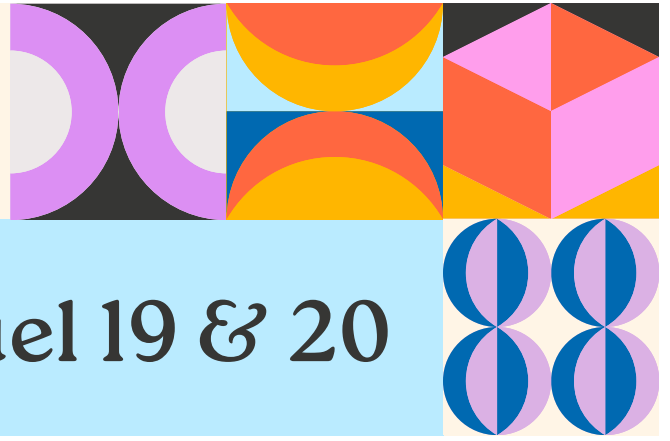


Preparation for Bringing Back the King



2 Samuel 19 & 20

Key Bible Texts	2 Samuel 19 & 20
Key Bible Verse(s)	“And Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?” (2 Samuel 19:10)

Background to the Study

After Absalom’s insurrection, David was in exile and mourning his son's death. Amid the chaos in Israel, it was crucial for the king to return to Jerusalem and unite the people. Joab reproved David for his inaction and urged him to rise and lead. David then sat at the city gate, where the people, who had once supported Absalom, now called for David’s return to the throne. However, the people of Judah were hesitant. To strengthen his position, David replaced Joab with Amasa, Absalom’s former general, to command his army. This helped unite the army, especially the people of Judah, who were influenced by Amasa.

On David’s return, several individuals sought to make peace with him. Shimei, who had previously cursed David (16:5-6), begged for forgiveness, which David granted, though he later advised Solomon to execute him (1 Kings 2:8-9). David was uncertain whether Ziba or Mephibosheth was telling the truth regarding their dispute over land. He decided that they should divide it, but Mephibosheth surrendered his share to Ziba. David also wanted to honour Barzillai, who had supported him during his exile, but Barzillai requested that the honour be given to his son, Chimham, which David accepted. Despite David’s return, tensions remained between the people of Judah and the other tribes of Israel.

In 2 Samuel 20, Sheba, a leader from the northern tribes, rebelled against David, urging the northern army to reject him. David moved quickly to prevent another insurrection and sent troops after Sheba. Sheba’s rebellion was quickly quelled when he was killed in Abel. As part of his political restoration, David secluded his ten concubines, whom Absalom had violated, to maintain his authority. Amasa, whom David had appointed as commander, failed to gather the Judean troops in time, so David instructed Abishai, Joab’s brother, to pursue Sheba instead. Amasa eventually met Joab and Abishai at Gibeon, and Joab, who had previously killed Abner and Absalom against David’s wishes, took the opportunity to eliminate Amasa. Joab may have felt that if he eliminated Amasa, he could regain his position as captain. Joab was a man who preferred to destroy those who stood in his way. David gave in to Joab’s “power tactics,” and Joab was reappointed captain of the host.

TESTIMONIES FROM OUR DAY

My son and daughter-in-law just came back from Hawaii, where they celebrated their tenth anniversary. They had been planning this trip for over a year. As the flight date drew near, suitcases were pulled out, clothing was chosen and packed, and a list of miscellaneous items was checked off. We devote much time and energy into planning and preparing for a trip. How much more we should be sure we are ready for the return of our King! We must make plans now to meet Him. Various preparations are necessary, such as restitutions, consecrations, and being equipped for His service. We must lay aside weights and cares of this world if we are to get a clear vision of the glory that awaits us.

Through all of our preparation, we need to feel anticipation for Christ's coming. Just as Israel began to call for their king to come back and take possession of his throne in order to bring peace back to their land, we need to long for Jesus to come so that He may set up His Kingdom and bring peace to this world. As we are preparing and anticipating, we also need to spread the Gospel to others who have not yet begun their preparations. They need to know that the King will soon be here, and that is vital for them to be ready for His return. Every effort put into getting ready for Heaven will be worth it!

"If you don't vote against this grant proposal, I will resign as your vice president!" The woman standing in my office had issued her ultimatum. As president of the academic senate at a large West Coast college, I frequently deal with difficult administrators, irate staff, and outspoken faculty. But her words were especially distressing. Our disagreement would clearly strain both our personal and professional relationship. I know I'm not alone in facing job stress, office politics, and workplace conflicts.

It's comforting to remember that the challenges we face today are not unlike those faced by King David. In 2 Samuel 20, David dealt with Sheba's rebellion, Amasa's incompetence, and Joab's violence—events that were unpleasant and gruesome. God's Word acknowledges the difficult situations we may encounter. You might face a rebellious "Sheba" at church, an incompetent "Amasa" at work, or a manipulative "Joab" in your life. While we can't control the actions of others, like David, we can keep our eyes on God, affirming, "God is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer."

A Closer Look

Question 1

David's grief for Absalom was so intense that it appeared he did not appreciate the military victory that had been won. Joab pointed out that there would be terrible consequences if David did not commend the troops for their achievement. For the sake of political strategy, he urged David to go and "speak comfortably unto thy servants." What was the result? 2 Samuel 19:8

Question 2

Why did David act in such a generous manner to Shimei? II Samuel 19:18-23

Question 3

Why did Judah seem more hesitant than the other tribes to restore David to the throne? II Samuel 19:9-12

Question 4

What things could hinder our looking with anticipation for our King to return?

Question 5

What specific details in the narrative indicate that the historian/writer wants us to be repulsed by the violence of Joab? II Samuel 20:11-15

Question 6

As Christians, how can we influence those around us to eschew violence and seek peaceful solutions to problems? (The wise woman of Abel) II Samuel 20:15-22

Take Home

Focusing on the coming of Jesus rather than the things of this world, will help us make sure we are ready to meet Him. When people seem to be out of control around you, remember that there is a God in Heaven and in your heart who is most certainly in control. His ways are being worked out even in the chaotic violence and confusion that surrounds us.