

2ND SAMUEL

Week 29, chapter 19

We began this rather long chapter 19 of 2nd Samuel last week and still won't finish it today. In a few moments we will read this chapter in its entirety. While every word in the Bible is God-breathed and therefore necessary, purposeful and enlightening, some chapters stand out above the others; this is one of them.

It seems as though for months the central topic of our study has been David and his rise from shepherd boy to King, and now we study the waning days of his reign. We've read of the many twists and turns, of personal victories and defeats, in his life-journey and if we are honest in our assessment, David proved himself to be an all too ordinary man at times, who was elevated to extraordinary status simply due to God's sovereign decision and declaration.

The Jewish people have historically had a difficult time dealing with their image of David because they see him as the exact type of Messiah they are to expect. And because they also see their Messiah as having to be perfect (and rightly so), then they are forced to portray David as perfect and so go through fascinating gyrations to twist and turn David's obvious infidelities and character warts into pious positives.

However because Believers (Christians and Messianic Jews) have met the Savior (Yeshua), we know that as much as God loved David, even a reincarnated David would never qualify as the Messiah. We readily admit that David was a precursor to Messiah (even a type), and that from his bloodlines would come the true Messiah. We also admit that David offered some good illustrations of Messiah but he also demonstrated why the Christ HAD to be God; because a purely human Redeemer could never be 100% sinless.

We're going to be talking a lot about the parallels between David and Yeshua, and a little about significant differences between the two. However if anything set David apart from other

men it was his zeal and his great passion to do whatever he did to its fullest. He always loved God and remained dedicated to Him, even though he failed over and over again because at times (especially in the last several years of his life) he spit the bit out of his mouth and refused to be guided by His Master (something Jesus never did).

It is a reality of our fallen humanity that even the best of God's worshippers and leaders here on earth experience enormous failures (some publically visible, some hidden). In fact I would say that significant failures are probably part and parcel of those who are the MOST zealous for the Lord. We see that negative side of the most zealous even among the Apostles as Peter denies knowing the Lord on 3 occasions. And yet, since our earthly day-to-day behavior is thankfully NOT the measure of what saves us, we get this truly head-scratching statement from Yeshua in the Book of Revelation:

(Rev 3:14-17 CJB)

¹⁴ "To the angel of the Messianic Community in Laodicea, write: 'Here is the message from the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the Ruler of God's creation:

¹⁵ "I know what you are doing: you are neither cold nor hot. How I wish you were either one or the other!

¹⁶ So, because you are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of my mouth!

¹⁷ For you keep saying, 'I am rich, I have gotten rich, I don't need a thing!' You don't know that you are the one who is wretched, pitiable, poor, blind and naked!

Have you ever stopped to think about what Christ is communicating, here? He is saying that He has more acceptance for those who are super-cold or super-hot than for those who are slumbering comfortably in the middle and thinking everything is just fine. David ran super-hot and super-cold; but never was he on the fence! What is being identified and rejected by Messiah Yeshua is the lack of passion for God and thus the embracing of a comfortable but fruitless passivity. A passionless passive Believer is called by Our Lord "wretched, pitiable, poor, blind and naked". Would you like to stand before God and be told that He sees you as wretched and pitiable, all the while thinking that you are well accepted and in good standing with the Almighty?

As humans our passion will at times lead us to greatly pious works and at other times to greatly impious wrongs. David swung both directions with equal fervor. But always, he maintained his trust and devotion for God and so God never “vomited him out of my mouth”. This is by no means a mulligan for a passionate Believer to go out and do wrong and be prideful of it or smug in it. Or as Paul says, “do not say let’s sin more so that we can receive more grace”. Rather it is as Yeshua says a couple of verses later in that same Revelation 3 chapter:

(Rev 3:19 CJB)

¹⁹ As for me, I rebuke and discipline everyone I love; so exert yourselves, and turn from your sins!

Exert yourselves; this is nothing more than the Revelation Messiah repeating in a more modern way the ***Shema*** of Deuteronomy 6.

(Deu 6:4-5 CJB)

⁴ "Sh'ma, Yisra'el! ADONAI Eloheinu, ADONAI echad [Hear, Isra'el! ADONAI our God, ADONAI is one];

⁵ and you are to love ADONAI your God with all your heart, all your being and all your resources.

Here then is the Scriptural definition of the term “exert”: for a Believer to exert oneself is to love God with all our heart, being, and resources. Everything, all the time, in fullest measure. This exertion is called passion and zeal in the Bible. It is an attitude and an action. So don’t ever think that taking the nice safe viewpoint that if I do nothing, I’ll do nothing wrong; that although I’m not really actively serving God, I’m also not actively committing bad behavior or direct trespasses. Christ says that when it comes to living out our lives for Him, doing nothing is far worse than doing something wrong. He WILL rebuke and punish those zealots who do wrong, but it will be because He continues to love you, not because He rejects you. On the other hand, for the utterly passive non-passionate Believers, it is YOU who are in the danger zone. Become passive and indifferent enough and He will reject you. Where that line is I do not know; but it is there and I recommend we all stay far from it.

So as we continue to learn about King David, remember this. On the Passion-o-Meter he was

of the highest highs and the lowest lows, and God blessed him for his highs and cursed him for his lows. But NEVER did God “vomit him out of my mouth”. David exerted himself and had a burning passion for God even if much too often it became misdirected and he fell into sin. **God-principle:** Exert yourself in your relationship with the Lord.

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Absalom is dead and David is inconsolable. He has withdrawn into himself, turned bitter, and nothing else or anyone else matters. Life seems not worth the living. He is wandering around **Machanayim** weeping, crying out Absalom’s name; this is not what the people or the army expected. And the general of David’s victorious army, Joab, finds it grossly inappropriate that not only would Israel’s King appear in public so weak and distraught but that his ranting and desolation is causing the troops to feel ashamed instead of feeling vindicated. They don’t deserve this; rather they deserve the king’s admiration and thanks for winning a battle in which they were outnumbered and outmanned.

In verse 5 we have David covering his face and crying over **Avishalom**; this is not meant for us to picture David putting his face in his hands and weeping, tears seeping through closed fingers. The Hebrew word for covering as used here is **la’at** and it means to cover as in the sense of wrapping around or covering over. Rather he covered over his head, probably with a Tallit, a prayer shawl or something similar. It was a customary mourning tradition for a Hebrew, male or female, to cover their heads and faces when grieving (and we saw this same idea when David was fleeing from Jerusalem back in chapter 15):

^{CJB} **2 Samuel 15:30** *David continued up the road to the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went up, head covered and barefoot; and all the people with him had their heads covered and wept as they went up.*

So we are to understand that Joab’s anger with David had mostly to do with David grieving when celebration should have been the order of the day. The rebellion has been put down and David is ready to reassume his throne, but the army is conflicted: have they done right or have they done wrong and are now in for punishment? Moral is collapsing and the disillusioned loyalist army is on the verge of disintegrating and going home.

Verse 6 begins a conversation with **Yo'av** giving it to David with both barrels. But even though he felt free to unload upon the king Joab did it in private as they went inside to a guard house of some sort. Joab, as 2nd in command, felt he had the right (if not duty) to snap David back to reality since he had commanded David's military for well over 2 decades. In a nutshell **Yo'av** tells David that his priorities are seriously reversed. David hates those who love him, and loves those who hate him. We must take this in the understanding of the times; this is NOT about the emotions of love and hate. Rather this is political in nature and in this era love and hate were common political terms. The term to "love" means to be loyal to the throne, and the term to "hate" means to be disloyal to the throne (the opposition forces). In fact, says **Yo'av**, you are making it clear that it would have pleased you more if **Avishalom** had survived but all of David's loyal men had died and the battle for the Kingdom was lost!

Joab is essentially telling David that in a war between good and evil only one side can win. There is no such thing as middle ground. You can't kill the army of the wicked usurper without also killing the usurper. This is a truth that modern day politicians (especially in the Western world) have completely abandoned and it has brought nothing but incomplete victories, and we wind up having to re-fight the same wars and same evil dictators over and over again with great loss of life to the combatants and often innocent civilian populations. In fact we no longer even want to frame modern wars as good versus evil, but rather in terms of political or social ideology and "way of life". David had become pure politician and was more interested in the nuances of outcomes; but Joab was a general and had no interest in anything but a decisive victory.

So in verse 8 David is told to act immediately and stop this nonsense or he was going to wind up with no army at all. Even the self-absorbed David understood that **Yo'av** was right so he went and sat at the city gate as a public display of being with his men (but it was most insincere).

Now the narrative shifts to what was happening with the remainder of Absalom's forces. They fled, each going back to their own home within the tribal territory of whatever tribe they represented. It is here that we begin to see what is either a prophetic picture of the restoration of God's anointed Messiah to his own people (that is, of Messiah Yeshua to his own people, the Jews, who have generally rejected Him) or it is a story full of very interesting parallels that at least reminds us of this coming restoration. My personal opinion is that this is prophetic.

The 10 northern tribes (most of which were supporting Absalom) have a meeting and discuss what to do now that their leader, Absalom, is dead and their rebellion has lost. And the thought is that even though David has essentially lost his crown and is now living across the Jordan,

still he is the same man who, years earlier, fearlessly led the battle against the Philistines and freed Israel from their oppression. Bottom line: hey, we could do worse. Even though their hope was for Absalom to be the new king, since he is now dead doesn't it make sense to invite David to come back into power? Thus the 10 northern tribes reluctantly decided to make it known that they wanted David to resume his monarchy over them.

However David didn't want to return to power until his own people (Judah) also let it be known that they wanted him back. The two High Priests (who had remained loyal to David) were apparently still back in Jerusalem at this time and so David sent word to them to assemble the leaders of the tribe of Judah and ask them why they hadn't approached David about returning. After all, if the 10 tribes wanted him back and they were NOT directly related to David (other than through their ancient ancestor Jacob), why wouldn't his direct relatives (Judah) want him back so very much more? And then verse 13 has David making this poignant remark that ought to remind us of Yeshua and His torn relationship with His own people, the tribe of Judah:

CJB 2 Samuel 19:13 *You are my kinsmen, my flesh and bone; so why are you the last to bring back the king?'*

How can we not see Messiah in this?

(Mat 23:37-39 CJB)

³⁷ *"Yerushalayim! Yerushalayim! You kill the prophets! You stone those who are sent to you! How often I wanted to gather your children, just as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but you refused!"*

³⁸ *Look! God is abandoning your house to you, leaving it desolate.*

³⁹ *For I tell you, from now on, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of ADONAI.'"*

And we know from the New Testament that it will be the Jewish people (who were actually the first to accept to Yeshua) who will also be the last nation of people who finally re-accept their own Messiah, and one especially revealing Scripture that explains that is in Romans 11.

(Rom 11:25-27 CJB)

²⁵ *For, brothers, I want you to understand this truth which God formerly concealed but has now revealed, so that you won't imagine you know more than you actually do. It is that stoniness, to a degree, has come upon Isra'el, until the Gentile world enters in its fullness;*

²⁶ *and that it is in this way that all Isra'el will be saved. As the Tanakh says, "Out of Tziyon will come the Redeemer; he will turn away ungodliness from Ya'akov*

²⁷ *and this will be my covenant with them,... when I take away their sins."*

So here we have a picture of David asking his own flesh and bone, his own tribe of Judah, why is it that of all people you are the very LAST ones to invite me into your lives and to be God's anointed ruler over you when I return? The implication of course is that since Judah is David's tribe, why wouldn't they see the benefit in having one of their own as the King of God's Kingdom? And Christ is asking exactly the same thing. And it is interesting to remember that it was among the Jews of the tribe of Judah that Absalom's rebellion against God's anointed King David began, and only then spread to the other tribes. And of course that is how it was for Yeshua, God's eternal anointed king, that He was rejected by the leadership of His own tribe and then that rejection spread.

Then in verse 14 David makes a terrible and vindictive decision, showing that he is still firmly stuck on that dark track that he's been on for some time. He asks **Amasa**, who was the general of Absalom's rebel army, to come and be his commander. After all, **Amasa** was not just a Judahite but he was also a close relative of David on his sister's side. That said, **Amasa** was merely an illegitimate cousin. So David was firing his longtime loyal general **Yo'av**, who won the battle for David, and replacing him with the enemy commander who was routed! Why? Retribution; this was all about Joab allowing Absalom to be killed. What a slap in the face not merely to **Yo'av** but to David's entire army.

All that being the case, David's overture to Judah succeeded in causing Judah to ask for David to return and be their king. Thus in verse 16 we find David on his way back to Jerusalem, and the leading men of Judah went out to meet him. This was far more than merely

the Jewish welcome wagon; notice that the place of David's crossing the Jordan was at Gilgal. There were many good crossings to ford the Jordan; why do it at Gilgal? Gilgal was nearly on the banks of the Jordan River and it was a historically and spiritually important place for Israel. It was there that **Sha'ul** had been anointed the first King of Israel, and also there that Samuel took the throne away from him. Gilgal had a sanctuary located there and at this time was in the territory of Benjamin, which seemed to be mostly allied with Judah but it also had good relations with the 10 northern tribes. Gilgal was holy for all 12 tribes and although it is not specifically stated, the context makes it apparent that there was a re-coronation ceremony of some sort at Gilgal for David. No doubt there was a major assembly of leadership of the 12 tribes to affirm David's resumption of his monarchy. This would have been needed as this was, after all, essentially a peace settlement in the aftermath of a Civil War.

David is greeted by his kinsmen, crosses over and is instantly confronted by **Shimei**, the old man from the tribe of Benjamin who had cursed David and thrown dirt and rocks at him several weeks earlier. What we have in these next few passages is a series of meetings with characters that David had met on his way out of Jerusalem as he headed for exile. Now the entire process is reversed as his restoration is underway and he meets the same people as he triumphantly returns.

Before we get to that, however, I'd like to show you yet another parallel (or perhaps prophecy) of Yeshua's return to His own land and His own people that is still in our future. Who hasn't tried to form a mental picture of the following stunning End Times prophecy as revealed to us in the Book of Matthew.

(Mat 24:23-27 CJB)

²³ ***"At that time, if someone says to you, 'Look! Here's the Messiah!' or, 'There he is!' don't believe him.***

²⁴ ***For there will appear false Messiahs and false prophets performing great miracles-amazing things!- so as to fool even the chosen, if possible.***

²⁵ ***There! I have told you in advance!***

²⁶ ***So if people say to you, 'Listen! He's out in the desert!' don't go; or, 'Look! He's hidden away in a secret room!' don't believe it.***

²⁷ ***For when the Son of Man does come, it will be like lightning that flashes out of the***

east and fills the sky to the western horizon.

Evangelical Christians quote this all the time but it always puzzled me; since when does lightning flash from the east to the west? That's no more true in Israel than it is in Florida or anywhere else for that matter. So is that just an ancient Hebraic saying of some sort? There is no evidence of it being an old traditional saying. Rather, I think it is prophetic fulfillment; but prophetic of what?

Here we have David returning to Jerusalem from what direction? From the east to the west. God's anointed is returning to the throne but he is coming quickly from the east towards the west. And as I've taught you since early in Genesis, always pay attention to the direction east in the Bible, there is usually some important significance that is attached. I think Christ's return is being prophesied in 2nd Samuel 19 as David returns to Jerusalem, right down to the direction of the return. We'll see more evidence of this shortly.

In any case the aged **Shimei** joins the leaders of Judah at the river bank to greet David. Of course **Shimei** is taking no chances and is accompanied by 1000 of his fellow Benjamites. And guess who else shows up? **Tziva**, **Mephibosheth's** estate steward, the one who brought David food and wine for his exodus and told David that essentially his master **Mephibosheth** was too busy to come to pay his respects to David and besides he considered this as the moment when the kingship would be returned to a member of Saul's family (himself!). Recall that the hurt and angry David told **Tziva** that as a result of this offense all that belonged to **Mephibosheth** was now given to **Tziva** (no doubt the very thing **Tziva** had schemed for).

Shimei who had cursed King David was now in a vulnerable position. The rebellion (that he openly supported) had failed. One of David's army commanders had wanted to behead **Shimei** for cursing David, but David decided not to since this exile was undoubtedly the handiwork of Yehoveh so it seemed wrong to kill the one who was merely carrying out God's will. Now here this old man is throwing himself on the King's mercy, asking David to forget his offense.

Let me give you some background. Today when we think of cursing at someone, we think of saying bad words as an insult (just getting in our 2 cents worth). It offends the recipient but they are merely words. But in David's day cursing was not about insults, it was very serious business and designed to cause damage. It was the formal issuance of a divine curse and it was meant to have a visible and tangible effect. It was believed that if a person took the strong

action of issuing a curse against you (that automatically invoked the name of that person's god), then it was likely that the nature of the curse would come to pass. It was expected that a curse would lead to something bad happening to the cursed person, and so issuing a curse isn't something that happened except in the worst circumstance. That **Shimei** would be so bold as to issue a curse directly to the face of the King of Israel and still be left alive was an amazing show of restraint by David. But with David's victorious return it also showed to **Shimei** that his curse held no power over David, so that unnerved **Shimei**.

Now here is **Shimei** asking for forgiveness for the usually unforgivable. Why would he think he ought to present himself to David rather than running into hiding and avoiding him? Actually **Shimei** timed this event perfectly. Recall that I told you that David chose Gilgal to cross back over into the Promised Land because there would be a re-coronation ceremony. It was standard in the Middle East that on the day of a King's coronation he would give out gifts to his subjects to start things off on the right foot. But it was also the day that pardons would be issued for crimes against the state. It's not at all unlike how here in the USA and outgoing President will, in his last few days in office, issue pardons to people concerning matters that would be too politically radioactive for a sitting President to deal with. But in David's day, the process was reversed and it was the incoming leader who offered the pardons. Shimei was assuming that David would not have him executed on the day of his coronation.

However **Avishai**, one of David's commanders, wasn't impressed and told David that **Shimei** should be summarily executed. David responds in verse 23:

^{CJB} **2 Samuel 19:23** *But David said, "What do I have in common with you, you sons of Tz'ruyah? Why have you become my adversaries today? Should anyone in Isra'el be put to death today? Don't I know that today I am king over Isra'el?"*

When David says that he knows that "today" I am king over Israel, it is meant to be taken literally. This conversation was either immediately before or immediately following his re-coronation ceremony at Gilgal and so David was merely following the long standing tradition of a new king handing out pardons. David then vows to **Shimei** that he won't be put to death. But David is not to be trusted. All David seemed to want anymore was to hang on to his bitterness and plot revenge. This pardon for **Shimei** was merely a political calculation accompanied with a clever technicality. When in a few more weeks we begin our study of 1st Kings we read this:

CJB **1 Kings 2:1** *The time came near for David to die; so he commissioned Shlomo his son as follows:*

² *"I am going the way of all the earth. Therefore, be strong; show yourself a man.*

So its a few years later and David is on his deathbed. Solomon is about to take over as King and David starts issuing his final instructions. A few verses down in this same chapter we read:

(1Ki 2:8-10 CJB)

⁸ *"Finally, you have with you Shim'i the son of Gera the Binyamini, from Bachurim. He laid a terrible curse on me when I was on my way to Machanayim; but he came down to meet me at the Yarden; so I swore to him by ADONAI that I would not have him put to death with the sword.*

⁹ *Now, however, you should not let him go unpunished. You are a wise man, and you will know what you should do to him- you will bring his gray head down to the grave with blood."*

¹⁰ *Then David slept with his ancestors and was buried in the City of David.*

David promised that HE wouldn't execute **Shimei**, but he didn't promise that somebody else wouldn't execute him. So David commissions his son Solomon with this duty (and Solomon carries it out).

We'll continue with this fascinating chapter next time.