

II Samuel 18:1-19:8

Lesson #18, Civil War Once More

There was only one battle between Absalom and David. Absalom directed the attack against his father. He had a much larger force in the field, which he placed under the command of Amasa. David divided his smaller defense forces into thirds, appointing Joab, Abishai (Joab's brother), and Ittai the Gittite as captains. The two forces engaged in combat on the east side of the Jordan River in a wooded area.¹

Then David numbered the people who were with him and set over them commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds. ² David sent the people out, one third under the command of Joab, one third under the command of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and one third under the command of Ittai the Gittite (II Sam 15:18-22). And the king said to the people, "I myself will surely go out with you also." ³ 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." ⁴ 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. ⁵ 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. ⁶ Then the people went out into the field against Israel, and the battle took place in the forest of Ephraim.

EPHRAIM, FOREST OF, (ya`ar 'ephrayim): The word ya`ar (Hebrew) probably agrees in meaning with the Arabic wa`r, which indicates a rough country, abounding in rocks, stones and scrub, with occasional trees; not a "forest," as we understand the term. Here Absalom was defeated and slain ([2 Samuel 18:6](#), the King James Version "wood of Ephraim"). It must be sought, therefore, East of the Jordan, in the neighborhood of Mahanaim; but no identification is yet possible.

[1.] David split his army 3-ways. Who were the three commanders?

[2.] Who was Ittai?

[3.] v:4 said, So the king stood beside the gate. What gate was this?

[4.] v:5, What charge did David give to his commanders?

[5.] Reviewing II Sam 8:6 & 14, we read that "the Lord helped David wherever he went". Why might David continue to rely on the Lord's help in this situation?

[6.] For us as Christian leaders, no matter how bleak things might look, can we continue to bank on "the Lord's help whatever the situation"?

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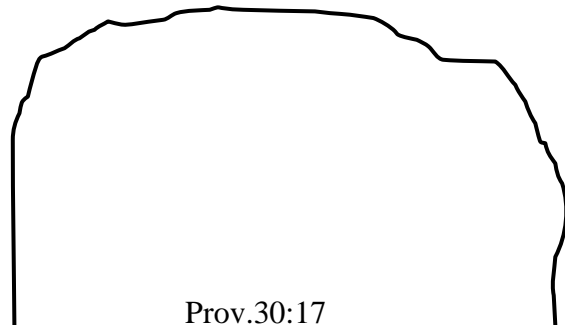
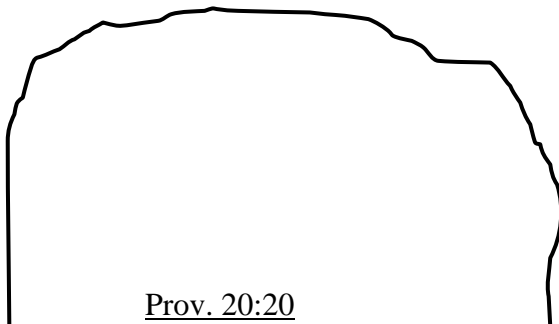
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7 The people of Israel were defeated there before the servants of David, and the slaughter there that day was great, 20,000 men. 8 For the battle there was spread over the whole countryside, and the forest devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.

9 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. (please note the description of the forest of Ephriam on page #1) And his head caught fast in the oak, so he was left hanging between heaven and earth, while the mule that was under him kept going. 10 When a certain man saw it, he told Joab and said, "Behold, I saw Absalom hanging in an oak." 11 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." 12 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 and Abishai and Ittai, saying, 'Protect for me the young man Absalom!'" 13 "Otherwise, if I had dealt treacherously against his life (and there is nothing hidden from the king), then you yourself would have stood aloof." 14 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. 15 And ten young men who carried Joab's armor gathered around and struck Absalom and killed him.

16 Then Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing Israel, for Joab restrained the people. 17 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.

Consider that below is the front and back of Absalom's tomb stone over the pit. Write in the front and back an epitaph as noted.



[7.] v:8, describe a scenario where "the forest devours more than the sword".

[8.] v:9, Let's see now, how much did Absalom's hair weigh according to II Sam 14:26?

[9.] v:10-15, Far be it for me to trump up a murder wrap against Joab but wasn't he disobeying the kings order?

[10.]When do you think Joab planned this?

[11.] If the battle had gone Absalom's way, on whose side would Joab have stood?

[12.] David decided to stand and fight at the Forest of Ephriam. Had he continued his retreat another 40-mi do you feel Joab would have warned him?

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18 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.

19 Then Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said, "Please let me run and bring the king news that the Lord has freed him from the hand of his enemies." 20 But Joab said to him, "You are not the man to carry news this day, but you shall carry news another day; however, you shall carry no news today because the king's son is dead." 21 Then Joab said to the Cushite, "Go, tell the king what you have seen." So the Cushite bowed to Joab and ran. 22 Now Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said once more to Joab, "But whatever happens, please let me also run after the Cushite." And Joab said, "Why would you run, my son, since you will have no reward for going?" 23 "But whatever happens," he said, "I will run." So he said to him, "Run." Then Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain and passed up the Cushite.

24 Now David was sitting between the two gates; and the watchman went up to the roof of the gate by the wall, and raised his eyes and looked, and behold, a man running by himself. 25 The watchman called and told the king. And the king said, "If he is by himself there is good news in his mouth." And he came nearer and nearer. 26 Then the watchman saw another man running; and the watchman called to the gatekeeper and said, "Behold, another man running by himself." And the king said, "This one also is bringing good news." 27 The watchman said, "I think the running of the first one is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok." And the king said, "This is a good man and comes with good news."

28 Ahimaaz called and said to the king, "All is well." And he prostrated himself before the king with his face to the ground. And he said, "Blessed is the Lord your God, who has delivered up the men who lifted their hands against my lord the king."

29 The king said, "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" And Ahimaaz answered, "When Joab sent the king's servant, and your servant, I saw a great tumult, but I did not know what it was." 30 Then the king said, "Turn aside and stand here." So he turned aside and stood still.

[13.] v:19, Why would Ahimaaz, the priest's son, think Absalom's death would be good news to David?

[14.] v:29, What was David's main concern?

[15.] Why didn't Ahimaaz tell the truth?

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31 Behold, the Cushite arrived, and the Cushite said, "Let my lord the king receive good news, for the Lord has freed you this day from the hand of all those who rose up against you." 32 Then the king said to the Cushite, "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" And the Cushite answered, "Let the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise up against you for evil, be as that young man!" 33 The king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And thus he said as he walked, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

19:1 Then it was told Joab, "Behold, the king is weeping and mourns for Absalom." 2 The victory that day was turned to mourning for all the people, for the people heard it said that day, "The king is grieved for his son." 3 So the people went by stealth into the city that day, as people who are humiliated steal away when they flee in battle. 4 The king covered his face and cried out with a loud voice, "O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

5 Then Joab came into the house to the king and said, "Today you have covered with shame the faces of all your servants, who today have saved your life and the lives of your sons and daughters, the lives of your wives, and the lives of your concubines, 6 by loving those who hate you, and by hating those who love you. For you have shown today that princes and servants are nothing to you; for I know this day that if Absalom were alive and all of us were dead today, then you would be pleased. 7 "Now therefore arise, go out and speak kindly to your servants, for I swear by the Lord, if you do not go out, surely not a man will pass the night with you, and this will be worse for you than all the evil that has come upon you from your youth until now."

[16.] v:32, Did the Cushite tell the truth?

[17.] Which of the two runners was the faithful messenger?

[18.] As Christian leaders why is it not easy to be a faithful messenger of God's Word?

[19.] v:5-7, Write down if Joab's following statements were true or just jerking David around.

◇ Today you have covered with shame the faces of all your servants,

◇ **(you)** love those who hate you, and by hating those who love you

◇ you have shown today that princes and servants are nothing to you

◇ I know this day that if Absalom were alive and all of us were dead today, then you would be pleased

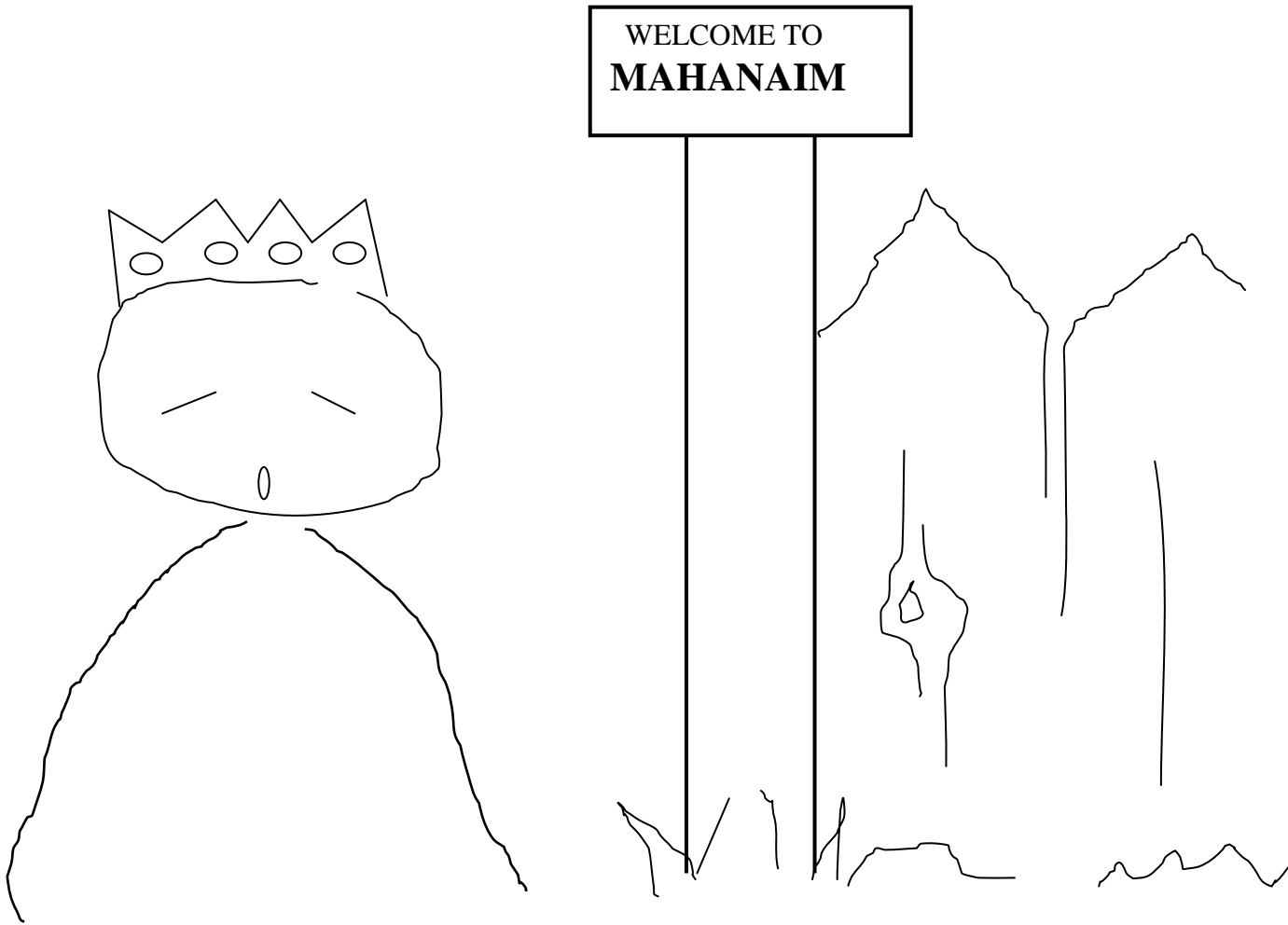
◇ if you do not go out, surely not a man will pass the night with you, and this will be worse for you than all the evil that has come upon you from your youth until now."

[20.] Was Joab's council the council of a true friend?

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8 So the king arose and sat in the gate. When they told all the people, saying, "Behold, the king is sitting in the gate," then all the people came before the king. Now Israel had fled, each to his tent.



Chantry, Walter J, David *man of prayer man of war*; 1 page 245