

17.34 David Returns to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 19:1–40)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows
Brackets [. . .] indicate a remark to the teacher that should not be read aloud, or they show answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach: Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- (None for this lesson)

Scripture: (ESV)

2 Samuel 19:1 It was told Joab, “Behold, the king is weeping and mourning for Absalom.” 2 So the victory that day was turned into mourning for all the people, for the people heard that day, “The king is grieving for his son.” 3 And the people stole into the city that day as people steal in who are ashamed when they flee in battle. 4 The king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, “O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!” 5 Then Joab came into the house to the king and said, “You have today covered with shame the faces of all your servants, who have this day saved your life and the lives of your sons and your daughters and the lives of your wives and your concubines, 6 because you love those who hate you and hate those who love you. For you have made it clear today that commanders and servants are nothing to you, for today I know that if Absalom were alive and all of us were dead today, then you would be pleased. 7 Now therefore arise, go out and speak kindly to your servants, for I swear by the Lord, if you do not go, not a man will stay with you this night, and this will be worse for you than all the evil that has come upon you from your youth until now.” 8 Then the king arose and took his seat in the gate. And the people were all told, “Behold, the king is sitting in the gate.” And all the people came before the king.

Now Israel had fled every man to his own home. 9 And all the people were arguing throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, “The king delivered us from the hand of our enemies and saved us from the hand of the Philistines, and now he has fled out of the land from Absalom. 10 But Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why do you say nothing about bringing the king back?”

11 And King David sent this message to Zadok and Abiathar the priests: “Say to the elders of Judah, ‘Why should you be the last to bring the king back to his house, when the word of all Israel has come to the king? 12 You are my brothers; you are my bone and my flesh. Why then should you be the last to bring back the king?’ 13 And say to Amasa, ‘Are you not my bone and my flesh? God do so to me and more also, if you are not commander of my army from now on in place of Joab.’” 14 And he swayed the heart of all the men of Judah as one man, so that they sent word to the king, “Return, both you and all your servants.” 15 So the king came back to the Jordan, and Judah came to Gilgal to meet the king and to bring the king over the Jordan.

16 And Shimei the son of Gera, the Benjaminite, from Bahurim, hurried to come down with the men of Judah to meet King David. 17 And with him were a thousand men from Benjamin. And Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, with his fifteen sons and his twenty servants, rushed down to the Jordan before the king, 18 and they crossed the ford to bring over the king’s household and to do his pleasure. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, as he was about to cross the Jordan, 19 and said to the king, “Let not my lord hold me guilty or remember how your servant did wrong on the day my lord the king left Jerusalem. Do not let the king take it to heart. 20 For your servant knows that I have sinned. Therefore, behold, I have come this day, the first of all the house of Joseph to come down to meet my lord the king.” 21 Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered, “Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the Lord’s anointed?” 22 But David said, “What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah, that you should this day be as an adversary to me? Shall anyone be put to death in Israel this day? For do I not know that I am this day king over Israel?” 23 And the king said to Shimei, “You shall not die.” And the king gave him his oath.

24 And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king. He had neither taken care of his feet nor trimmed his beard nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came back in safety. 25 And when he came to Jerusalem to meet the king, the king said to him, “Why did you not go with me, Mephibosheth?” 26 He answered, “My lord, O king, my servant deceived me, for your servant said to him, ‘I will saddle a donkey for myself, that I may ride on it and go with the king.’ For your servant is lame. 27 He has slandered your servant to my lord the king. But my lord the king is like the angel of God; do therefore what seems good to you. 28 For all my father’s house were but men doomed to death before my lord the king, but you set your servant among those who eat at your table. What further right have I, then, to cry to the king?” 29 And the king said to him, “Why speak any more of your affairs? I have decided: you and Ziba shall divide the land.” 30 And Mephibosheth said to the king, “Oh, let him take it all, since my lord the king has come safely home.”

31 Now Barzillai the Gileadite had come down from Rogelim, and he went on with the king to the Jordan, to escort him over the Jordan. 32 Barzillai was a very aged man, eighty years old. He had provided the king with food while he stayed at Mahanaim, for he was a very wealthy man. 33 And the king said to Barzillai, “Come over with me, and I will provide for you with me in Jerusalem.” 34 But Barzillai said to the king, “How many years have I still to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? 35 I am this day eighty years old. Can I discern what is pleasant and what is not? Can your servant taste what he eats or what he drinks? Can I still listen to the voice of singing men and singing women? Why then should your servant be an added burden to my lord the king? 36 Your servant will go a little way over the Jordan with the king. Why should the king repay me with such a reward? 37 Please let your servant return, that I may die in my own city near the grave of my father and my mother. But here is your servant Chimham. Let him go over with my lord the king, and do for him whatever seems good to you.” 38 And the king answered, “Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do for him whatever seems good to you, and all that you desire of me I will do for you.” 39 Then all the people went over the Jordan, and the king went over. And the king kissed Barzillai and blessed him, and he returned to his own home. 40 The king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him. All the people of Judah, and also half the people of Israel, brought the king on his way.

Introduction/Review:

Let’s imagine for a minute an army returning to its king after a victory. Pretend how they would act, what they would say. [Lead students in the following example if necessary.] “Yippee! We won the war. Our king still reigns! He will be happy with us!”

Now, suppose you hadn’t won the victory. Pretend how you might act. [Lead students in the following scenario:] Slink into the city, hoping no one sees you. Someone says, “Aren’t you a soldier?” “Yes, but don’t tell anyone. It looks bad for our king and our country since we lost the war.”

Last week we left David weeping and wailing because Absalom, his son, had died in the war.

Story:

Disheartened soldiers

Now, here come the victorious soldiers back to hear the congratulations of their king. They might be jumping and shouting, excited that the war is over and they’ve won, excited to see the look of pride on their king’s face. But as they approach the city, what loud wailing do they hear coming from the king’s house over the gate? “O Absalom, my son! My son, Absalom! I wish I could have died instead of you! O Absalom, my son, my son!”

When the victorious soldiers heard this, their joyous jumping turned into shameful slinking. It didn’t seem as if the king was happy about their victory.

Someone told Joab about the king’s mournful laments. Joab, David’s army captain and his nephew, always ready to correct David (who sometimes seemed to need correction), went into David’s house and said, “Today you have humiliated the men who have saved your life and the lives of your children and wives. You

love those who hate you and hate those who love you. You have made it clear today that your soldiers mean nothing to you. It seems as if you would have been pleased if Absalom had lived and all of us had died. Now, go out and greet the men. If you don't, these men will leave you before night comes, and you'll have more trouble than you've had in all your life combined."

David did stop his crying and did go down to the city gate. When his men knew he was there, they all met him there. Although the Bible doesn't state it, ✓we assume David congratulated his men for all they had done in fighting to save his life.

Returning king

Meanwhile, the soldiers who had fought for Absalom ran back home. All of Israel [locate] was talking and wondering and arguing: "King David is the man who delivered us from our enemies—like the Philistines. He fought for us then, but when we anointed Absalom to be king, he ran away. Now Absalom is dead, and no one says anything about bringing back the king." They talked about being loyal to David again since Absalom was dead. ✓Apparently, their talk somehow reached the ears of David.

David himself ✓must have been wondering, "Is Israel loyal to me or not since they followed Absalom? They talk about bringing me back but haven't done anything."

So he sent Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, to his own tribe of Judah [locate] with this message: "You are my close relatives. Everyone else is talking about bringing me back. Why should my close relatives be the last to bring me back to the throne in Jerusalem?"

"In addition, tell Amasa, Absalom's army general and one of my other nephews (2 Samuel 17:24), that I promise he can take Joab's place as the general of my army."

All the men of Judah ✓thought, "David is a great king." They sent a message back to David: "Return to Jerusalem. Come on back." So David and all his men began returning and reached the Jordan River.

Friendly greeters

By the time they got to the eastern side of the river, several different people had rushed to meet David and to help him cross the Jordan River. First, The men of Judah. Second, Shimei with the men of Judah, bringing a thousand loyal men of the tribe of Benjamin. Third, Ziba, Mephibosheth's servant with his fifteen sons and twenty servants.

(1) The first one actually to reach and talk to David was Shimei. Do you remember him? If I mention the word *stones*, will you remember? Yes, he is the man who had thrown stones at David, calling David a bloody man and cursing him. Oh, now his attitude was changed! Bowing to the ground before King David, he cried, "Please forgive me. Please do not remember how I did you wrong when you left Jerusalem. I know I have sinned, but I'm the first of all to come before my lord the king."

Abishai, the same nephew who had wanted to take off Shimei's head when he cursed David, now spoke up again. "Shouldn't Shimei be put to death for cursing the Lord's anointed?"

David, ✓perhaps impatiently, replied, "What can I do with you, you sons of Zeruiah, my sister? You are become my adversaries today! Should anyone be put to death on the day I again become king of Israel? Shimei, you shall not die."

(3) Another man came down to meet David on the east side of the Jordan in order to help David cross. This 80-year-old, very wealthy man was Barzillai, one who had provided food and necessities to David and his men while they were in Mahanaim.

David said to him, "Barzillai, you took care of me all this time that I have been gone from Jerusalem. Now, you come with me to Jerusalem, and I will provide for you for the rest of your life."

"Oh," said Barzillai, "I am an old man. I can't taste, see, or hear as I used to. I would be a burden to you."

Just let me go back home to die. If you really want to repay me, take your servant, my son, Chimham [“KIM ham”] and do whatever you wish.”

David said, “Chimham will cross over with me, and I will do for him anything you ask.” After David blessed Barzillai, they fondly parted.

(3) Then the people crossed over the river at Gilgal [locate], probably wading. They included the thousands of David’s soldiers; the men of Israel and of Judah who had met the king; Shimei and his thousand friends; Mephibosheth’s servant, Ziba, and his fifteen sons and twenty servants. Last, on a ferry boat, David and all of his household (children, wives, and servants) crossed the Jordan and returned home to Jerusalem.

(4) When David arrived in Jerusalem, Mephibosheth himself came to greet David. Who is Mephibosheth again? [Jonathan’s lame son who ate at David’s table.] What had Mephibosheth’s servant, Ziba, told David when David had left Jerusalem? [Mephibosheth thought he might now become king.] What had David given the servant Ziba? [All of the fields that had been Mephibosheth’s.]

✓Perhaps David, while he was gone from Jerusalem, had wondered how Mephibosheth could be so ungrateful. However, now, as he looked at Mephibosheth’s appearance—his long beard, his lame feet uncared for, his dirty clothes—and as he heard Mephibosheth’s story, he understood the situation.

“Why didn’t you go with me, Mephibosheth?” David asked.

“My lord, the king,” answered Mephibosheth, “since I am lame, I said, ‘I will have my donkey saddled and bring some food so that I can go with the king.’ But my servant took off with my donkeys and food and slandered my name to my lord, the king. I have not trimmed my beard, washed my clothes, nor cared for my feet since the day you left. You took me in to eat at your table when my grandfather’s descendants deserved nothing but death. You are like an angel of God to do whatever you wish with me now.”

“Well,” said David. “Instead of Ziba’s getting all the land, you and Ziba, your servant, may divide the fields.”

“None of that matters to me,” replied Mephibosheth, “now that my lord, the king, has arrived home safely.”

Yes, David was back home in Jerusalem. But was all going well in the kingdom? No.

Lessons from This Lesson:

- We see Jesus:

David’s sparing the life of undeserving Shimei is a picture of the forgiveness Jesus Christ gives to His children.

Activities:

- Play dough: ferry boat or raft
- Snack: Cheese sticks
- Discuss the picture of Shimei found below bowing to the king with a boat in the background. The people and objects in the picture would not be true to the time of David. Tell students that people of later time periods depicted scenes from the Bible as they might have appeared in their own time. An internet image search of nearly any Bible story will yield other examples.
- Review questions: (Game: Have a flannel board with a strip of blue for the Jordan River dividing the board. Print on paper and back with paper towel the pictures found below of those who accompanied David across the Jordan. For each correct answer, a student may move a picture from the right side to the left side of the Jordan, reserving David and his household for the last. For your information, the following is the actual order: thousands of David’s soldiers; men of Israel and of Judah; Shimei and his thousand friends; Ziba and his fifteen sons and twenty servants; David and all of his household;

Mephibosheth, who remained in Jerusalem and whose card should stay on the left side of the board.)

1. Who rebuked David for lamenting Absalom's death? [Joab.]
2. What did Joab say would happen to David if he didn't immediately encourage his men? [No one would stay with him, and all the evil that had come upon him in his lifetime would not compare to the worse evil that would come to him.]
3. Who was the first man to greet David as he returned to Jerusalem? [Shimei, the one who had cursed David as he fled from Absalom.]
4. Fill in the blank. The king said to Shimei, "You shall not _____." [Die.]
5. Who went back to be near David in Jerusalem instead of the old man, Barzillai? [Barzillai's son, Chimham.]
6. Tell one thing Mephibosheth had not done for himself while David was gone from Jerusalem? [He had neither taken care of his feet, trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes.]

Memory Verse[s]: I heartily recommend the song and visual at [Psalm 139 - NKJV \(thywordcreations.com\)](http://thywordcreations.com).

- Psalm 139:1 O Lord, You have searched me and known me. 2 You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. 3 You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. 4 For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O Lord, You know it altogether. 5 You have hedged me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it.

7 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? 8 If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. 9 If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, 10 Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me. 11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me," Even the night shall be light about me; 12 Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You.

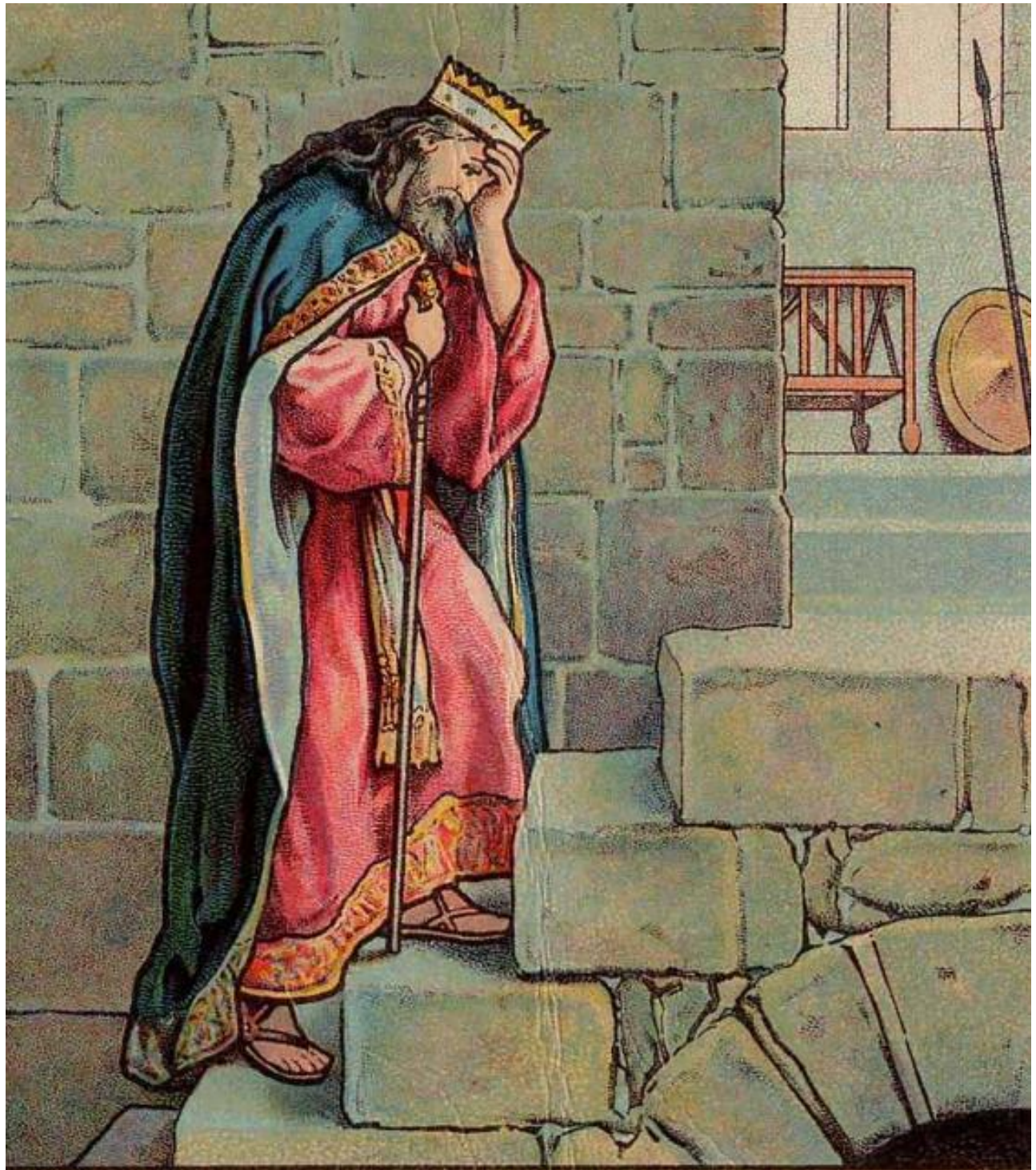
13 For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. 14 I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. 15 My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them.

17 How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! 18 If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You. . . .

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; 24 And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.

Handwork:

- Make a suitcase out of a file folder, a paper shopping bag, or a plain gift bag. Students might decorate with stickers or drawings, especially scenes from the story. The Psalm 139 memory verses as found above might be printed, cut out, and attached to the bags. Or students could write, "David returned to Jerusalem," on the bag.



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DAVID'S GRIEF OVER ABSALOM

2 Sam. 18 : 24-33.

GOLDEN TEXT :—A foolish son is a grief to his father.

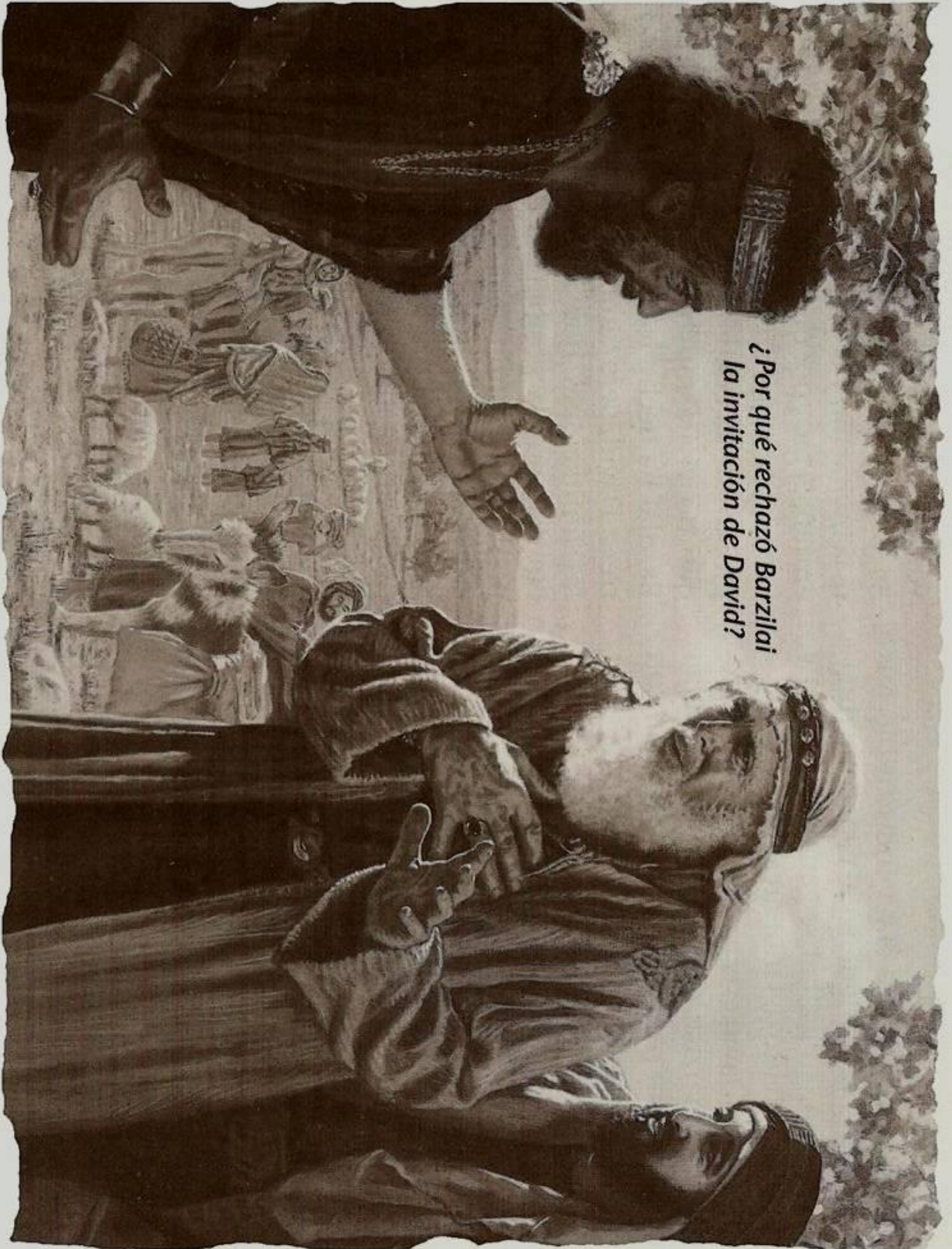
Prov. 17 : 25.

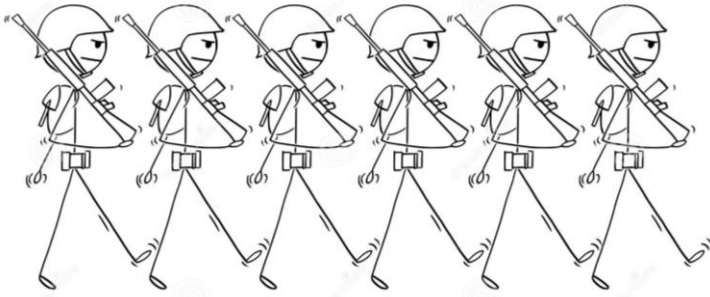


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¿Por qué rechazó Barzilai la invitación de David?





1000s of David's soldiers



Men of Israel and Judah



Shimei and 1000 Benjaminites



Ziba, his 15 sons and 20 servants



David and his household



Mephibosheth