

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Nov. 6

MONDAY

That evening, when David heard the report from his spies, he and all with him began to cross the Jordan River, headed east. By morning, they had all crossed the river and arrived at a place called Mahanaim. Back in Jerusalem, Ahithophel, whose advice Absalom had rejected, went to his home and hung himself.

READ: II Samuel 17:22-24

Ahithophel apparently knew that David would win back power and would then grievously prosecute and maybe even torture or kill him for siding with Absalom in his unsuccessful rebellion, and Ahithophel chose death as a way out of that scenario. How foolish! To pretend to know the future. Only God knows the “what if”! We need to remember that. The issue is never that we should act in such this way or that as to manipulate the future, but only that we should do the right thing now, regardless of what lies ahead. We just don’t know what the future will bring. Help us, Lord, to live today in obedience to You. One day at a time.

TUESDAY

Absalom appointed Amasa commander in chief of his army. (Joab had held the job when David was king) Amasa was distantly related to both David and Joab through marriage. He led the army out to Gilgal and made camp.

READ: II Samuel 17:25-26

The way the story is worded makes it clear that appointing Amasa to be commander of his army was due to the family connection. The way the battle turns out, it’s also clear that it was not a wise appointment. The point is not that we should pass over family. Rather it’s to show again that the so-called wisdom of man is sheer foolishness in the sight of God. How badly we need to call upon the Lord to give us wisdom from above to live this day for Him! And how amazing is it that His Spirit works within us so that we may know and to do His good will!

WEDNESDAY

In Mahanaim, some of the citizens, knowing that David and his men were tired and hungry, brought a great number of badly needed supplies for them: beds, basins, bowls, wheat, barley, flour, corn, beans, lentils, honey, butter, mutton, and cheese.

READ: II Samuel 17:27-29

These benefactors were not loyal subjects. They were foreigners. But they saw the need of David and his men and they responded. The simple fact is that although we can’t know their reasons, we do know that God was surely behind all this - supplying the needs of those who trusted in His care. “I will supply all your needs.” And along comes Shobi and Machir and Barzillai with a ton of stuff! He will supply your needs today, too. And maybe send you out to do some supplying in His name!

THURSDAY

David divided his men into squads of 100 and battalions of 1000 (10 squads) with

captains over them. He put Joab in charge of one-third of his forces, Abishai in charge of another third, and Ittai in charge of the other third. David had originally planned to lead a group himself, but his followers protested, saying that he was too valuable to risk injury or death in battle. So he stayed in the city at the gate as his forces marched out to fight.

READ: II Samuel 18:1-4

David takes the good advice of those he trusts and stays behind. In the decisions of our lives, the insight of others around us is invaluable. Some-times they see things more clearly. Sometimes they see the whole picture. David was wise to listen and so are we. Maybe some around you recognize a God-given gift in your life and have told you about it. Maybe they have hinted at some area which needs your attention. Hear them out! It may be just the message God wants you to hear!

FRIDAY

In the hearing of all the people, David commanded his three commanders (as they went out to battle) to deal gently with his son Absalom. The two armies met in the Woods of Ephraim. David’s forces won a great victory, with twenty thousand of the enemy dying, most of them in intense fighting in the woods.

READ: II Samuel 18:5-8

David’s charge to his commanders reminds us of another day when another One cried out, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Notice he does not command them not to deal with Absalom, but to deal gently with him. Think of the people we run into in the course of our lives who deserve nothing good from us. Yet God works in us to forgive them and to treat them gently and generously. It’s God’s work and we are His workmanship, created to do good works – to do His will.

SATURDAY

In the course of the battle, as Absalom engaged some of David’s forces, his mule ran under a low hanging branch of an Oak, and Absalom’s long flowing hair got tangled in it. He found himself suspended between heaven and earth! Word of his rather unfortunate situation spread and it wasn’t long before Joab learned of it.

READ: II Samuel 18:9-10

Absalom’s plight is not a warning against long hair or riding mules too fast through a wooded area. It is a warning against covetousness - wanting what belongs to another, in this case his own father. Gaining what we covet will never bring the results we think it will. Absalom might have imagined his own downfall in some heroic fashion - perhaps going down in a blaze of glory. But never did he imagine the ignobility of hanging like an old rag doll by his hair, unable to free himself. The warning, of course, is don’t. Don’t covet what belongs to another. Find contentment in what the LORD has entrusted to you.

#55