of Joab.’” 14 And he swayed the heart of all the men of Judah as one man, so that they sent word to the king, “Return, both you and all your servants.” 15 So the king came back to the Jordan, and Judah came to Gilgal to meet the king and to bring the king over the Jordan.

19:9–10 *arguing*. Political arguments on who should now be king. (TLSB)

19:9 *The king delivered us*. With Absalom dead, the northern tribes remember what David had done for them (see 3:17–18; 5:2). (CSB)

19:10 *anointed over us*. Although not mentioned earlier, this anointing evidently took place in Hebron when Absalom launched his revolt (15:10). If he was anointed with the majority’s approval, David probably could not immediately resume his kingship. Cf 15:6, 12–13. (TLSB)

you say nothing. Appeal for the popular support David needed to become their king again. (TLSB)

19:11 *Zadok and Abiathar*. David used priests for secular political purposes. The politics of Israel could not be separated from the nation’s religious significance or from God’s promise concerning David and his throne (7:12–13). (TLSB)

Ask the elders of Judah. Even though the rebellion had begun in Hebron in Judah (see 15:9–12), David appeals to the elders of his own tribe to take the initiative in restoring him to the throne in Jerusalem (see 2:4; 1Sa 30:26). This appeal produced the desired result, but it also led to the arousal of tribal jealousies (see vv. 41–42). (CSB)

bring the king back. David wanted his own tribe of Judah to lead the way in restoring him to the throne. (TLSB)

Word of all Israel. David had received intelligence concerning the movement in his favor among the northern tribes. (TLSB)

19:13 *Amasa.* Although Amasa deserved death for treason, David appointed him commander of his army in place of Joab, hoping to secure the allegiance of those who had followed Amasa, especially the Judahites (see 20:5). (CSB)

David's nephew, cousin of Joab and Abishai. (TLSB)

May God deal with me, be it ever so severely. A curse formula. (CSB)

David made a strong promise to Amasa. Perhaps David wanted to remove Joab for having Absalom killed (18:14–15) and for his earlier murder of Abner (3:26–39; 1Ki 2:5–6). At the same time, David sought to bring a leader in Absalom's revolt over to his side. By doing so, David would gain an influential ally and would assure the rebel forces that he did not intend revenge against them. (TLSB)

19:14 *swayed the heart.* Won the loyalty. Whereas Absalom "stole" the hearts of Israel (15:6), David "sways" the heart of Judah. (TLSB)

19:8d–15 Having won the war, David has the task of regaining the people's support. The northern tribes of Israel are the first to call for his return to office, but David needs to negotiate Judah's loyalty. In so doing, he shows that he does not bear grudges against those who opposed him. Today, we are tempted to manipulate the people and situations around us to our own advantage, and even to seek revenge. Remarkably, rather than seeking revenge on us, our gracious God forgives our sins for Jesus' sake and calls us back to His service. • Lord Jesus, let not pride prevent us from doing what is good and right, nor let us make expedience our rule, but guide us by Your Word. Amen. (TLSB)

David Pardons His Enemies

16 And Shimei the son of Gera, the Benjaminite, from Bahurim, hurried to come down with the men of Judah to meet King David. **17** And with him were a thousand men from Benjamin. And Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, with his fifteen sons and his twenty servants, rushed down to the Jordan before the king, **18** and they crossed the ford to bring over the king's household and to do his pleasure. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, as he was about to cross the Jordan, **19** and said to the king, "Let not my lord hold me guilty or remember how your servant did wrong on the day my lord the king left Jerusalem. Do not let the king take it to heart. **20** For your servant knows that I have sinned. Therefore, behold, I have come this day, the first of all the house of Joseph to come down to meet my lord the king." **21** Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered, "Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD's anointed?" **22** But David said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah, that you should this day be as an adversary to me? Shall anyone be put to death in Israel this day? For do I not know that I am this day king over Israel?" **23** And the king said to Shimei, "You shall not die." And the king gave him his oath. **24** And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king. He had neither taken care of his feet nor trimmed his beard nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came back in safety. **25** And when he came to Jerusalem to meet the king, the king said to him, "Why did you not go with me, Mephibosheth?" **26** He answered, "My lord, O king, my servant deceived me, for your servant said to him, 'I will saddle a donkey for myself,[b] that I may ride on it and go with the king.' For your servant is lame. **27** He has slandered your servant to my lord the king. But my lord the king is like the angel of God; do therefore what seems good to you. **28** For all my father's house were but men doomed to death before my lord the king, but you set your servant among those who eat at your table. What further right have I, then, to cry to the king?" **29** And the king said to him, "Why speak any more of your affairs? I have decided: you and Ziba shall divide the land." **30** And Mephibosheth said to the king, "Oh, let him take it all, since my lord the king has come safely home." **31** Now Barzillai the Gileadite had come down from Rogelim, and he went on with the king to the Jordan, to escort him over the

Jordan. 32 Barzillai was a very aged man, eighty years old. He had provided the king with food while he stayed at Mahanaim, for he was a very wealthy man. 33 And the king said to Barzillai, “Come over with me, and I will provide for you with me in Jerusalem.” 34 But Barzillai said to the king, “How many years have I still to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? 35 I am this day eighty years old. Can I discern what is pleasant and what is not? Can your servant taste what he eats or what he drinks? Can I still listen to the voice of singing men and singing women? Why then should your servant be an added burden to my lord the king? 36 Your servant will go a little way over the Jordan with the king. Why should the king repay me with such a reward? 37 Please let your servant return, that I may die in my own city near the grave of my father and my mother. But here is your servant Chimham. Let him go over with my lord the king, and do for him whatever seems good to you.” 38 And the king answered, “Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do for him whatever seems good to you, and all that you desire of me I will do for you.” 39 Then all the people went over the Jordan, and the king went over. And the king kissed Barzillai and blessed him, and he returned to his own home. 40 The king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him. All the people of Judah, and also half the people of Israel, brought the king on his way. 41 Then all the men of Israel came to the king and said to the king, “Why have our brothers the men of Judah stolen you away and brought the king and his household over the Jordan, and all David's men with him?” 42 All the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, “Because the king is our close relative. Why then are you angry over this matter? Have we eaten at all at the king's expense? Or has he given us any gift?” 43 And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, “We have ten shares in the king, and in David also we have more than you. Why then did you despise us? Were we not the first to speak of bringing back our king?” But the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

19:16–17 Those who had opposed David now took the initiative in being reconciled to him, lest he punish their treason. Ziba was among them, though he had not opposed David but had aided him in his flight (16:1–2). Perhaps he saw that his ruse concerning Mephibosheth would be exposed (16:3; 19:24–28). He reaffirmed his loyalty, hoping not to lose the reward he had received (16:4; cf 19:29). (TLSB)

19:17 *a thousand Benjamites*. No doubt fearing they would be suspected by the king of being implicated in Shimei's deed. (CSB)

19:20 *I your servant know that I have sinned*. Shimei's guilt was common knowledge; he could only seize the most appropriate time to plead for mercy. (CSB)

house of Joseph. A common way of referring to the northern tribes (see 1Ki 11:28; Eze 37:19; Am 5:6; Zec 10:6)—of which Ephraim and Manasseh (sons of Joseph) were the most prominent (see Nu 26:28; Jos 18:5; Jdg 1:22). (CSB)

Technically, this included only the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh (Jsh 16–17), but here it was used for all the northern tribes of Israel, in contrast to Judah. (TLSB)

19:21 *the LORD's anointed*. See note on 1Sa 9:16; see also 1Sa 24:6; 26:9–11; Ex 22:28; 1Ki 21:10. (CSB)

19:22 *an adversary to me?* David described Abishai as an accuser (Hbr *satan*) because he urged punishment instead of absolution in response to Shimei's confession. Cf Jb 1:5–12; Rv 12:10–11. (TLSB)

Should anyone be put to death in Israel today? It was a day for general amnesty (see 1Sa 11:13). (CSB)

I am this day king over Israel? Politically speaking, David had nothing to gain, but everything to lose, by resorting to violence at this point. (TLSB)

19:23 *You shall not die.* David kept his pledge; he would not himself avenge the wrong committed against him. But on his deathbed he instructed Solomon to take Shimei's case in hand (see 1Ki 2:8–9, 36–46). (CSB)

the king gave him his oath. But Solomon would see to his punishment (1Ki 2:8–9, 37–46). (TLSB)

19:24 *Mephibosheth.* See 9:6–13. (CSB)

from the day the king departed. In contrast to Ziba's accusations (16:3), Mephibosheth truly mourned David's exile. (TLSB)

19:25 *Why didn't you go with me ... ?* David remembers Ziba's previous allegations (see 16:3). (CSB)

19:26 Instead of assisting his master, Ziba had left without Mephibosheth, and then had accused him of plotting insurrection against the king (16:3). (TLSB)

saddle a donkey for myself. Doing so would have been difficult for the lame Mephibosheth. (TLSB)

lame. See 4:4; 9:3. (CSB)

Shows that he was hardly in a position to threaten David's throne. (TLSB)

19:27 *he has slandered your servant.* See 16:3. (CSB)

like an angel of God. See 14:17 and note. (CSB)

Like the angel of the covenant, the mediator of divine blessings to the nation, knowing good and evil. (TLSB)

do whatever pleases you. Mephibosheth discreetly requests David to reconsider the grant of his property to Ziba (see 16:4). (CSB)

19:29 *divide the fields.* Faced with conflicting testimony that could not be corroborated, David withholds judgment and orders the division of Saul's estate. (CSB)

Compromise. One of the men has lied, but David chose not to punish either of them. (TLSB)

19:33 *provide for you.* More than simply offering to repay Barzillai for his generous support, David sought to secure the alliance by making Barzillai a permanent member of his court (1Ki 2:7). (TLSB)

19:35 *difference between what is good and what is not.* At his age, he would be indifferent to all the pleasures of the court. (CSB)

Barzillai's senses were dulled by old age. He describes the pursuits and activities of the king's court. (TLSB)

19:37 *Kimham*. Likely a son of Barzillai (see 1Ki 2:7). (CSB)

19:39 *went over*. Back into the main territory of the realm. (TLSB)

the king kissed Barzillai and blessed him. To mark a friendship and establish an alliance. (TLSB)

19:40 *Gilgal*. cf 1Sm 11:14–15. (TLSB)

the people of Judah ... half the people of Israel. Judah was decidedly supportive of David, while Israel remained divided in its support. This is a turn of events; the northern tribes were the first to speak of restoring David to his throne (vv 9–10, 43), while his own tribe of Judah hesitated (vv 11–12). (TLSB)

19:41 *Why did ... the men of Judah, steal the king away and bring him ... across the Jordan ... ?* It seems that the Jordan was a kind of psychological border to the land of Israel (see Jos 22:19, 25; Jdg 12:4)—which may also explain why Ish-Bosheth (2:8), Mephibosheth (9:4) and even David himself (17:22) had sought refuge in Transjordan. That being the case, the protest of the Israelites may be that the Judahites had not waited for all Israel to assemble before bringing David across the Jordan, thus leaving the Israelites in a bad light—as though they were reluctant to receive the king back (see v. 43). (CSB)

19:42 *our close relative*. David was from the tribe of Judah (1Ch 2:1–15; Mt 1:3–6; Lk 3:31–33). (TLSB)

Have we eaten ... any gift? The men of Judah deny having abused their close kinship with the king. (TLSB)

19:43 *ten shares*. The ten tribes, excluding Judah and Simeon. (CSB)

David was the anointed king of the entire nation, of which Israel comprised the northern 10 tribes, Judah the southern tribe (the Levites not being counted). (TLSB)

we have a greater claim on David. The grounds for this assertion may be that the Lord had chosen David to reign in the place of Saul (see 3:17–18; 5:2). (CSB)

fiercer. This conflict anticipated the final rift between the north and south under David's grandson Rehoboam (1Ki 12:16–20). (TLSB)

19:16–43 As David retraces his steps to Jerusalem, he meets several of the same people he encountered previously. With mercy, wisdom, and generosity, David crosses over the Jordan, out of the wilderness on his way back to the royal city. In contrast to David's willingness to forgive, there is too often jealousy and fierce anger burning in our hearts against our brothers. Thanks be to God that His heart burns instead with love and mercy for us. For He despises nothing He has made but forgives the sins of all who are penitent for Jesus' sake. • Lord God, heavenly Father, grant to us Your Holy Spirit and the charitable heart of Your dear Son, that we may bear with one another in love. Amen. (TLSB)