

## 2 Samuel 17:24 -18:18

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Date: 26 November 2023

[ 0 : 00 ] 2 Samuel chapter 17, we're going to finish up the 17th chapter and then we're going to get into the 18th chapter. So where we're at is chapter 17, we're going to pick up in verse 24, and we're going to go into the 18th chapter and we read down to verse 18.

So 2 Samuel 17 verse 24, and then we'll go into 18, stopping at verse 18 will be our text this evening. I trust that you've had a good day.

I know it's been a dreary day, a little bit of a dark day, but still it's a good day the Lord has given us to enjoy, and I'm so thankful for it. Let's open up with a word of prayer, and then we'll get right into the word with one another.

So let's pray together. God, I'm so thankful, thankful to have the opportunity, Lord, just to gather with brothers and sisters in Christ, just to be encouraged through the study and reading of your word.

Lord, we thank you for these opportunities. We thank you for the grand privilege it is of seeking to know you better and coming to a greater understanding of who you are and who we are, and Lord, knowing that that understanding has a great impact upon our lives.

[ 1 : 05 ] We pray that you'd be glorified and honored in our time together. Pray that Christ would be exalted, and Lord, that we would be encouraged to walk in deep fellowship with you, and we ask it all in Jesus' name.

Amen. 2 Samuel 17, starting in verse 24 and going into chapter 18. Let's put it in context because in the historical writings, it's always good to have it in the proper context, and I know we are some time removed from the last time we looked at this with one another.

Absalom's revolt is in full swing. It's actually about to reach the pinnacle here in the 18th chapter. So David has fled Jerusalem. He has removed himself into the wilderness.

A number of people are with him. Josephus, the historian, the Jewish historian, non-believing Jewish historian for the Roman Empire, noted that in his Antiquities book, so he writes history, looks back, writing the history of the Jewish people, he noted that at this time David had about 4,000 men that traveled with him.

Now that's extra biblical or outside of biblical record. We don't have it in biblical record. We'll see in just a moment. There were a number of people, at least thousands, and he set leaders over the thousands and over the hundreds.

[ 2 : 26 ] But he had somewhere around 4,000 plus men or so with him according to history. But he's removed himself. Absalom has come in. He has asserted himself as king.

He has declared his own kingdom. He has sought the counsel of Ahithophel and then took Hushai's advice and dismissed the counsel of Ahithophel.

Ahithophel goes home and takes his own life. Again, if we read it in history writings, it's because Ahithophel is as wise as he declares, as the scripture declares to us.

If you remember, in the 17th chapter of the counsel of Ahithophel during those days was as if God was speaking. They sought his counsel. They longed for his counsel. And the counsel he gave was not heeded.

Therefore, with certainty, he knew that the plan of Absalom was not going to work and he would be a condemned individual. Went home, set his things in order, and took his own life. And we saw a tragic end to a well-sought-after man.

[ 3 : 23 ] And now Absalom is getting ready to do what Hushai had given counsel to, to take all the people of Israel to go out and to fight his dad in battle. Confront him in one great military campaign.

And that's where we're at. So we're picking it up midway there, right after Ahithophel took his own life. In the 24th verse of the 17th chapter of 2 Samuel, it says, Then David came to Mahanaim, and Absalom crossed the Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him.

Absalom set Amasa over the army in place of Joab. Now Amasa was the son of a man whose name was Ithra, the Israelite, who went in to Abigail, the daughter of Nahash, sister of Zariah, Joab's mother.

And Israel and Absalom camped in the land of Gilead. Now when David had come to Mahanim, Shobi the son of Nahash from Rabbah of the sons of Ammon, Meshir the son of Amil from Lodabar, and Barzili the Gileadite from Rogilim, brought beds, basins, pottery, wheat, barley, flour, parched grain, beans, lentils, parched seeds, honey, curds, sheep, and cheese of the herd for David, and for the people who were with him to eat.

For they said, The people are hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness. Then David numbered the people who were with him and sent over them commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds. David sent the people out, one-third under the command of Joab, one-third under the command of Abishai, the son of Zariah, Joab's brother, and one-third under the command of Ittai the Gilead.

[ 4 : 59 ] And the king said to the people, I myself will surely go out with you also. 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. 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.

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.

Then the people went out into the field against Israel, and the battle took place in the forest of Ephraim. The people of Israel were defeated there before the servants of David, and the slaughter there that day was great, twenty thousand men.

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

[ 6 : 06 ] So he was left hanging between heaven and earth, while the mule that was under him kept going. When a certain man saw it, he told Joab and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanging in an oak.

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.

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 in Abishai and Ittai, saying, Protect from me the young man Absalom.

Otherwise, if I had dealt treacherously against his life, and there was nothing hidden from the king, then you yourself would have stood aloof. 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. And ten young men who carried Joab's armor gathered and round-struck Absalom and killed him. Then Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing Israel, for Joab restrained the people.

[ 7 : 06 ] 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. 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. 2 Samuel 17, 24 through 18, 18.

We see this evening the battle for the kingdom. The battle for the kingdom. By this time, David is advanced in years and not really able to go out, though he is willing, his soldiers and his men do not desire that he does, to go out to fight the battle with them.

If we read it chronologically, we will see that the events that take place in the 21st chapter of 2 Samuel proceed by some time this event that we're reading this evening. And in the 21st chapter, we find that when David was out with his men fighting a great battle, one of the giants decided that he had gotten the best of David and was about to kill him until he was helped by Abishai, who came and killed the giant so that David's life would be spared.

And it was at that moment that his men realized that the battle was beginning to be too much for him in his age and that it was no longer fit for him to go out to battle with his men, but rather should stay behind. And then we move along in history and we see here that Absalom has this great revolt and the battle for the kingdom is about to begin.

[ 8 : 38 ] And David is willing to go out, but yet his men say, no, you need to stay here. And they're fighting the battle on behalf of the king. We have seen throughout all of this, the foreshadowing, if you will, of the coming king.

That's so much more than just what is happening historically around Jerusalem concerning the man David at that time is actually being portrayed for us. And we see that, I don't think we have to read into it too far and make it say things that it's not saying, but rather as we read the account, we are struck by the similarities of the battle for the kingdom that still rages today.

We see that this battle really is set one king, one rightful king against another self-imposed king. We see that where you stand in relation to the king directly impacts whose side you are on.

And we see that this is a battle for the true kingdom and the true king for which it stands. And we see that this battle will determine who will set up on the throne of all of God's people.

We see it happening historically, but we see the application for us even today. The first thing that we notice in this battle is there were divided people.

[ 9 : 51 ] There were divided people. It says, then David came to Mahanaim. Mahanaim is the city which we are introduced to at the very beginning of 2 Samuel.

Because Mahanaim was the capital of Ish-bosheth. Remember? The descendant of Saul when he set up his own kingdom. And David was appointed king by the men of Hebron.

Remember that time? The capital of Ish-bosheth and all of Israel with him, except for the men of Judah, was Mahanaim. Mahanaim had been a place of division before.

Because it was there that the kingdom of Israel was first divided between two kings. You had David ruling from Hebron, the men of Judah. And you had Ish-bosheth ruling the others of Israel from Mahanaim.

It was a place of division. And we are told that when David comes here, that Absalom and his men are coming out as well. Absalom is crossing the Jordan River and going to that side, the eastern side of the Jordan River, in pursuit of his father.

[ 10 : 58 ] And then we are introduced to the commander of his army. It says that he has appointed Amasa, the command, his army, in place of Joab. And we are giving the family lineage of Amasa.

And we'll put it in kind of layman's terms. He was the son of David's sister. So Amasa is David's nephew and Joab and Abishai's cousin.

So now we have come to this place where you have son fighting against father, nephew fighting against uncle, cousin fighting against cousin, and kinsman fighting against kinsman.

We have come to a place when all of Israel, we are told, are gathered together and they are fighting against one another. Civil war is tragic, but civil war is even more tragic when you have such close relatives in leadership of either side fighting against one another.

But we see here the division that was created singularly on where one stood with the king. Because the greatest ties was not familial bonds.

[ 12 : 10 ] The greatest ties were where you stood with the king and who you allowed to be king of your world. We realize that Absalom and Amasa are also cousins.

But we wonder what would make them conspire together against their uncle, their father, their cousins, and the rest of their family, other than this desire to set up their own kingdom.

And where you stood in relation to which king you pledged allegiance to directly impacted where you would be in the battle. And it seems from where we read the text that there were, let me get this right, there was no neutral ground.

That is, it says all of Israel was gathered and then the servants of David were gathered. Neutrality was not an option. You were on one side or the other.

Jesus himself said, I come not to bring peace but to bring a division. To set a man against his father and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law and the members of his own house.

[ 13 : 14 ] Not that he was doing it intentionally seeking to create discord in the family. That's not what he was doing. He was declaring that in order for one to have proper and right allegiance to him, that the king had to be the one of utmost importance, not the family.

That the bond that would drive the motivation, the bond that would drive the battle, would be where you stood in relation to the true king.

We also notice here that we know going into the battle there is one self-declared king, there is one rightful king. Who shall I say it best when he said, The king which God and his people have appointed and anointed, with him I will stand.

Absalom had declared himself king, but no one had anointed him king. God had not appointed him as king. God had not called him as king. David was the rightful king, but yet when we go to the battle, the rightful king has the least amount of people.

And we understand this, because it is where you stand in relation to the king, which is the great dividing factor of the people.

[14:25] Friend, listen to me. It's the same way today. The battle for the kingdom rages on today, but where we stand in relation to the king, in other words, the one we declare to be king determines where we stand on the battlefield.

It's not if we're on the battle, it's on whose side we are with on the battle. We cannot be neutral. And we see the greatest determining factor should be a relationship to the king, not a connection through blood or family or kinship.

This is a true picture of divided people. Allegiance is determined, and it is expected that you will fight for that king.

We are called that. Jesus says, he who loves father or mother or brothers or sisters or sons and daughters more than me is not worth in me. These are difficult passages. But we also know that when we're fighting for the kingdom, we need to make sure that we pledge full and final allegiance to the king for which we fight.

We see a divided people. Number two, we also see displayed support. That is the encouragement given to the true king here.

[15:47] It tells us in verse 24, then David came to Mahanaim, and we are told of the division that exists among the people. Then we are told again in verse 27, now when David had come to Mahanaim, this same place, the first time Mahanaim is mentioned in scripture, it is not mentioned in connection with the kingdom of Ish-bosheth.

You need to understand that. The first time Mahanaim is mentioned in scripture has nothing to do with division. The first time Mahanaim is mentioned in scripture is Genesis chapter 32.

Genesis chapter 32, starting in verse 1 and going to verse 2, we find an individual getting ready to meet his brother, a brother with which he is at odds with.

A brother that wanted to kill him the last time he saw him. Sounds striking, right? We see Jacob getting ready to meet Esau on his way back in Genesis 32. And in Genesis 32, when he is on his way, preparing to meet his brother Esau, who wanted to kill him last time he saw him because he had not only stolen his birthright, he had also taken his blessing, and he had been a deceiver to the very core of his being, just like his name had said, of course with his mother's help.

But he's getting ready, and he's preparing for battle. He comes to this place called Mahanaim, and when he comes to Mahanaim, which means two kingdoms, by the way, that's what the name means, he names it two kingdoms because he encounters another kingdom on his way.

[17:11] When he comes into this region, which he names Mahanaim, in Genesis 32, starting in verse 1, it says, he met the army of the Lord and his angels. He was encouraged by the presence of God's angels all around him.

And he saw the heavenly hosts surrounding him, and he realized, as many Bible commentators will tell you and Bible students will tell you, it was there before this critical moment that he realized he was not traveling alone because right before the critical encounter, God reminded him, I am present there as well.

It's a wonder, right? We see this all throughout the Old Testament. We see it even throughout the New Testament that the people of God are given eyes from God to see the help that supports them and encourages them. And when Jacob sees these angels, he names that place two kingdoms because he realizes there's the kingdom of the earth and the kingdom of heaven, and how much better to be walking around in the kingdom of heaven before you encounter the kingdoms of the earth.

And here we find this great battle again, and at this very place, Mahanaim, David is there, and then all of a sudden, David is not encouraged by angels. As a matter of fact, he's encouraged by men.

God doesn't send angels. He doesn't open David's eyes to show him the presence of angels. He doesn't show him that his heavenly hosts are surrounding him. Rather, he sends three men to encourage him.

[ 18 : 38 ] And one of these men are very, very unlikely men. We don't see it. It says that when he's there, Shobbi, the son of Nahash from At-Rabba, of the sons of Ammon.

Now, the sons of Ammon and the sons of Israel have been fighting against one another for some time. The sons of Ammon, that's the Ammonites, and the Israelites, under the leadership of David, have been battling against one another, and they've been battling for this one reason.

Because when Nahash the king died, David heard of it, and David was wanting to console his son. His son is not Shobbi. It would have been Shobbi's brother. He wanted to console his son because this king, Nahash, had been good to David when he was fleeing.

So in order to console his son, he sent some men to the son of Nahash to give grievance, to say, well, sorry about the loss of your father. You remember the story, right? When the men got there, the counselor said, oh, he's not showing concern.

He's willing to spy on you and see where your weaknesses are. So he shaved the men and cut their garments up above their waists and humiliated them publicly. He made a public display of them, and they reached out to David, and David said, well, just stay where you're at until your beards grow back.

[ 19 : 46 ] They reclothed them, right? You had to wait until your beards grew back. And then David said, okay, the sons of Ammon have now made themselves odious in our sight. They called out all these other camps, and then there was this great battle that was being fought.

We see this. But now all of a sudden, in the midst of these battles which have been fought because of their ridicule of the nation of Israel and the servants of David, at this moment, that man's brother comes to David and brings him gifts.

It's an unlikely event. We don't know why a son of Ammon, especially the brother of the king who ridiculed the servants of David, unless he realized, my brother messed up.

He shouldn't have done that. David really wasn't doing it. We don't know. We can read into it all we want to. But we can also say this. God can use anybody he wants to, even the most unlikely of people, to encourage us.

God is not constrained or confined to who he can use and where he can use them. And it is when he is here, getting ready to fight a battle against his son, knowing that his son, because if you remember, the spies which he had left in Jerusalem have come out and told him the plan that Hushai has given him and that Absalom's gathering all of Israel and they're going to come out in pursuit of him.

[ 20 : 56 ] And it was at that moment that these three men, Shobbi, the son of Nahash of Rabbah, the sons of Ammon, Macher, the son of Amil of Lodabar, and Barzili the Galadite from Rogalim. These men come and they bring provisions.

I mean, it's wondrous provisions that he gives them, right? They give them furniture, they give them Bezalel, they give them food. You know, David would write in Psalm 23, verse 5, that the Lord had prepared a table before him in the presence of his enemies.

Right? You ever wonder why those things come out? Because here he is waiting in the presence of his enemies and there's a table being set before him with all of these provisions.

What is God doing? God is encouraging him. Isn't it good to see the encouragement and the support? This is so much more than just men bringing gifts. This is God reminding him, even though you're in the darkest moment, even though you're suffering because of the consequences of your sin, you are forgiven.

And I haven't forgotten about you. I haven't forsaken you. I haven't neglected you. I haven't just cast you aside. I am with you and I can provide for you even in the most unlikely ways.

[ 22 : 01 ] He didn't have to show him angels, right? He just had to bring three men to him and prepare a table for him with all of these delicacies, with all of this food, with all of these provisions.

Hey, we know you guys are displaced, so here's some beds to lay on, right? We don't want you to be thirsty in the wilderness. We don't want you to run around here. You're in this city and we want to encourage you because there are two kingdoms fighting, right?

Because Mahanaim means two kingdoms. There is one kingdom that was God-ordained, God-appointed, and God-anointed. There was another kingdom that was of this world. It was the

desire of Absalom.

And God's just encouraging it. Hey, I'm there, right? I don't have to manifest it in a supernatural way. Sometimes the greatest encouragement we have and the greatest support that God can ever show us is through the presence of other individuals.

And it's always in perfect timing. This is why we're told not to forsake this and then together one another. This is why we're given those commands throughout all the scripture, all the one another's that pray for one another, support one another, encourage one another, all of those things that God has given us.

[ 23 : 07 ] Why? So that he could display his support for us in the midst of the battle for the kingdom. And David now, notice the shift. I want you to notice the shift that takes place in the very next verse.

Because it says, after these men came and they brought all these gifts to them, then David numbered the people who were with him. Up to this point, David has been on the defensive. That is, he's been fleeing.

Up to this point, David has been leaving, leaving, leaving, leaving, leaving. He's wanting to spare the people of Jerusalem. He's not fighting a battle. He doesn't want to fight his son. We understand that. But up to this point, he's been leaving, he's been leaving, he's been leaving, he's been leaving. Now he stops and he counts. You know why you count and number the people? Because you're getting ready to do something. You don't number people if you're getting ready to flee. You number people if you're getting ready to fight. And if you notice in scripture, David now is going to make this transition because of the support that has been shown him, because of the display of support, because now he has this encouragement.

Now he's going to stand up, number his people, he's going to appoint leaders over thousands and hundreds, and he's going to send them out. He's not waiting on Absalom to come to him. He's going to go to Absalom. Now it begins to be an offensive battle.

[ 24 : 18 ] No longer is it defensive. He's not fleeing. He's not running. Now he is confronting. Because there will be a day when the true king calls his troops together and they go to battle.

And the battle will be decided. We read about the true king, the king of kings and lord of lords in the book of Revelation. And we see where he gathers his troops together. He doesn't have to number them or count them or appoint them because he is the captain of his own army.

He is the one who goes before us. He will not stay behind because he gets neither weak nor tired, nor is he ever weary or unfit for battle. And we don't even fight in that battle. We ride behind him as he wins the battle with the sword of the Lord coming out of his mouth, which is just a glorious display.

I know I've told you this before and I'm always encouraged by this, but we wear white to that battle, which doesn't make any sense except for the fact that we're not going to be doing any fighting. We wear the white righteous garments of the saints to fight the Lord behind this battle.

Why? Because we're not getting dirty. We're not doing the work. We're just enjoying the spoils. That's the reality. And when we read that in the book of Revelation, you notice that Jesus is not fleeing.

[ 25 : 25 ] He's not leaving. He is on the offensive there because the true king fights the battle for the kingdom and wins. David here numbers his people and he begins to appoint leaders over his people.

And he sets these three captains over his people. And now he's going to fight for the kingdom because he knows God is with him. And this support has changed everything for him. It is good to know that God reminds us of the support that he's given us.

Therefore, we no longer have to flee. We no longer have to run. We no longer have to push, pull back. Then we can push forward and fight the battle of the kingdom because the king knows that people are with him.

But this gets us to the fourth thing. And that is a declared compassion. A declared compassion. We read this, we are reminded of a number of things.

The first thing we remember is a number of people throughout scripture did wrong by their children. Right? I mean, Samuel's children didn't grow up and follow his example.

[ 26 : 29 ] Eli's children did not either. David spoiled his kids. He never called Absalom to account. He never checked his sin. We see this over and over again. But we need to be careful because we need to also remember that David is a man after God's own heart.

So what we see reflected in the heart of David is really a picture of the heart of God. And we are told here that after David gets them together, David says, I'm going to go fight with you. He wasn't going to send them to fight a battle he wasn't willing to fight. And they said, no, we don't want you to do that. The risk is too great. So then we are told in verse 5 of the 18th chapter. Actually, let's go back to verse 4. Then the king said to them, whatever seems best to you I will do. So the king stood beside the gate. Stood beside the gate of Mahanim. And he's at the gate. The gate is a place in scripture of decision. Right? The gate's a place of wisdom. The gate's a place of judgment. The gate's a place of public forum, if you will. [ 27 : 33 ] A lot of things happen at the gate in scripture. David stood at the gate. The king is standing at the gate. We are reminded, one commentator says, and I can't remember who it was, that over and over and over again in the 18th chapter we are reminded that David is king because it says, the king, the king, the king, the king, the king.

So we're reminded who the true king is. King David is standing at the gate. Now, there was a day when Absalom stood at the gate in Jerusalem. You remember what Absalom was doing when he was standing at the gate in Jerusalem right outside the king's palace? Absalom was standing at the gate confronting everyone that was going to his father to plead their case and Absalom was really demeaning his father, casting doubt upon the rulership of his father. It was at the gate that Absalom said, oh, I wish that someone would make me judge and then I would rule in your favor. He was very careful with his words. Absalom never said, I wish someone would make me king. He said, oh, I wish someone would make me judge because then I'd rule in your favor but the reality is that everyone knew you could not be judged without being king. See, when Absalom stood at the gate, he undergirded and undermined the rulership of his father. He really belittled him. He put him down and he won the hearts of the people. [ 28 : 50 ] When King David stands at the gate, he's going to display compassion and concern for his son. What a difference. Absalom, despised his father.

David shows love for his son. He displays compassion. We can say, well, he just was spoiling his children but look at what it says. The king charged Joab and Abishai and Etai saying, deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom. He is declaring a concern and a genuine love and a compassion for his son. He knows the wrong of his son. He knows the revolt that is taking place. He knows how far this has went because people have told him. He knows the counsel that Ahithophel gave. He knows what is taking place when he came into Jerusalem. In spite of all he knows, he makes this declaration, deal gently with my son. In spite of all the wrong, in spite of all the sin, in spite of all the shortcomings, in spite of all the murderous desire, in spite of all the murderous activity that has taken place, in spite of all those things that have opposed the true king and the true kingdom, the heart of David is deal gently with my son. [ 30 : 11 ] Now we can shake our heads and go, well, I don't see how David could do that but we also need to be reminded that we too have a father who stands at the gate that does not rejoice in the death of the wicked, scripture tells us.

He does not delight in the death of the wrongdoer and in his compassion and in his loving kindness and in his mercy is extending forgiveness to the most vilest of individuals. Remember this morning's sermon. We are the grand display of his mercy because there was a day when he stood at the gate and said, deal gently with that one, my son. For all of my murderous desires, for all of my, he said murderous, right, because he who has hatred in his heart has committed murder. For all of my blasphemy, for all of my shortcomings, for my breaking every one of the Ten Commandments. Yet he said, deal gently with my son because the heart of the father is displayed with compassion and concern and mercy and grace in spite of who we are and all we have done because the true king stands at the gate not as an act of condemnation that will come later on but as an act of compassion saying I don't desire that he would die. Man in his ambitions and his desires, man in his own retribution says they deserve to die. God in his compassion says no, not yet. [ 31 : 38 ] It's an amazing thing when we see declared compassion from the most unlikely of individuals it's even more astounding when we see that God would show his compassion upon us.

We are the Absaloms, right? We made ourselves king, we led our own kingdom at least so we thought. We rebelled against the kingdom of heaven and all of our natural ambitions.

That's who we are. In God's mercy and grace and compassion we did not die on the battlefield but rather he called us to himself. We see that compassion.

May we never ever fall short of being amazed at such compassion. I can't tell you what would lead David to say such things because naturally none of us would other than the fact that he was a man after God's own heart.

We read of other kings throughout history. Herod the Great who was not so great killed just about every one of his sons save one. Why?

[ 32 : 45 ] Because they were a threat to his kingdom. We read throughout history many, many kings who were self-preserving, self-seeking and self-satisfying and had no problem whatsoever killing their own offspring when it became a threat to their kingdom but yet what we see here with David is he is declaring please deal kindly with him.

This is not a fallacy or a weakness rather this is a grand display of the heart and character of God that is put on public display for all because it says and all the people heard when the king charged all the commanders concerning Absalom.

In case we wondered if the heart of the king changed the hearts of the men we have to realize this unnamed man who met Absalom hanging from the tree and yet did nothing and Joab says why didn't you do it?

He said because I heard the king's command. Why? Because the heart of the king impacted the heart of his men and they heard it. Therefore when we hear the true king of kings and lord of lords dealing compassionately with sinners may we not be those who are quick to judge them may we not be those who throw the spear but may we be those who as Spurgeon said rescue the perishing over our kneeling crying bodies if men be condemned to hell may they go over our crying bodies. Dealing in compassion and concern. Number four and finally we see a dishonorable end. In this battle for the kingdom there are divided people displayed support a declared compassion and a dishonorable end.

[ 34 : 19 ] It tells us that the battle takes place in the forest of Ephraim. They're not necessarily in the wilderness region they're in the woodland region too. The wilderness can include that but they're in the forest of Ephraim probably named after the tribe of Ephraim who settled it first.

And they're in that region it says 20,000 men fell. We don't know how many on each side but the greater number of them with the men of Israel because it says the men of Israel fell before the servants of David. But then we are told that the forest devoured more men than sword.

It's such a treacherous land that many fell because of the place they were fighting not the people they were fighting and I think that's probably a way of God sparing his people the brutalities of this civil war.

As sad as it is many of them fell because of the forest not because of the sword. The true king will rise victorious and the servants of David as they are declared are victorious over the men of Israel. but then we are told in verse 9 now Absalom don't you love scripture now Absalom happened to meet the servants of David. He just happened to meet them.

[ 35 : 29 ] Why? Because there will always be a day of reckoning and a day of judgment. Absalom happened to meet the servants of David as he was riding his mule which was the animal of kings of that day.

And he happened to meet them in the most unlikely of way. While he's riding his mule his mule goes under an oak tree and his head catches fast. It is Josephus that tells us it was his hair that caught fast in the oak tree because the Bible just tells us it was his head that caught fast.

Isn't it amazing that the thing in which he had the most pride would become the very thing that would hold him up literally. Because Absalom was proud of his hair he had it cut once a year and had it weighed out remember that?

The thing that was his pride and joy became the thing that would hold him up and bring about his condemnation and judgment. Surely pride goes before a fall and here pride went before a tree hanging.

Suspended it says between heaven and the earth. And one of the servants of David met him but would not dare stretch his hand out against him and went and told Joab and Joab had heard the heart of the king but Joab had a little bit too much of the world in him because Joab said why didn't you take care of him I would have rewarded you he said I don't want your reward.

[ 36 : 53 ] Joab decided to do the thing on his own he said I don't have time to sit here so he takes three spears he thrusts them into the heart probably the bowels of Absalom and the ten armor bearers of Joab finish it off.

but I want you to see this dishonorable end because here's the man who declared himself king who he called the people to himself who had brought wise counselors around himself who had made himself to appear king in the king's city in Jerusalem and there are a number of things at his end which are very dishonorable in scripture number one he was hanging from a tree cursed are those who hang from a tree that was declared in the book of Deuteronomy which Jesus has become our curse this is why it was so offensive to the Jewish people that the Messiah and even today the Messiah would hang upon a tree on a hill called Calvary because cursed is everyone who hangs upon a tree he took our curse we see that Absalom here is declared cursed because of the manner of his death he was in a tree we see also the dishonor in his burial because it says he was just cast into a deep pit and had piles of stones laid upon him this great heap of stones is dishonorable because one of the greatest dishonors that you could ever display to an individual of the Jewish nation was to not give them a proper burial remember the men of Kabea who went and took down the body of Saul and brought him back so that he could have a proper burial we see here that he had received no proper burial he who was king was not laid in a king's tomb he who was king of his own realm was laid in a deep pit and was given an unmarked grave covered with stones and we see the dishonor that at the end of his life he knew that his name could very easily be forgotten we are told earlier in scripture that he had three sons we don't know if those three sons had already died if they died early on or if he knew that they weren't going to live long enough to keep his name laying but we know that there was a time when he set up a pillar to his own self when you have to raise your own monument then you're not doing too well in society he erected a monument so that no one would forget him nobody knows where that monument was at by the way the place of that monument has long been lost that monument has long been forgotten any trace of Absalom's monument for his own testimony is long gone nobody knows nobody knows where his grave is they say that if you go into

Jerusalem you will find what they call Absalom's heap or Absalom's pile in the Kidron Valley but that dates back to the times of the Herodian dynasty not back to the times of the Davidic dynasty so unless it was erected over the same spot it's more than likely not yet we see the dishonor that comes at the end he who had exalted himself had proclaimed his own worth in the end is forgotten better to be known as a servant of David than to be known as a king forgotten because the servants of the king lived on in the battle for the kingdom only one can arise victorious and only one can live eternally the name and lineage and the family of David continues and will continue forever more Absalom was a part of that and chose to rebel against that and therefore was removed from that he he was united to an everlasting dynasty underneath the rulership of king David and yet wanted his own realm and in wanting his own realm he put himself to his uttermost ruin because the name only means something when connected to the true king and we see that when man tries to establish their own power and their own place and their own position in this world they too will soon be forgotten but those who unite with the king of kings and lord of lords have a name recorded in the book of life that will never be forgotten we don't have to raise monuments on this earth because the bible tells us that god's already carved stones in the one to come we don't need someone to look back and see who we were here because we know that we will be on display eternally there there's a kingdom coming that has no end and when we're fighting the battle for the kingdom we must make sure that we're fighting the battle on the right side because only one will last the other ends up in a deep pit covered with a pile of stones soon to be forgotten and neglected and the world moves on but yet we see David and his men rise victorious we'll keep reading we'll see David will be broken we'll see the king's heart and all these matters but for this moment we see in the battle for the kingdom only one kingdom endures and it's the true king it's the god anointed and appointed king that will rise victorious and the servants who are with him though they may appear to be outnumbered though they may appear to be out strength god will bring them through the battle victoriously we see that for us in 2 samuel 17 24 through 18 18 let's pray and then we'll be dismissed lord i thank you so much for your word thank you for the encouragement of your word god also thank you for the challenge of it lord i know that our lives will be defined each and every day based upon the king in which we pledge allegiance to may we be wholly committed to the king of kings and lord of lords may we fight the battle for your glory and honor may we be content to fight

as servants of the king unnamed unnoticed and unknown but realizing we are a part of a kingdom that will endure forever or may we not seek to build our own kingdom may we not seek to be recognized by our own efforts but lord may you be the center of our desire and the aim of our ambition we thank you for this day thank you for these people and the encouragement that they are to me i want to thank you for their place in the church and pray that as we as your church would labor during this season i know there are a number that are sick and we lift them up to you oh god i know there are a number of opportunities before us and god we pray that we would have the strength and the courage to take them may we be bold witnesses for the king's sake in the days ahead through our actions and through our words may you be honored as we leave here tonight may you walk with us the week ahead of us lord until we come back again to be encouraged and renewed in our commitment and we ask it all in christ's name amen thank you guys so much for your time and attention you