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**Day 105 – April 15**

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## **Israel as a Monarchy (1100 – 930 BCE)**

### ***Absalom's Rebellion***

**Readings: *2 Samuel 19:5-20:36***

#### ***Reflections:***

- Joab as David's trusted commander tells him the hard truth: "You love those who hate you and hate those who love you. I see that you would be pleased if Absalom was alive today and all of us were dead." This is some very hard truth but this is exactly what David has demonstrated multiple times. David submits and attempts to reach out and encourage his soldiers and citizens. But his reputation is tarnished and not everyone is sure they are on his side. Finally he wins over part of Israel, the tribe of Judah.
- Like other enemies of David, David extends mercy to Shimei. He also extends mercy again to Mephibosheth as well as Barzillai. This again shows a king full of grace and mercy to his enemies and their descendants.
- Judah's acceptance arouses the rest of Israel to come to David but in the end Sheba leads a rebellion against David that divides the nation. Judah remains loyal to David but the rest of the nation turns away from him.
- The concubines that remained at the palace and had publicly slept with Absalom are spared and allowed to continue but are no longer David's lovers. They now must live as widows. This again is meant to show David's mercy. He could have had them all executed but he doesn't. He allows them to continue their life in confinement but he will not sleep with them.
- David is afraid of Sheba and believes he will bring more disaster on the nation and his kingship than Absalom did. He sends out Abishai and Joab and the men to hunt down Sheba. Joab slays Amasa in a very gory account. After David's men surround the city where Sheba is hiding, the people inside turn on Sheba to save their own lives. They cut off his head and throw it over the wall in yet another gory story.
- The stories of David's mercy and the stories of these killings once again show us an incredible contrast between mercy and judgment. We are struck by the mercilessness of Joab and war. We are also struck by David's grace. Again, David has his weaknesses and failings but we see in him a different heart on many occasions. So often he shows mercy

when others would have lashed out in vengeance. His life will help set the stage for the coming Messiah who will teach us to no longer “love our neighbor but hate our enemy” but to “love our enemy, and do good to those who persecute you.” (See Luke 6:27-36)

- The nation is finally reorganized and a bit of peace apparently is restored.