

Name:

Year:

Monday (Read 2 Samuel 15: 1- 12)

Absalom returned to Jerusalem, not for the sake of his longing for the forgiveness and love of his father, but for his own fame and glory to take his throne, whatever the cost.

David was advancing in years and his preoccupation with war and his family problems may have delayed the administration of justice. In this Absalom saw the opportunity to work his way into winning over the people of Israel and eventually become kings by any means possible.

St. John Chrysostom says: "Look how Absalom was crafty in his deception, to steal the hearts of people, unlike the honesty of his father ! But you should also look to the end of each of them: Look how Absalom, in absolute folly, was only planning to harm his father, to end up becoming blind in every thing else; While David was the contrary to that; For "He who walks with integrity walks securely" (Proverb 10: 9).

Danger of Vain Glory

"Be humble in your own eyes, to behold the glory of God within you. Where humility takes root; there, the glory of God sets forth. If you strive to be despised by everyone, God will glorify you. If you have humility in your heart, God will reveal to you his glory in your heart.

Be despised in your greatness; and not great in your lowliness. Do not seek to become dignified, while you are full of wounds inside. Reject dignity, to become dignified; and do not love it, lest you become rejected. **Whoever seeks dignity, it will run away from him; and who runs away from dignity, will be chased by it;** and everyone will proclaim his humility. Run away from vainglory, to get glorified; Fear pride to get great".

St. (Mar) Isaac the Syrian

Tuesday (Read 2 Samuel 15: 13-37)

David realised the danger early; and probably recalled his sin, and the words of the Lord to him; saying: "The sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me; ... Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house" (2 Samuel 12: 10, 11). Thus he fled.

St Augustine likens David's adversary of the betrayal of his son with Jesus and the betrayal of Judas.

David wanted all his movements to be under the shadow of the Lord Himself as his Saviour; So he asked 'Zadok' the priest and the Levites to bring the ark, until all the people have crossed; Yet once the crossing came to an end, he did not want to take it with him out of Jerusalem, but requested its return , believing that God, if it pleases Him, will allow him to return to where the ark is -- as the ark is symbol of the divine presence.

In verse 32 we see that David worships and gives thanks to God amongst all his afflictions. Again we see David's great faith, knowing that God who laid this hardship on him is still with him.

Be strong and courageous...
for the LORD your God is with you
Wherever you go.
- Joshua 1:9



Wednesday (Read 2 Samuel 16: 1-14)

Shimei was throwing stones at David as though at a dog, but his words had no truth. David had never fought the house of Saul to take away his throne. But, on the contrary he opposed Saul's pursuit with forgiveness. He never stretched his hand to Saul or his children but sought to do them favour.

We can but only marvel at David's acceptance to Shimei's cursing; he even shows joy! He felt that those curses were allowed by God to chastise him because of his sin. And as St. John Chrysostom says: "If someone insulted you saying, 'You adulterer !', Why should you become angry ? Haven't you ever had a thought of adultery or of a wicked lust in your youth ? Count that as a chastisement for the thoughts of your youth".

David also counted those curses as an opportunity for humiliation, as a way to gain the mercies from God. Can I do the same?



Thursday (Read 2 Samuel 16: 15-23)

The women David left behind to take care of the palace (concubines) were more like servants than wives. Because they belonged to David, it was a tremendous insult for Absalom to be with them. This was a way for Absalom to show that he intended to take over his father's throne.

Father Tadros Malaty says "Ahithophel's first counsel to Absalom, was to go in to his father's concubines, whom he left to keep the house. Absalom did that on the roof, for everyone to see, and to make sure that his hatred against David has reached its climax, and that there would be no chance for reconciliation with him".



Naming Names

Ahitophel- was a King David's counselor, but here he deserts King David for Absalom.

Hushai- is a friend of David and acts a spy against Absalom.

Friday (Read 2 Samuel 17: 1-14)

Ahithophel advises to Absalom to pursue David and his men. Absalom considers this advice as good, but as it wasn't good enough so he calls Hushai to hear what he thinks as well. Hushai advises the following:

- a. David is a man of war and that a fierce battle would take place (vs 8)
- b. Doing things in a hurry would not benefit Absalom as he needs to prepare if he wants to go against David who is experienced (vs 10)
- c. He doesn't need to restrict the army to only 12,000 men (vs 12 & 13)
- d. Killing David alone will not solve all his problems, but needs to get rid of all David's men (vs 12)
- e. That Absalom also goes to battle in person (vs 11)

Absalom listens to Hushai's advice rather than Ahithophel. The very fact of the matter though is that this was all in the hands of God, who allowed these events- as God is the true rescuer of David. When you have issues in your life, do you trust that God can and will save you from all the storms?

Saturday (Read 2 Samuel 17: 15-29)

Hushai through the priests, informs David of what happened.

Father Tadros Malaty says "Absalom did not follow the counsel of the arrogant Ahithophel; who set forth to his house, where he hanged himself and died, after putting his household in order (2 Samuel 17: 23). He did that for two main reasons: Firstly, for the sake of his personal dignity; his feelings having been hurt by the acceptance of the counsel of someone else. And secondly, because he realized that Hushai's counsel would definitely lead to the destruction of Absalom; in which case the return of David to his throne, would imply his execution as a traitor. Ahithophel turned into a symbol of Judas, the traitor who likewise, hanged himself"

But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; They will run & not grow weary, They will walk and not be faint. ^{Isaiah} 40:31