

Significant Lessons From The Seemingly Insignificant

#4 God's 3 "Angels": Shobi, Machir, Barzillai

II Sam. 17:27a And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, ... 2 camps or 2 hosts

- This is where Jacob was met by a band of angels prior to his encounter with Esau.

Gen. 32:1-2 And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. ² And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

1. This vision came at a crisis in Jacob's life. He had just left Laban's house and was traveling with a long caravan, consisting of wives, children, servants and all his wealth turned into cattle.

2. On his journey home, he travels close by the country of Esau whom he fears. His fear grew.

3. Suddenly a bright-harnessed army of angels meets him.

4. In a glow of confident joy, Jacob calls the place Mahanaim, two camps.

- His camp with helpless women, children and his own frightened and defenseless self.
- A camp revealing a real spiritual presence around him as a bodyguard making an impregnable wall between him and every foe.

5. He was obeying God by returning home. He could say: "I being in the way, the Lord met me."

6. God's delays are merciful as they help us realize our need of Him.

They provide room for the sorrow or burden to work its peaceable fruits.

8. God seems to let us come almost to the edge of the precipice and then, in the nick of time, He stretches out His strong right hand.

9. As in the case of Lazarus, God's delay seemed too late.

Yet the miracle after His delay was the occasion for a more glorious display of His power.

Ps. 37:7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him:

We have all the armies of heaven with us, if we tread the path which God has marked out for us.

In our weakness and trembling commit ourselves to Him.

Many centuries after Jacob's experience at Mahanaim, another trembling fugitive found himself there. David was at his lowest point: downcast and humiliated. He like Jacob, was fearful of the vengeance and anger of one who was related to him by blood.

As he wrote in Ps. 142:4 "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul."

When poor King David was fleeing from the face of Absalom his son, the first place where he made a stand, and where he remained during the rebellion, was Mahanaim.

Ps. 4:8 I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.

II Sam. 17:27-29 And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, ...

that Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon,

and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lodebar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim,

²⁸ Brought beds, and basins, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched corn, and beans, and lentils, and parched pulse,

²⁹ And honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for the people that were with him, to eat: for they said, The people is hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness.

1. David, literally fleeing for his life, was at his lowest point ever.
2. He had been humiliated, driven from his home and was under deadly attack from the enemy
3. A revolt is underway and Absalom and his army are headed to Manahaim.

Consider: He desperately needed encouragement.

Ps. 86:17 Show me a token for good; that they which hate me may see it and be ashamed.

For you Lord have helped me and comforted me.

3. These 3 risked their lives solely to help their king, present gifts and encourage him.

Heb. 3:13 But Exhort One Another Daily while it is called Today;

lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Shobi: This is the only place this name is mentioned. It means "glorious" one.

- I suspect he did look "glorious" to King David.
 - Shobi is the son of "Nahash" which means serpent.

I Sam. 11:1-2 Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabeshgilead: and All The Men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us and we will serve thee.

Nahash the Ammonite answered them, on this condition will I make a covenant with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel."

- Descendant of the Ammonites which were produced by the incestuous relationship between Lot & his daughters. Terrible background!
- God can pluck his servants from all backgrounds. He took a son of a very cruel man and transformed him into a real friend of King David. God's grace!

I Kings 18:3-4 Ahab called Obadiah, which was the governor of his house. Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly: For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.

- God raised up a man in the wicked house of King Ahab to feed & care for His prophets.

Illustration of the truth of Proverbs 16:7:

When a man's ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

Dan. 1:9 Now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of eunuchs.

Otherwise, Daniel could have perhaps been slain for refusing to eat the King's meat.

Machir = Bartered

- Machir's father is Ammiel = "My Kinsman is God."
- Lived in Lodebar = land of no pasture, yet he gave graciously to the fleeing King David.

This is the same man who had harbored the lame grandson of King Saul, Mephibosheth.

He protected and fed him when no one else seemed to care.

Mark 14:8 The woman who anointed Jesus for burial: She has done what she could.

I Cor. 16:15 I beseech you, brethren, you know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints!

Barzillai = "iron-hearted"

Men who will stand strong for the man of God; who do not fear what the enemy can do.

Barzillai is from Gilead which is a rocky region. He is from Rogelim = the place of the "fullers."

Virtues Displayed In His Life:

1. Courageous Loyalty: David desperately needed support and provisions which Barzillai personally brought to the king and his hungry, thirsty followers.

He apparently did not consider the consequences of his actions if Absalom had been successful. If Absalom had become king, Barzillai would have been slain for aiding David.

- "To Barzillai, David was still godly although a fugitive, and his great, loving heart bled for the king as, like a poor panting beast, he hid from his pursuers.

Bountifully he provided David with necessary sustenance as he lay at Mahanaim."

2. His Wide Influence: Barzillai did not squander his wealth on idle pleasures nor hoard it for selfish ends. His position, prestige and purse were beneficially used for others.

Barzillai's loyalty to David continues after the death of Absalom & the end of the rebellion.

II Sam. 19:31-39 And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim, and went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him over Jordan.

³² Now Barzillai was a very aged man, 80 years: and he had provided the king of sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim; for he was a very great man. [wealthy - a great man in possessions.]

³³ And the king said unto Barzillai, Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem.

³⁴ And Barzillai said unto the king, How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem?

³⁵ I am this day 80 years old: and can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king?

³⁶ Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king: and why should the king recompense it me with such a reward?

Consider: Barzillai felt his services were trivial and unworthy of any recompense from David.

3. His Beautiful Old Age: Although not spared the infirmities of old age (II Sam. 19:35), he retained his charm. At eighty years of age his heart of love was deep and broad.

Old John Trapp says of Barzillai as he reached an honored age, "He had lost his color but kept his sweet savor with the rose." May grace be ours to grow old gracefully and beautifully!

³⁷ Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and of my mother. But behold thy servant Chimham;

let him go over with my lord the king; and do to him what shall seem good unto thee.

4. He Anticipated His Death: Barzillai was "not afraid to face the crossing of the bar."

Thus as Alexander Whyte puts it, "Barzillai having shown us how to live, shows us also how to die. Barzillai dies the same devout and noble and magnanimous man he has all his days lived."

If ours is grace to live well, grace will be given to die well.

Even in his final moments with David, Barzillai sought the welfare of others, this time offering a better life for his own servant.

³⁸ And the king answered, Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem good unto thee: and whatsoever thou shalt require of me, that will I do for thee.

³⁹ And all the people went over Jordan. And when the king was come over, the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him; and he returned unto his own place.

1. He maintained an attitude of service and self-sacrifice to God and his fellow men. He took advantage of opportunities to be used by God in the lives of others even in his old age.
2. He saw the need and proceeded to meet the need.
3. His deeds of kindness were done out of love, without expectation of reward or recompense.
4. He offers a powerful example of the legacy one person can have through loving God and serving others during difficult times.
5. God seems to allow special honor to be offered to those who give out of their abundance as well as those who give sacrificially.

II Sam. 19:40 Then the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him: and all the people of Judah conducted the king, and also half the people of Israel.

I Kings 2:7 When David was on his death bed, he charged Solomon to show kindness unto the SONS of Barzillai and let them be of those who eat at the King's table.

Barzillai's kindness, remembered long after his death, was mentioned by the king of Israel.

Jer. 41:17 And they departed, and dwelt in the habitation of Chimham, which is by Bethlehem, to go to enter into Egypt,

The king's servants modeled true service by offering to do whatever David needed them to do.

- Ittai expressed friendship by being a companion to King David.
- Zadok & Abiathar became informants and made sure the King had the information he needed to guarantee his welfare. [v. 24-29]
- Hushai met him on the Mt. Of Olives. He was willing to risk his life to defend David in the presence of his enemies. [II Sam. 15:30-37]
- Barzillai, Shobi & Machir provided necessities and more at Mahanaim.

These people proved to be "sheltering trees" for their friend in his hour of need.

May we press toward the prize of the "well done good and faithful servant."

The 3 Main Valleys Which Provide A Natural Defense For Jerusalem

1. The Gehenna or Hinnom Valley is south of Jerusalem.

a. It marked the tribal border between Benjamin and, on the south, Judah [Joshua 15:8, 18:16].

b. In the late monarchical period, a very sad place in the valley was called Topheth or "fire stove." [Isa. 30:33] Children were presented as burnt offerings [passed children through the fire] to Molech and other Canaanite gods [II Kings 23:10; Jeremiah 7:31-34; II Chron. 28:23, 33:6]. It was a place of tremendous evil for many years.

- c. The name Topheth comes from the Hebrew word toph, meaning "a drum," or "to burn." Possibly both, because the shrieking children sacrificed by the priests to Moloch were drowned out by the sound of beating drums. King Josiah ended this horrible practice [II Kings 23].
- d. In later years, the valley was used for incinerating the corpses of criminals and unclean animals and as a place to burn garbage from the city. A fire was kept constantly burning.
- e. The Gehenna Valley was thus a place of burning sewage, burning flesh, and garbage. It was a dark and dreary place. Maggots and worms crawled through the waste, and the smoke smelled strong and sickening [Isaiah 30:33]. It was a place utterly filthy, disgusting and repulsive to the nose and eyes.
- f. The Dung Gate was situated here.
- g. From these practices, the Greek form "ge hinnom" [Gehenna] came into use as a synonym for Hell. Gehenna is translated "hell" in the KJV in Matt. 5:22-30.
- h. By the time of Jesus Christ, the deep, constantly-burning Valley of Hinnom was also known as the Valley of Gehenna, or Hell, and had taken on a popular image as the place "down there" where the wicked would eventually be cast into the flames for destruction.
- i. Gehenna presented such a vivid image that Jesus used it as a symbolic depiction of hell: a place of eternal torment and constant uncleanness, where the fires never ceased burning and the worms never stopped crawling. [Matt. 10:28; Mark 9:47-48] Gehenna became associated with eternal torment because of the detestable infant sacrifices to Molech.
- j. Jer. 19:6 Therefore, behold, the days come, says the LORD, that this place shall no more be called Tophet, nor The valley of the son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter.

2. The rugged Tyropoean Valley originates in the upper part of the city and passes down beside the western wall of the Temple Mount. It separates Mt. Moriah from Mt. Zion.

- a. It eventually joins the Kidron Valley. This was the main street of Jesus' time. Shops and markets lined the valley with bridges above.

3. The Kidron Valley, [Valley of the Shadow of Death] separates the city from the Mount of Olives. Its name, meaning "dark" or "shady," probably reflects its depth (at least 50 feet deeper than it is today). The Kidron also provided the water resource for Jerusalem's only spring, the Gihon Spring on the eastern slope.

During the Feast of Tabernacles at night, four enormous oil lamps burned in the Temple courtyard. Each lamp had four large bowls of oil on tall stands, with wicks made from worn-out garments of the priests. It is written that "there was not a courtyard in Jerusalem that did not reflect the light" (Mishnah, Sukkoth 5:3). The lights could be seen throughout Jerusalem. However due to the depth and angle, the Kidron Valley remained in shadow; hence, it was called the "Valley of the Shadow of Death," as in Psalm 23:4.

Many believe David wrote Psalm 23 during this event in his life.

Note: Yea, though I walk through the valley of death = valley of deep darkness

David deals with some of the difficult things he experienced during his long walk with the Lord. This message is for mature Christians who have fought battles and carried burdens. There is a fullness of experience about it, and a tone of subdued, quiet confidence which speaks of a heart mellowed by years, and of a faith made sober by many a trial. These 3 deep valleys made Jerusalem feel safe and secure as if God Himself were guarding it. Even Titus, the Roman General who destroyed the city in 70 AD said, "If it had not been for the internal dissensions, the city could never have been taken." God Himself is still on guard for Jerusalem as El Shaddai.

In I Kings 8:28-29, Solomon quotes the Lord as stating that His Name shall be in the land where Solomon is to build the House of God:

"That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place."

Interesting Points: The three valleys form the Hebrew letter "Shin" which represents God's name as in "El Shaddai" = God Almighty; ALL Sufficient One.

It represents the unspeakable name of the one and only God, YAHWEH.

Shaddai = the keeper of the doors of Israel

I Kings 11:36 I will give one tribe to his son so that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the City Where I Chose To Put My Name.

Jerusalem literally sits on the name of God.

