

2 Samuel Chapter 19

2 Samuel 19:1 "And it was told Joab, Behold, the king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom."

When returned to Mahanaim or on his way to it; perhaps by the messengers he sent; and this report he had before he saw the king.

"Behold, the king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom": For the death of him, instead of rejoicing at the victory obtained, and the deliverance from his enemies.

This is not that David does not appreciate all they have done. The weeping is mostly because he feels this is a further punishment from God for his sins. He feels the death of his son, is because of him. Joab disobeyed David. He did not have to kill Absalom. He could easily have taken him prisoner instead. Joab should now realize that he is in trouble.

Good leaders put their own needs and feelings aside to care for those they lead. David failed to do that, and Joab feared that he would lose the loyalty of the nation. Joab's words led David to take appropriate action and commend the people for their victory.

2 Samuel 19:2 "And the victory that day was [turned] into mourning unto all the people: for the people heard say that day how the king was grieved for his son."

They had so great a regard to their prince, that, when they heard of his distress, they were afflicted with him; and instead of triumphing, they also made lamentations.

Generally, a victory is accompanied by singing and dancing. This is an unusual situation, since the son of the king is dead. The people, who actually offered to give their lives for their king, must now come into town in a state of mourning as if they had lost the war.

2 Samuel 19:3 "And the people gat them by stealth that day into the city, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle."

"The people gat them by stealth": Because of David's excessive grief, his soldiers returned from battle not as rejoicing victors, but as if they had been humiliated by defeat.

This was a somber army which marched back into town. This would have been their attitude in defeat, and not in victory. Some of the people have difficulty understanding this, since it was Absalom and his army that they were in the battle against. He had not asked the people to mourn. They were mourning because their king was sorrowful.

2 Samuel 19:4 "But the king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

And would not see his generals, and thank them for their services: but wrapped himself in his mantle, after the manner of mourners.

"And the king cried with a loud voice, O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!" And this was some time, perhaps some days after he had received the news of his death, since Joab and the army were returned from the battle. Had it been a sudden start of passion, upon first hearing the news, and had continued a few hours, it would have been more excusable; but to continue some days, as is very probably it did, was very unbecoming.

All of them who had sons of their own probably understood.

Verses 5-7: David's grief over his slain son was ill-received by "Joab," who considered Absalom only a traitor. Joab feared that David's conduct might alienate those who had helped him to regain the throne.

2 Samuel 19:5 "And Joab came into the house to the king, and said, Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons and of thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines;"

"Thou hast shamed ... thy servants": Joab sternly rebuked David for being so absorbed in his personal trauma and failing to appreciate the victory that his men had won for him.

2 Samuel 19:6 "In that thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends. For thou hast declared this day, that thou regardest neither princes nor servants: for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well."

Which though not strictly true, there was some appearance of it, which is here greatly exaggerated. In that he expressed so much grief and sorrow for Absalom his enemy, who had rebelled against him, and showed so little regard to his friends, that had exposed their lives for him.

"For thou hast declared this day": By his conduct and behavior, mourning for his rebellious son, and taking no notice of his faithful servants.

"That thou regardest neither princes nor servants": Neither the officers of the army, the generals and captains, or the common soldiers. Since neither one were admitted into his presence privately, nor had the other public thanks as they entered the city, as might have been expected. Or "that thou hast no princes and servants"; none that are accounted of as such; they are nothing with thee, in no esteem at all, as if thou had none.

"For this day I perceive that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well": This was carrying the matter too far; for though it would have been agreeable to David if Absalom had lived, and not been slain. Yet not that his army should perish, or his people be destroyed; it would have pleased him well if both had lived.

Joab is covering up for his disobedience of his king's commands. He is trying to make David feel bad now that he is grieving over his son, who tried to take the kingdom away from him. He wants David to say he is pleased that Absalom is dead; so that he can tell him he killed him and get rewarded for the deed. Joab seems to me, to be without compassion for David. He is shaming David by saying that David would rather they had all died, than for Absalom to have died. He really knows this is not true. He is trying to soften the punishment he deserves when David finds out the details of how Absalom died.

2 Samuel 19:7 "Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak comfortably unto thy servants: for I swear by the LORD, if thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee this night: and that will be worse unto thee than all the evil that befell thee from thy youth until now."

“There will not tarry one with thee this night”: Joab, who was the esteemed general of the army, was a dangerous person because of that power. He was also dangerous to David because he had disobeyed his command to spare Absalom, and killed him with no remorse. When he warned David that he would be in deep trouble if he did not immediately express appreciation to his men for their victory, David knew he could be in serious danger.

Joab shames David into going to the gate and meeting with the victors. Joab says that David must thank the soldiers for their effort on his behalf. He should praise those who led the battle so bravely. They were greatly outnumbered, and yet they went anyway, because of their love and respect for David. He must now show that he loves and respects them. He must put his personal grief away and meet with his army.

2 Samuel 19:8 "Then the king arose, and sat in the gate. And they told unto all the people, saying, Behold, the king doth sit in the gate. And all the people came before the king: for Israel had fled every man to his tent."

“Sat in the gate”: It was at the gate of Mahanaim that David had reviewed his troops as they had marched out to battle (18:4). David’s sitting in the gate represented a return to his exercise of kingly authority.

For the importance of the “gate” of the city (see the note on Ruth 4:1).

They had run to their tents thinking their king was disappointed. Now, they come to him at the gate for a word from him.

2 Samuel 19:9 "And all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, The king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines; and now he is fled out of the land for Absalom."

“Strife”: An argument arose in Israel concerning whether David should be returned to the kingship. David’s past military victories over the Philistines and the failure of Absalom argued for David’s return. Therefore, David’s supporters insisted on knowing why their fellow Israelites remained quiet about returning David to his rightful place on the throne in Jerusalem.

These are the people who had come against David with Absalom. They are now reflecting back, how he had delivered them over and over. He is now, not even in his palace in Jerusalem. They are having difficulty knowing why they followed Absalom in the first place.

2 Samuel 19:10 "And Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?"

To be king; which either was really done by Absalom's party, or in effect by proclaiming and appointing him king.

"Is dead in battle": Which shows the thing was not of God, and by which means they were released from their oath of allegiance to him.

"Now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?" Nobody speaks of it, gives the least hint of it, or shows any concern about it; but the greatest coldness and indifference, as if it was a matter of no importance.

They want David to come back and be king of all of them again. They want to approach him and ask him to forgive them for fighting against him and see if he will be their king again.

2 Samuel 19:11 "And king David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying, Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying, Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house? seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, [even] to his house."

"Elders of Judah": Through the priests who had stayed in Jerusalem during the rebellion, David appealed to the leaders of his own tribe to take the initiative in restoring him to the throne in Jerusalem (see 2:4; 1 Sam. 30:26). Though this appeal produced the desired result, it also led to tribal jealousies (verses 40-43).

David sends word through the priests and the high priest that he has heard they want him back as king, and he will come when they ask him back. He does not send word directly to them, because he would be recognizing their authority. He recognizes the authority of God by sending the message by the high priest.

2 Samuel 19:12 "Ye [are] my brethren, ye [are] my bones and my flesh: wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king?"

Being of the same tribe, and therefore he should deal gently with them, as if they were parts of his body; and not be severe upon them, for the hand they had in the conspiracy, as they might fear.

"And wherefore then are ye the last to bring the king back?" Since they were so nearly related to him and he so ready to forgive them.

Verses 13-14: As a token of reconciliation, David replaced “Joab” as commander of his army with “Amasa,” Absalom’s general. Perhaps he also thought in this way to repay Joab for his slaying of Absalom. The move was unwise and would cause more difficulty for David (20:9-12; 1 Kings 2:5-6).

It probably came as a shock to Joab to be demoted and have his position given to “Amasa” (his nephew and former general to Absalom). Perhaps David had discovered Joab’s part in the killing of Absalom and was punishing him. Or perhaps he was simply doing what needed to be done to unite the nation, as this move won the “heart of all the men of Judah”.

2 Samuel 19:13 "And say ye to Amasa, [Art] thou not of my bone, and of my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not captain of the host before me continually in the room of Joab."

“Amasa” (see note on 17:25).

“Captain of the host ... in the room of Joab”: David appointed Amasa commander of his army, hoping to secure the allegiance of those who had followed Amasa when he led Absalom’s forces, especially those of Judah. This appointment did persuade the tribe of Judah to support David’s return to the kingship (verse 14), and secured the animosity of Joab against Amasa for taking his position (20:8-10).

David is speaking words of peace to them. He wants to come home and be their king. He says that he makes Amasa the captain of Absalom's army, captain of the whole host in place of Joab. The reason he gives is because Amasa is of his own flesh and Joab is his nephew. In reality, he is demoting Joab for the cruel way he killed Absalom. In all reality, Amasa is his nephew as well. His mother is Abigail, David's sister.

2 Samuel 19:14 "And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as [the heart of] one man; so that they sent [this word] unto the king, Return thou, and all thy servants."

This the Jewish commentators generally understand of Amasa that he used his interest with the men of Judah, and so wrought upon them, that they agreed as one man to send for the king, and bring him back. But it seems best to understand it of David, who by these gentle methods, kind messages, and affectionate speeches, powerfully inclined and engaged the hearts of the people towards him. So that they were unanimously and affectionately agreed to restore him: in this way David chose to return. He could have come without their leave, or any invitation from them, as he was their lawful king, and a victorious one, the rebellion being crushed. And had it in his power to chastise those concerned in it, and use them with severity; but he chose rather to gain the hearts of his people, and to come in a way peaceable to them, and honorable to himself.

"So that they sent this word unto the king, return thou and all thy servants": Perhaps by the same messengers that David sent; or it may be, rather for honor’s sake they deputed some of their principal men to wait on David, and invite him to return to them with all his retinue and army, promising allegiance and fidelity to him.

It was David who extended the hand of forgiveness to all those who had been in Absalom's army. They want David back as their king when they realize there will be no punishment for their part in the war against him.

2 Samuel 19:15 "So the king returned, and came to Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to conduct the king over Jordan."

The two parties met at the Jordan, David coming from Mahanaim to the eastern side of the ford, near Jericho, and the representatives of the tribe of Judah to Gilgal on the opposite bank.

“Gilgal”: (see note on 1 Sam. 10:8).

We see from this, that the troops that had followed Absalom came out to meet David and lead him home to his palace.

Verses 16-23: “Shimei” had a change of heart since he cursed David (in 16:5-13). David did not punish him, but (in 1 Kings 2:8-9, 36-46), David saw to it that Shimei’s son Solomon did.

(See the note on 16:13-14).

2 Samuel 19:16 "And Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite, which [was] of Bahurim, hasted and came down with the men of Judah to meet king David."

“Shimei” (see note on 16:5-8). Shimei confessed his sin of cursing David and his life was spared, temporarily, for on his deathbed David ordered that Shimei be punished for his crime (1 Kings 2:8-9; 36-46).

We see that this is a prominent man of the tribe of Benjamin, who comes down and meets David to show his support.

2 Samuel 19:17 "And [there were] a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they went over Jordan before the king."

Of which tribe he was, and these were either a band of soldiers, of which he was the commander of a thousand; or tenants of his, which showed him to be a great man; or his neighbors, and persons of some figure, whom he prevailed upon to come as intercessors for him.

"And Ziba the servant of the house of Saul": Who had imposed upon David, and got his master's inheritance from him, knowing that David would be undeceived by Mephibosheth his master, when he came to Jerusalem. And therefore, that he might be more tenderly dealt with, and come off the better, he was thus forward to meet the king, and pay his respects to him.

"And his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him": Which made a considerable appearance (see 2 Sam. 9:10).

"And they went over Jordan before the king": To meet him on the other side, both Shimei and his thousand men, and Ziba with his sons and servants.

The fact that there are a thousand men with him shows proof of his importance as a leader. We remember that Ziba had brought provisions to David at the Mount of Olives. He in a sense, was a representative of the house of Saul. We see from this, a unity of all the people behind David as king. We also know that part of the reason Ziba is here, is so he can keep the land which belonged to Mephibosheth. He had told a lie to David to get the land. It seems that Ziba and Shimei had waded over the Jordan, so they could be the first to proclaim loyalty to David.

2 Samuel 19:18 And there went over a ferry boat to carry over the king's household, and to do what he thought good. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, as he was come over Jordan; One trip with the ferry boat, would not have carried this large family of David over Jordan. It is like most ferries, that make several trips in a day. They made several trips to carry them all over.

His wives and children, who could not so well crossed the river on foot: some will have this to be a bridge of boats, a pontoon; and Abarbinel thinks it might be a company of men, who carried the women and children on their shoulders, one after another.

"And to do what he thought good": To carry over whatever else the king pleased, besides his family.

"And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, as he was come over Jordan": Or just as he was about to come over, when he came to Jordan to take the boat in order to come over. For he went over Jordan to meet him, and therefore would take the first opportunity of coming into his presence, and fall down before him, and make his submission to him.

2 Samuel 19:19 "And said unto the king, Let not my lord impute iniquity unto me, neither do thou remember that which thy servant did perversely the day that my lord the king went out of Jerusalem, that the king should take it to his heart."

That is, deal with him according to the desert of it, punish him for it, but forgive it: for non-imputation of sin is in effect the pardon of it.

"Neither do thou remember that which thy servant did perversely the day my lord the king went out of Jerusalem": He desires that he would not only forgive, but forget it. He owns it was a perverse action, and aggravated by being done at the time when the king was in great trouble and distress.

"That the king should take it to his heart": And determine to avenge himself on him for it.

Shimei was the man that had run along the rim of the canyon and had cursed David. He had been a follower of Saul. He now repents at the feet of David. He is asking David for mercy, and not justice. We are all like this too. We do not want the punishment we deserve from the LORD; we want his forgiveness and mercy.

2 Samuel 19:20 "For thy servant doth know that I have sinned: therefore, behold, I am come the first this day of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king."

“House of Joseph”: A reference to Ephraim, the descendant of Joseph, a large tribe of Israel which was representative of the 10 northern tribes. Here, even Shimei’s tribe Benjamin was included.

He has humbly fallen before David and asked his forgiveness. He explains to David that he had been the very first to come and ask his forgiveness.

2 Samuel 19:21 "But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said, Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD'S anointed?"

The same person that would have taken off the head of Shimei at the time he cursed David, if he would have given him leave (2 Sam. 16:9).

"Shall not Shimei be put to death for this?" This humiliation and acknowledgment he has made, shall he be forgiven on that account? Shall so small a matter as this atone for so great a crime he has been guilty of, as that he shall not die?

"Because": Or "though".

"He cursed the Lord's anointed": Is asking pardon sufficient to expiate so foul an offence, for which according to the law he ought to die? Or for this action which he has done, as the Arabic version, in cursing the Lord's anointed.

It appears that Abishai was always telling David what to think. It was almost as if he did not trust David's judgment. It was Abishai who offered to kill Shimei when he was screaming the insults at the beginning. David stopped him then, and reprimands him here again for the same thing.

2 Samuel 19:22 "And David said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries unto me? Shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? for do not I know that I [am] this day king over Israel?"

(See 2 Sam. 16:10).

"That ye should this day be adversaries unto me?" Or a Satan unto me, as the word is, by advising him to do what would be prejudicial to his interest (see Matt. 16:22); as to use severity at such a time as this would have been. For had he immediately ordered Shimei to be put to death, though he deserved it, who was the first man that came to ask pardon, the Israelites in general. Or all however concerned in the rebellion, would have concluded they must share the

same fate, and so would not have submitted, but have raised a new rebellion against him. And some think Joab and Abishai had this in view, that they might keep their posts in the army.

"Shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? There shall not; the glory of this day shall not be sullied by the death of any. Or the joy of it turned into sorrow in any family in Israel, as would, if any was put to death for what had passed during the rebellion.

"For do not I know that I am this day king over Israel?" And can and will do as I please; as he had been driven from his throne and palace, and was now invited back again, and upon his return, it was as if he was made king anew, and afresh inaugurated into his office. And therefore, no blood should be split on that day on which he was restored to his kingdom.

There is no need to kill someone, as he is now king of all the people. A great king knows when to forgive. David tells his sister's son, that he will not be thought of as a vengeful king, but a forgiving king.

2 Samuel 19:23 "Therefore the king said unto Shimei, Thou shalt not die. And the king sware unto him."

This day by my hands, or order, or by the sword (1 Kings 2:8).

"And the king sware unto him": That he should not die for that offence, or for that only; but if he committed a new one, this oath was no longer binding on him, and not at all upon his heir and successor.

David pardoned him that day. I am sure that David greatly admired his bravery, for screaming against 600 men.

Verses 24-30: The author emphasizes that Saul's rightful heir ("Mephibosheth") not only submitted to David's kingship but was devoted to him. This submission arose from David's gracious, God-honoring care (9:1-13), which was rooted in David's loyalty and promise to Jonathan (1 Sam. 20:15, 42). David's life shows that godly character can have great significance, David's love toward Jonathan and Mephibosheth helped unify God's people under his rule.

See note on 4:4. Mephibosheth also met David, exhibiting the traditional marks of mourning, and explained that he had not followed David into exile because he had been deceived by his servant Ziba (see 16:1-4). He came to David with great humility, generosity of spirit, and gratitude, recognizing all the good the king had done for him before the evil deception (verse 28).

2 Samuel 19:24 "And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came [again] in peace."

I.e. the grandson (2 Samuel 9:3, 6).

"Had neither dressed his feet": By cutting his nails, or by washing his feet which were usual in those hot climates, and very refreshing; and therefore now neglected, as becoming a mourner.

"Nor trimmed his beard": But suffered it to grow very long and disorderly, as was usual with many persons in a forlorn or mournful state.

"Nor washed his clothes": His linen clothes. This and the former were signs that he was a true and obstinate mourner, that laid aside his usual refreshments; and they are here mentioned as evidences of the falsehood of Ziba's former relation concerning him (2 Sam. 16:3).

This leaves no doubt how Mephibosheth felt about the reign of Absalom and it was exactly the opposite of what Ziba had said. The way that Mephibosheth was dressed, and his beard and hair showed extreme mourning. David is now aware that Ziba had lied.

2 Samuel 19:25 "And it came to pass, when he was come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto him, Wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth?"

Jerusalem, from whence he went a little way to meet the king, as he was coming thither; for it was said he abode at Jerusalem (2 Sam. 16:3).

"That the king said unto him, wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth?" When he departed from Jerusalem, being obliged to flee from thence because of Absalom. It is very probable David would never have asked him this question, knowing his lameness, had it not been for the suggestion of Ziba his servant, that he stayed at Jerusalem, hoping that the kingdom of his father would be restored to him (2 Sam. 16:3).

David is showing sorrow here for not taking Mephibosheth with him. He asks him, why he did not go?

2 Samuel 19:26 "And he answered, My lord, O king, my servant deceived me: for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king; because thy servant [is] lame."

His servant Ziba, who instead of saddling an ass for him by his order; went off with that and another himself (2 Sam. 16:1).

"For thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass": He not only determined this in his own mind, but gave orders to his servant to saddle one for him.

"That I may ride thereon, and go to the king, because thy servant is lame": And could not walk afoot, being lame of both his feet (2 Sam. 4:4).

Ziba had tricked Mephibosheth as he had tricked David. Ziba was supposed to furnish him an ass to ride since he was crippled, and he never came back for him.

2 Samuel 19:27 "And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but my lord the king [is] as an angel of God: do therefore [what is] good in thine eyes."

By suggesting that he stayed at Jerusalem with a view to the kingdom, hoping that the quarrel between David and Absalom would issue in the restoration of it to his father's family; which was a mere calumny, he having had no such thought, nor was there any foundation for it.

"But my lord the king is an angel of God": For understanding and wisdom, to discern the falsehood of such suggestions.

"Do therefore what is good in thine eyes": Condemn him or acquit him; reject him or receive him into favor; he entirely submitted himself to him, to do with him as seemed good in his sight.

Mephibosheth knows that David will do what is right, guided by the LORD. He places himself in the hands of David, to do whatever David believes is right.

2 Samuel 19:28 "For all [of] my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king: yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table. What right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the king?"

Or "men of death"; worthy of death, not on account of Saul's persecution, for which his family did not deserve to suffer; rather for the attempt of Ish-bosheth to get the kingdom from him, which might be deemed treason, and so the family was tainted for it. Though the sense may be only this, that their lives lay at his mercy, and that if he had dealt with rigor and severity towards them. As was usual for princes to do towards the family of their predecessors, who had any claim to the kingdom, put them to death, this would have been their case.

"Yet didst thou set thy servant among them that eat at thine own table": Which was showing him great kindness, and doing him great honor.

"What right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the king?" To ask any favor of him, or make any complaint to him.

He knows that the blessings he has are just because of the goodness of David toward him. Had it been any victor other than David, they would have killed the grandson of the king whose kingdom they had taken over. Mephibosheth is thankful to be alive and will accept whatever David does for him. David's goodness toward him is because of the love David had for his father, Jonathan.

2 Samuel 19:29 "And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land."

David seems uncertain as to Mephibosheth's part in the rebellion (16:3). Perhaps he did not care to look into the matter at this time or just felt that "Ziba" was in a position to be of help to him in the restoration of his kingdom (verse 17). The edict here seems to be a compromise between those given (in 9:9 and 16:4). For the name Mephibosheth (see the note on 2:8-11).

“Divide the land”: David had previously given the estate of Saul to Mephibosheth to be farmed under him by Ziba (9:9-10). Then when David was deceived, he gave it all to Ziba (16:4). Now David decided to divide Saul’s estate between Ziba and Mephibosheth since he was either uncertain of the truth of Mephibosheth’s story or who was guilty of what, and was too distracted to inquire fully into the matter. It was, in any case, a poor decision to divide the estate between the noble-hearted son of Johnathan and a lying deceiver. Mephibosheth was unselfish and suggested that his disloyal servant take it all, it was enough for him that David was back.

This is settled, that he and Ziba will share equally from the land and David does not want to hear from this anymore.

2 Samuel 19:30 "And Mephibosheth said unto the king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house."

Nothing could be more generously spoken, or signify greater affection, than that he was content to be without an estate, now the king was restored to his kingdom.

Mephibosheth is not concerned about material things. He even says he is willing for Ziba to have it all, if that was what it took to get David back safe. He was so happy that David is back, that none of the material things matters.

Verses 31-40: David later honored Brasilia’s faithful service through his son Solomon (1 Kings 2:7).

“Barzillai” (see note on 17:27). David offered to let Barzillai live in Jerusalem as his guest, but Barzillai preferred to live out his last years in his own house.

2 Samuel 19:31 "And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim, and went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him over Jordan."

The place of his habitation, to Jordan (see 2 Sam. 17:27).

"And went over Jordan with the king to conduct him over Jordan": To accompany him over the river, and then take his leave of him.

2 Samuel 19:32 "Now Barzillai was a very aged man, [even] fourscore years old: and he had provided the king of sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim; for he [was] a very great man."

Which was ten years beyond the common term of man's life, and reckoned a very great age in David's time; and has been ever since, and still is (see Psalm 90:10).

"And he had provided the king of sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim": Had supported him and his family, furnished him with provisions, and all the necessaries of life, during his stay there.

"For he was a very great man": In wealth and riches, and was a very liberal man, and a man of great wisdom and good sense. And very probably was a man of great grace, which taught him his duty to his prince, and influenced him to show mercy to him in distress.

This chapter is not in chronological order, because this returns to the time when David was still at the Jordan. Barzillai was a very rich man who had furnished beds and all sorts of supplies for David, when he was in Mahanaim. He is now 80 years old as he comes to see David off across the Jordan to Jerusalem. He seems to be a very good friend of David.

2 Samuel 19:33 "And the king said unto Barzillai, Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem."

Over Jordan; Barzillai came with an intent to accompany the king over Jordan; but the king meant not only to go over Jordan, but when over to go further with him, even to Jerusalem.

"And I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem": Meaning that he should dwell with him in his palace, and eat at his table, in return for feeding him at Mahanaim.

He had befriended David in his time of need and David is offering to take care of him now. Such a good friend David would like to have with him in Jerusalem. David would like to care for him until his death.

2 Samuel 19:34 "And Barzillai said unto the king, How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem?"

In answer to the grateful proposal he made.

"How long have I to live": That could not be said with exactness by any; but it might be probably conjectured from the age he was of, and the infirmities that attended him, that he could not live long; it was but a short time he had to be in the world.

"That I should go up with the king to Jerusalem?" Take so long a journey as that, seeing he might die before he got thither; and if he did not, since it could not be thought he should live long, he could not think of it, or judge it advisable at such an age to take such a journey, change his place of abode, and manner of living.

2 Samuel 19:35 "I [am] this day fourscore years old: [and] can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king?"

My senses are grown dull, and incapable of relishing the delights of the court. I am past taking pleasure in delicious tastes, or sweet music, and other such delights of the court. I am through age both useless and burdensome to others, and therefore most improper for a court life.

He is explaining to David, that he is an old man of 80. His sense of hearing and tasting are gone. He is no longer quick in making decisions. He has slowed greatly with his age. He explains that he would just be a burden to David that David does not need at this time.

2 Samuel 19:36 "Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king; and why should the king recompense it me with such a reward?"

That is, go a little way after he was over Jordan with him, and then return to his own city.

"And why should the king recompense it with such a reward?" The sense is, why should the king recompense so trifling a thing as I have done, and which was but my duty, with such a reward, as to maintain me in so grand a manner at his court?

2 Samuel 19:37 "Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, [and be buried] by the grave of my father and of my mother. But behold thy servant Chimham; let him go over with my lord the king; and do to him what shall seem good unto thee."

"Chimham": Probably a son of Barzillai (see 1 Kings 2:7). It is probable that David gave a part of his personal estate in Bethlehem to this man and his descendants (see Jer. 41:17).

They will not stop being friends, because they are on opposite sides of the Jordan. He will go a little way with David and then he must turn back. He is getting pretty old and does not have much time until he will be buried. He does not want to be buried in a foreign land. He wants to be buried with his parents. Chimham was thought to be a son of Barzillai. He would go with David, and receive the blessings from David, in place of his father.

2 Samuel 19:38 "And the king answered, Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem good unto thee: and whatsoever thou shalt require of me, [that] will I do for thee."

He admitted of him instead of his father.

"And I will do unto him that which shall seem good unto thee": He puts it to Barzillai, and leaves it with him to ask what he would for his son, and he would grant it. We nowhere read what it was that Barzillai asked, or whether he asked anything; only this we read, that some hundreds of years afterward there was a place called the habitation of Chimham near Bethlehem (Jer. 41:17). Which makes it probable that David gave him a paternal estate of his there, since Bethlehem was his city; and the Targum on that place is expressly for it (see Jer. 41:17).

"And whatsoever thou shalt require of me, that will I do for thee": Whatever suit he should make to him, or whatever favor he should ask of him hereafter, when returned to his own city, he would grant it to him, if it could be possibly done. Such a sense should be that he would always retain of this kindness to him.

David felt very obligated to Brazillia, he would be happy for Chimham to go in his stead. David is saying he will do whatever Brazillia wants him to do.

2 Samuel 19:39 "And all the people went over Jordan. And when the king was come over, the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him; and he returned unto his own place."

Those that were with David.

"And when the king was come over": Over Jordan, had got to the other side of it, while Barzillai accompanied him.

"The king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him": Took his leave of him with a kiss, as friends were wont to do at parting, thanked him for all his favors, wished him well, and prayed to God to bless him with all blessings temporal and spiritual.

"And he returned to his own place": His own city Rogelim, having crossed over again the river Jordan.

This was a kiss of two friends when they parted. David has allowed him to do just as he wished.

Verses 40-43: Although both "Israel" and "Judah" supported the king's return, the pronounced differences that had always existed between the northern and southern tribes surfaced again, differences that had existed since the early days of the conquest and had been highlighted in David's accession to the throne (Chapters 2-4). The basis tension will emerge in the rebellion of Sheba (Chapter 20) and develop into a full secession of the northern tribes after the death of Solomon (1 Kings 12:16-19).

2 Samuel 19:40 "Then the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him: and all the people of Judah conducted the king, and also half the people of Israel."

Which, according to Josephus, was six and a quarter miles or fifty furlongs from Jordan.

"And Chimham went on with him": After Barzillai had left them, and accompanied the king to Jerusalem.

"And all the people of Judah conducted the king": To Jerusalem; who came to meet him (2 Sam. 19:15).

"And also half the people of Israel": Or a part of them, as the word used signifies, and not always an equal half, so Kimchi observes. Even such of Israel as went out with David at first, and then a thousand men of Benjamin that came to meet him (2 Sam. 19:17).

Great throngs of people went with David. Chimham went to be with David in his kingdom. All of these people are to show their approval of David as king.

Verses 41-43: These verses make it clear that David united the nation geographically, but not morally. Their quarrel escalated into Sheba's revolt (20:1-26).

2 Samuel 19:41 "And, behold, all the men of Israel came to the king, and said unto the king, Why have our brethren the men of Judah stolen thee away, and have brought the king, and his household, and all David's men with him, over Jordan?"

“Stolen thee away”: Because only the troops of Judah had escorted David as he crossed over the Jordan River, the 10 northern tribes complained to David that the men of Judah had “kidnapped” him from them.

We see that the army that defeated Absalom, made a show of force with David returning. There would be no opposition with this large a company with him. There was jealousy among the twelve tribes, but David is king of them all. These people are disturbed that they were not consulted before David sets up his kingdom here. They were afraid that David was back to destroy those who were on Absalom's side.

2 Samuel 19:42 “And all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, Because the king [is] near of kin to us: wherefore then be ye angry for this matter? have we eaten at all of the king's [cost]? Or hath he given us any gift?”

“Is near of kin”: The men of Judah answered the men of Israel, stating that David was a member of their tribe. Nor had they taken advantage of their relationship to the king, as had some from the northern tribes.

We find that they are trying to justify their ill feelings here.

2 Samuel 19:43 "And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more [right] in David than ye: why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king? And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel."

“Ten parts”: The men of Israel replied to the men of Judah that they had a greater right to David, since there were 10 northern tribes in contrast to the one tribe of Judah. Contrast the “ten parts” here with the “no portion” (in 20:1).

“Despise us”: The Israel-Judah hostility evidenced here led to the rebellion of Sheba (20:1-22), and eventually to the division of the united kingdom (1 Kings 12:1-24).

This is the beginning of the rift of the ten tribes from the tribe of Judah. The other tribe not mentioned here, is probably that of Simeon. They feel as if they are being left out of the decision making. Even though Judah is just one tribe, they speak the fiercest in this confrontation. The ten tribes think David belongs to them. He is truly king of all of them.

2 Samuel Chapter 19 Questions

1. What was told Joab about David in verse 1?
2. What is the weeping for?
3. The victory that day was turned into _____.
4. Generally, a victory is accompanied by _____ and _____.
5. How did the victorious soldiers come into the town?
6. What did David cry out when he covered his face and wept?
7. What did Joab say to David about his troops?
8. What is one of Joab's reasons for David to stop mourning?
9. Joab tells David, if he does not go forth to appreciate his men, what will happen?
10. What did the people do, when they found out that David was in the gate?
11. What is verse 9 speaking of?
12. Since Absalom is dead, what are they going to do for a king?
13. Who does David send word to speak to the elders of Judah?
14. Why did David not send word to the elders?
15. David tells them, they are _____ of his _____.
16. Who does David make captain of his troops, in place of Joab?
17. What message came back to David?
18. Who came with the men of Judah to meet David?
19. How many men were with him?
20. How many sons did Ziba have?
21. What had Ziba done for David at the Mount of Olives?
22. How did the king's household cross the river?
23. What had Shimei done, that was so terrible?
24. He is asking David for _____, and not justice.

25. Who wants to kill Shimei?
26. What does David call Abishai in verse 22?
27. A great king knows when to _____.
28. What does David answer Shimei?
29. What was the condition of Mephibosheth, when he came to meet David?
30. What does this leave no doubt about?
31. What had Ziba told him, and not done?
32. What does Mephibosheth call David in verse 27?
33. Why has Mephibosheth been blessed by David?
34. How did David settle between Mephibosheth and Ziba?
35. Barzillai did what to help David?
36. What did David offer to do for him?
37. How old was he?
38. Who did he send with David, in his stead?
39. How did David say good-bye to Barzillai?
40. Who were disappointed, that David came back without invitation?