

Abishai

Abishai was the son of Zeruah and brother of Joab and Asahel [2 Samuel 2:18]. His father is not mentioned, for which there are several explanations. He may have died young or Zeruah may have been the more significant character.

It may also reflect the ancient custom of tracing kinship through the female line, or she may have married a foreigner, remaining in her own clan, so her children were reckoned as belonging to that clan.

Zeruah was also recorded as David's sister, [1 Chronicles 2:16] though she was strictly a step-sister, [2 Samuel 17:25] Jesse's wife being earlier married to Nahash.

Abishai's fierce loyalty to David had to be kept from becoming destructive, he was too willing to leap to his leader's defence. David never put down Abishai's eager loyalty, instead he patiently tried to direct its powerful energy.

This approach while not completely successful, saved David's life on at least one occasion, [2 Samuel 21:15-17].

Abishai was an excellent soldier, [1 Chronicles 11:20; 1 Chronicles 18:12-13] but he was better at taking orders than giving them, tending to act without first thinking.

When Abishai was not carrying out the direct orders of David, he was usually under the command of his younger brother Joab.

When Abishai was effective as a leader, it was because he was a good example of courage and loyalty.

We should all be challenged by Abishai's admirable qualities of fearlessness and loyalty, but we should also be warned by his tendency to act without first thinking.

It is not enough to be strong and effective, we also need to have self-control and the wisdom that only the Creator God can give us, through study and meditation on His Word, the Christian Bible.

We can then follow our Creator God and Saviour with our hearts and human spirit, yielding in total loyalty to Him, [Romans 12:1].