

Disastrous Defeat and Death

2 Samuel 18:1-33

- Absalom rides in front of “all of Israel” with 40,000 men.
- Josephus records David had 4,000 men.
- Absalom was not guarded for a surprise attack!

1. Organization – v. 1-8

- 2: common to divide army into 3 bodies (Judges 7:6, 9:43, 1S 11:11, 13:17, 2K 9:5-6)
- Foreigners serve under Ittai; native troops under the nephews, Joab and Abigail
- 3: Absalom’s men were not as kind as D’s
- 5: D has a hard time accepting nothing on Earth could resolve Absalom’s conflict
- 6: Forest of Ehpraim: no one know where
- 7: 20,000 men: surprised by the 3 groups of D’s men; attacked while they were travelling > weapons were packed.
- 8: panic scattered for miles. Woods would’ve aided defeat: falling into pits, starvation.

2. Death – v. 9-19

- 9: Josephus: hair greatly entangled in a knotty oak tree; caught by his head, possibly unconscious as we have no account of trying to dislodge himself.
- 13: man answering was loyal to the king and understood the character of Joab
- 14: darts did not kill Absalom: wooden stakes sharpened and heated in the fire.
- Heart: more middle of the body.
- Not right to kill Absalom; should have been captured and taken to D.
- 17: the pit: well-known
- 18: same as Vale of Shaveh (Gen. 24:19) where King of Sodom met Abraham.
- Monument erected upon the death of his three sons, 1S 14:27

3. Lament – v. 20-33

- Joab the supreme commander of D’s army
- 20-23: D executed the messenger that told him of Saul’s and Ishbosheth’s death (2S 1:15-16, 4:5-12). Joab wanted to spare Ahimaaz. Instead sends slave: “the Cushite” from Ethiopia [*darker*]

- 24-27: dramatic account no doubt from eyewitness
- 29: blatant lie from Ahimaaz, cf. v. 20
- 30-33: Coffman: “No more pitiful a picture of D in the whole Bible than this one.”
- Sad for death and for his agonizing grief over his sins.
- 33: D takes blame for the outrageous crimes of Absalom. Ps. 38 & 40 make the confession it is his own iniquity surging over his head.

Lessons:

1. Absalom was prepared for a fight, but he was not prepared for a surprise attack. As Christians, we are to be on the guard for all attacks as Satan is always ready to attack – 1 Peter 5:8.
2. Absalom was killed when he was stuck; Joab, however, should not have killed Absalom. Due process for sins should have occurred. Today, God is the one that repays, Romans 12:19.
3. Absalom’s death placed grief and guilt upon D as he felt responsible. There is no need for guilt in Christ.

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