
Day 104 – April 14

Israel as a Monarchy (1100 – 930 BCE)

Absalom's Rebellion

Readings: 2 Samuel 16:15-19:4

Reflections:

- Hushai's words to Absalom mirror the types of words that Absalom used to gain his position. David's spy is now on the inside.
- Absalom in response to the advice of David's old counselor, Ahithophel, decides to have sex with David's concubines with the full knowledge of Israel. At this point Absalom is both fulfilling the prophetic judgment against David and sinking to his lowest point. Absalom is showing that he is now king of Israel by taking over David's household.
- Ahithophel has the wisdom but David's insider and spy, Hushai wins the day. God backs up David's prayer and Absalom chooses the wrong advice. David is warned and the tide turns. Ahithophel can see what will happen and knows that when Absalom goes down Ahithophel will die a terrible death. Ahithophel chooses to commit suicide in a very sad story. "The traitor who commits suicide when he realizes what he has done" (in the future this will be Judas) will be replayed in the story of Jesus. It shows the sad end to those who fail to understand the heart of God. For all of his wisdom and understanding of God's mind, Ahithophel does not understand God's heart and so ends his life tragically. There is a huge difference between head knowledge about God's mind, versus heart knowledge of God's heart.
- Even as David goes to war, he listens to his men's counsel and pleads for mercy for his own son, Absalom. Again David's heart and grace shows through.
- The casualties are great. It is hard to understand what it means by the "forest claimed more lives that day than the sword." Men were dying in the trees? Anyways, we have one such death recorded, Absalom. He hangs himself on a tree branch. All of David's pleading for mercy cannot stall the judgment that has fallen on him. Joab runs him through and he dies helplessly. In his pride he set up a pillar for himself. This idol becomes the only thing left for people to remember him by. Here we see a sad example of how pride and self-centeredness can ultimately destroy a person's life leaving nothing but a hunk of dead rock left as a memory. No children, no relationships.

- David is finally told of Absalom's death and goes into great mourning. He wishes himself dead rather than his son, as most parents would. His grief is extreme and those around him join him in his mourning. His own grief causes his army to feel shame for what they have done. The nation is anything but united and at peace. The impact of Absalom's rebellion is deep. This is a warning to those who may be tempted to try to rebel against God appointed leadership, even when that leadership has obvious weaknesses or does things you disagree with. The impact of such a conspiracy is devastating both personally and corporately. More lessons for leadership.