

I. Introduction.

II. Civil war in Israel. 18:1-33

A. David prepares his men for battle. v. 1-6

1. He divides the troops among his three generals, including Ittai. v. 1-2 15:19ff
2. Again, while the LORD gives the victory, strategy and effort are involved.
3. The people won't let David put himself at risk. v. 3-4 17:1-3 21:17
4. David charges his generals to deal gently with Absalom. v. 5 17:14 Deut. 21:18ff

B. David's men prevail. v. 6-8 2:17

Even the trees fight for the LORD. v. 8 Josh 10:11 Judg. 5:20ff

C. Absalom is slain. v. 9-18

1. Proud Absalom is caught in the branches of a tree. v. 9 14:26
2. David's unnamed soldier refuses to strike Absalom down. v. 10-14a I Sam. 22:17
3. Joab kills Absalom. v. 14b-15 3:27 11:15ff 20:9ff Ps. 37:15
4. Was Joab's act right?
5. With Absalom's death the battle ends. v. 16
6. Absalom meets an accursed end. v. 17-18 Dt. 21:21-23 Josh 7:26 8:29 10:26 Esth 7:9 Ecc. 6:3 Ps. 2
7. Absalom who promised to solve all of the people's problems, only brings division and death. 15:4 18:7

D. Joab sends news of the battle to David. v. 19-32

1. Ahimaaz wants to be the messenger of *good news*. v. 19 15:27 17:17ff
2. Joab, knowing that David will be displeased, sends the Cushite instead. v. 20-21
3. Ahimaaz insists on going anyway. v. 22-23
4. David anxiously awaits news of the battle. v. 24-27
5. Ahimaaz gives an abbreviated report -- Shalom. v. 28-30
6. The faithful Cushite tells David of Absalom's death. v. 31-32

E. David mourns over his dead son. v. 33

David's excessive mourning puts his kingdom at risk. 19:1-7

III. Application.

A. A strong warning to passive parents. Pr. 13:24 19:18 22:6 23:13-14 29:15 26:3

1. David follows in the sad footsteps of Eli and Samuel as he fails to address the sins of his sons. 13:20-21,37-39 I Ki. 1:6 I Sam. 2:12-17,22-25,29 8:1-5 Dt. 21:18-21
2. A man can have a tender affection for his children and still raise them poorly.
3. Don't honor your children above the LORD. I Sam. 2:29
4. We are responsible to discipline our children, including our grown children who are under our roof. Pr. 19:18 26:3
5. We need to be God-centered in our parenting.

B. Parents still grieve over their wayward children.

1. You are responsible to discipline and instruct them in a godly way. Eph. 6:4
2. They are responsible for the choices they make. Eph. 6:2 Eze. 18:5-13 Ge. 4:1ff Pr. 1:20ff 20:11,20 30:11,17
3. Ultimately they need God's grace. John 6:44 Luke 12:51-53 Ps. 51:5

4. You never stop loving them, even if you stop enabling them.
 5. God also knows what it is to grieve over rebellious sons (and daughters).
Isa. 1:2 Jer. 2:30 Ezek. 18:32 33:11
 6. He is able to bring prodigals home. Mal. 4:6 Luke 1:17 15
 7. Don't grieve too much or take your child's side against the LORD. Lev. 10:1-3
Job 1:13-15,21
- C. A warning to rebellious children. Ex. 20:12 Pr. 20:20 30:17 I Tim. 3:1-2 Eph. 6:1-3
1. Absalom is a monument to what happens to children who dishonor their parents.
 2. Honor your mother and your father (and others in authority). Mt. 15:3-9
 3. Jesus honored and obeyed His parents, though they were not perfect. Luke 2:51
- D. Sin has consequences. Gal. 6:7 Pr. 29:1
1. All of this starts with David taking a walk on his roof. 11:1ff
 2. Where human authority fails, the LORD brings justice.
 3. Don't take God's forgiveness for granted.
- E. A warning to those who lift up their pride against God.
1. The wicked and the proud may appear to flourish for a short season, but God will ultimately bring judgment. Ps. 92:7-9
 2. Absalom is a picture of a man under God's curse/judgment. Deut. 21:22-23
Josh 7:26 8:29 10:26 Esth 7:9 James 4:6

IV. Where can we see Christ in this passage?

- A. The Gentiles who faithfully serve David remind us of how the Gentiles have come to Jesus, God's Anointed King. 18:2,21 Rom. 9:24ff Eph. 3:6 Isa. 60:3
- B. Humanity, like Israel, rejected God's king and enthroned another. 15:1ff Gen. 4:1ff
- C. As David was willing to die that Absalom might live, Jesus died that we might live.
18:33 John 3:16 Rom. 9:1ff
- D. Jesus was utterly cursed, not for his own sins (like Absalom), but for us. v. 14
Isa. 53:4ff I Pe. 3:18 II Co. 5:21 Gal. 3:13 Dt. 21:23,21 John 19:34
- E. Just as David sought to do good for a son who hated him, so Jesus did good for His enemies. Luke 23:34 Rom. 5:10 Ex. 34:6-7 Col. 1:21
- F. Just as David sorrowed over the fate of his wayward son, Jesus was sorrowful over the unbelief of His people. Luke 13:34 19:41 Rom. 9:3
- G. Just as the enemies of David perished, so all of Jesus' enemies will be crushed.
Heb. 1:13 Ps. 2 I Col. 15:25 I Jo. 3:8

V. Conclusion; Are you and your children safe? v. 29

VI. For tonight: David's friends and Christian charity. 17:27-29

Discussion questions

1. Was David wrong to tell his commanders to go easy on Absalom? v. 5
2. Was Joab wrong to kill Absalom?
3. In what ways is Absalom's end especially accursed?
4. How should David have responded to the news of Absalom's death?
5. Whose fault is it when kids go bad?
6. What other biblical examples do we have of passive parents and rebellious children?
7. What should people learn from Absalom?
8. How is Jesus' death like that of Absalom?
9. How is David's love for Absalom like God's love for us?