

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE Dec.4

MONDAY

David has invited Barzillai to join him in Jerusalem. Here, he gives his answer: I will honor you by going part way with you (as you have asked) but the pleasures that you offer me don't mean so much to an old man such as I. So I ask your permission to allow me to send Kimham (probably one of his sons) in my place so that I may return to my home.

READ: II Samuel 19:34-37

In refusing David's invitation, notice how gracious Barzillai is: he says that his age works against him; he says that he does not want to be a burden upon the king; and he says that he will honor the king in some other way. As believers, we need desperately to be at least as gracious as Barzillai! Our lives should be marked by a graciousness that comes from Above - and out of our mouths!

TUESDAY

David expresses a willingness to accept Kimham as a substitute for Barzillai. He promises to treat Kimham as well as he would treat Barzillai himself. Kissing and blessing Barzillai, David heads back to his palace.

READ: II Samuel 19:38-39

You know what's really neat? Much later in Jewish history, we read of a village near Bethlehem named *The Habitation of Kimham*! David evidently kept his word and rewarded him land, as if he were rewarding Barzillai. Keeping our word as important in our day as it was in David's. Doing what we say we will do. Letting our yeah be yeah.

WEDNESDAY

When David crosses the Jordan River back into the main part of the Promise Land, the people from different tribes accuse him of being controlled by the tribe of Judah - saying that this one tribe monopolizes his time and energy.

READ: II Samuel 19:40-41

Whether true or not it's hard to say, but it seems as if the people of Judah (and Simeon with them) were trying to win favor David's favor over the other 10 tribes. Without announcing his return to the other tribes, they met David as he crossed the Jordan, and provided an escort for his travels. Winning favor by virtuous deeds is a good thing; winning the favor of someone by trying to make yourself look better than others is not. "You don't find the best tree in the orchard by axing all the others," it's been said. We ought to use every occasion to praise another for those things well done.

THURSDAY

The representatives from ten tribes argue that two of the tribes demand too much of David's time and attention. They give various arguments to demand that David be their king, too.

READ: II Samuel 19:42-43

"The last words in chapter 19 (the words of the men of Judah) were fiercer than those of the men of Israel. Though we have right and reason on our side, yet, if we express ourselves with fierceness, God takes notice of it and is much displeased." So writes Matthew Henry, and he has it right! A soft answer with a gentle striving for the good is what God requires of us.

FRIDAY

A guy named Sheba, took advantage of the arguing and the discontentment, and declared that they should all just forget about David, and just leave him to Judah. In a way, he was offering himself as a leader instead of David.

READ: II Samuel 20:1-2

Every man of Israel (the ten tribes) deserted David. That is the story of the world at large. One minute it's, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" And the next minute it's, "Crucify him!" Out of the same mouth, James writes, proceed blessing and cursing. These things ought not to be so! Let us determine that it will not be our story. Not now, not ever.

SATURDAY

David returned to Jerusalem. There, he arranged for the ten women who had remained in the palace while he was gone to live elsewhere, in seclusion, as if they were widows. He also called for Amasa to gather the troops.

READ: II Samuel 20:3-4

Absalom had claimed these ten women as his own during the short time he had sat upon his father's throne. Perhaps it was that in some way or ways, they were used by Absalom in a vile or evil manner, too evil to speak of again (there are such things, you know). Perhaps they had willingly co-operated with David's son in his rebellion, and David had learned of that. The point is that David acted wisely is dealing with an issue that had no easy solution. We must ask daily for that kind of wisdom - to know what to do when I don't know what to do! And God gives us wisdom when we ask for it!

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