

I. DAVID'S PERSONAL TROUBLES

A. Absalom: 2nd of two sons to bring family grief

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6. (14.21-23) David orders Joab to bring Absalom back to Jerusalem
 - a. (14.24) But Absalom did not rejoin the royal court, but was sent to live in his own house
 - 1). David said he didn't want to see him
7. (14.25-27) Absalom's family prospered
 - a. He had three sons and one daughter
 - 1). The daughter was also named Tamar after his disgraced sister
 - b. He was known as a handsome man and admired by all the people
 - 1). When his long hair was cut at the end of each year, it weighed 5 lbs
8. (14.28-33) Absalom's estrangement from David resolved
 - a. David did not send for Absalom for two years
 - 1). Absalom was seen by the court and citizens as someone who needed to repent of his sin before rejoining everything
 - b. Absalom sent for Joab twice to ask him why this was so
 - 1). When Joab didn't respond, Absalom had his servants set Joab's field on fire
 - 2). When Joab came to him, Absalom asked him why he didn't respond
 - a.) He said he would have been better off to remain at Geshur then to be brought back to isolation
 - b.) He asked Joab to go to David charge him with a crime and execute him
 - c. But Joab somehow must have convinced David that Absalom's crime was justifiable homicide, and received him again

II. REBELLIONS AGAINST KING DAVID

A. Overview

1. God had warned David through the prophet Nathan
 - a. The sword would never pass from his house
 - b. Result of his sin with Bathsheba
2. So far
 - a. Rape of his daughter, Tamar by her half brother, Amnon
 - b. Murder of Amnon by her brother, Absalom
3. Now we will see that this is not finished
 - a. Two rebellions by his sons
 - b. A third revolt by a Benjamite

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B. Absalom's Revolt

1. Note how Absalom worked very soon after his return to undermine David's kingship and the people's loyalty to him
 - a. (2 Sam 15.1) He put on a big show to impress his countrymen
 - 1). He secured a chariot and horses
 - a.) David and other officials rode on a mule
 - b.) This was the first chariot and horses in Israel
 - 2). He had 50 men to run ahead of him and do PR by rousing up the crowd that he was coming
"Here comes the handsome crown prince"
 - b. (15.2a) He became the astute politician
 - 1). The city gate is where all leaders, wise men, debaters, and officials would gather to settle business
 - 2). Absalom didn't hang around the palace - he rose early and joined the group to spread his fame
 - c. (15.2b-4) He flattered those with claims of injustice
 - 1). He showed interest in their details, which flatters men
 - 2). He then agreed that they had a just claim, but pointed out that the king didn't have a representative there to hear
 - a.) The implication is that the king is not showing interest in his people
 - 3). Then he indicated that, if he were in a position as judge, he would assure that they would receive justice
 - d. (15.5) He also portrayed himself as their equal
 - 1). If anyone tried to prostrate himself to his royalty, he would raise him up and give him a kiss of equality
 - e. (15.6) All of this turned the people's heart to him instead of David

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2. Absalom is now ready to launch his campaign to be king
- a. (15.7a) A number of years passed with Absalom's scheming
 - 1). KJV and NASB both say "forty" years
 - 2). ESV, NIV, and many other reliable versions say "four" years
 - 3). **The** Hebrew word is ar·baw·eem = "forty"
 - 4). The Septuagint and Syrian versions say "four", which seems more plausible
 - a.) The "forty" might be a clerical error in the Hebrew
 - b.) Or the writer is dating from some earlier date in David's past
 - 5). No one has been able to prove either for sure

3. Absalom takes the first step

- a. (15.7b-9) He asks David's permission for him to go to Hebron
 - 1). He claimed that he made a vow to the Lord to serve Him if he was allowed to return to Jerusalem
 - 2). David could hardly refuse a pious request from this son, so he grants it
 - a.) "go in peace" is rather ironical !
 - 3). Why would Absalom choose Hebron to launch his rebellion ?
 - a.) It was in Judah, where his keenest supporters were
 - b.) The burial place of the patriarchs lies nearby
 - c.) The city's historical place in the kingdom occurred before Jerusalem
 - d.) Absalom was born there
 - e.) It was about 19 miles from Jerusalem, allowing delaying David's army when the rebellion would start
- b. (15.10) He alerts his supporters throughout the tribes
 - 1). Word is sent through his spies that there will be a trumpet signal
 - 2). When that occurs, his supporters are to declare that Absalom has been made king in Hebron from wherever they are in Israel
- c. (15.11-12) Then he begin his move by exiting Jerusalem in style
 - 1). He invited 200 citizens as guest to accompany him, but they didn't know anything that he was planning
 - a.) But they would shortly provide the credibility that many left Jerusalem to join the rebellion
 - 2). He also sent word to Ahithophel to join him
 - a.) He was David's counselor, trusted almost like an oracle of God
 - b.) Was Ahithophel in on the rebellion from the beginning ?
 - He was considered the ablest of counselors, not likely to be talked into a rebellion quickly
 - Why was he away from Jerusalem as the rebellion was starting, and at his native Giloh, close to Hebron ?
 - He was Bathsheba's grandfather ... revenge on David ?
- 3). And the conspiracy grew stronger

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4. David flees Jerusalem

- a. (15.13-15) A messenger arrives to tell David that Absalom has started the rebellion
 - 1). David quickly decides that he and his court must leave Jerusalem immediately to avoid being slaughtered
 - 2). It appears to be the best way to avoid a siege of the city
 - 3). His servants agree to follow him
- b. (15.16) David left 10 of his harem to tend the palace
 - 1). He apparently thought this would be over quickly
- c. (15.17-18) He stopped at the last house to review his troops
 - 1). 600 foreign fighters that had come with him from Gath

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C. David's Exit Encounters

1. Reaction to the situation occurred in the typical two ways

- a. Some pledged to serve David until death or victory
- b. Others used the situation to their own advantage
- c. Typical of mankind's reaction to such events, even today

2. Supporters

a. Ittai the Gittite (15.19-23)

1). Gittites were inhabitants of Gath

- a.) Ittai was the leader of the 600 who followed David from Gath
- b.) Jewish tradition identifies Ittai as the son of David's friend, King Achish of Gath

2). David asked why the Gittites were leaving

- a.) It appears that they served as the king's bodyguard
- b.) As such, they should remain for the new king

3). Ittai expressed his loyalty to David to the death

- a.) David then allowed his 600 men and their families to march out of Jerusalem with him

4). The entire assemblage marched out, down across the Kidron and toward the wilderness area

- a.) All of Israel was weeping at the event
- b.) Reasons ?
 - A love of David
 - Fear of civil war potential
 - Loss of stability of the monarchy

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b. Zadok and Abiathar (15.24-29)

- 1). The two chief priests arrive at David's followers
- 2). They, and Levites, brought the Ark with them
- 3). David instructed that they take the Ark back to Jerusalem
 - a.) He felt that God would indicate if he was to return, and would be safe there, waiting for him, if so
 - b.) He also reminded them that they would better serve him by staying in the city, able to report on what Absalom was doing
- 4). David told him that he would wait at the Jordan Fords for their advice before fleeing further or not

c. Hushaia the Archite

- 1). (15.30-31) Further grief for David
 - a.) David and the others were climbing up the Mount Of Olives, weeping with their heads covered
 - b.) News came to him that his trusted advisor, Ahithophel, was among the conspirators
 - David prayed to God that Ahithophel's advice to Absalom be foolishness
- 2). Then good news (15.32-37)
 - a.) Hushai the Archite met him as he came up the summit
 - Archites are a clan of Benjamin
 - He, too, had torn his clothes & scattered dust on his head in grief at the situation
 - b.) David had a better purpose for him than joining the group
 - 1st, he was too old, and not a fighter to be counted on
 - 2nd, as a trusted counsel, he could convince Absalom to take him on as advisor
 - .. This would allow Hushai to counter Ahithophel's advice to Absalom (an instant answer to David's prayer ??)
 - .. He could also report news to the chief priests, who would convey it to David via their sons



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3. The Opportunist (2 Sam 16.1-4)

a. Ziba, the servant of Mephiboheth, met David a little over the summit

- 1). He brought two donkeys and food for the royal court

b. David asked where his master, Mephibosheth was

- 1). Ziba replied that he stayed in the city because he believed that his father, Saul's, kingdom would be returned to him
- 2). While possible, this is an apparent attempt by Ziba to gain favor with David while slandering his master
 - a.) David regarded Mephibosheth's supposed disloyalty and awarded all of his lands to Ziba
 - b.) Another example of how David could sometimes be impulsive and act without checking out the facts

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4. The Antagonist

- a. (16.5-8) Shimei, of Saul's household, met him
 - 1). Came out at the village of Bahurim, east of the Mount of Olives
 - 2). Ran at David, cursing him as a man of bloodshed
 - 3). He told David that what he (supposedly) did to Saul had turned back on him
- b. (16.9-14) Abishai (Joab's brother) asked David's permission to decapitate him
 - 1). Both Joab and Abishai seemed to think the sword settled most anything
 - 2). But David said that maybe God had sent Shimei to curse him as part of God's judgement against him
 - 3). Instead, the party passed on, with Shimei running alongside cursing David and throwing stones at them

D. Absalom's Takeover Attempts

1. Hushai feigns loyalty to Absalom (16.15-19)

- a. After Absalom enters Jerusalem, Hushai greets him & offers his service
- b. Absalom questions what kind of loyalty abandons his friend, David
- c. Hushai declares that he serves what king God has put into place
 - 1). Absalom is apparently not smart enough, or is too vain, to not see the truth in this >> David is still God's anointed king

2. Apparently satisfied, Absalom asks Ahithophel what to do next (16.20-23)

- a. Ahithophel advised that he take the 10 concubines David had left behind
 - 1). This would signal to all that he was publicly claiming the throne
 - a.) Normally, this was a recognized public act that stated that the former king was dead and had been replaced
 - b.) Since David was still alive, this was the permanent break between Absalom and David > the rebellion was permanent
 - 2). This would also bolster those who were for the rebellion
- b. Ahithophel had a tent pitched on the roof in public view and Absalom went in to violate David's concubines
 - 1). (2 Sam 12.7-12) Note Nathan's prophecy that David's wives would be taken from him in public because he had taken Uriah's wife in secret

3. Plan and counter

a. Ahithophel's advice to Absalom (2 Sam 17.1-4)

- 1). He requested 12,000 men to pursue David
- 2). The sudden appearance of the large force would frighten the people away from David, exposing him to Absalom's defeat of him
- 3). He planned to lead the people back to Jerusalem
- 4). The elders were pleased with this (likely because his plan would end the civil war quickly)

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- b. Absalom then sends for Hushai to give his advice (17.5-10)
 - 1). (Remember that David advised Hushai, his friend, to go to Absalom's court to counter Ahithophel's advising)
 - 2). Hushai listened, and then pronounced Ahithophel's plan as bad advice
 - a.) David was likely securing himself in caves, away from the people
 - b.) David was a master at battle, and he and his men were known as fierce warriors
 - c.) If Ahithophel's force is defeated, it would go against Absalom's ability to finish the rebellion
 - 3). Hushai then gives his own "advice" to Absalom (17.11-14)
 - a.) Note vs 11 "...all Israel..." > muster a huge army
 - This builds delay into Absalom's next step
 - b.) That army would find David and totally crush him and his supporters
 - c.) Absalom and his advisors agreed this was a better plan
 - d.) It is again noted that God was working through Hushai to defeat Absalom
- c. Hushai continues to follow David's plan to warn him (17.15-16)
 - 1). He goes to the temple to tell the priests, Zadok and Abiathar, about Ahithophel's and his plans
 - 2). He urges them to warn David to depart from the Jordan Ford in case Absalom changes his mind and uses Ahithophel's plan
 - 3). But the warning is almost thwarted (17.17-20)
 - a.) The priests' sons, Jonathan and Ahimaaz, were hiding at Enrogel, a town in the Kidron Valley SE of Jerusalem
 - Being seen exiting Jerusalem would be a problem to the plan
 - b.) A maidservant was sent with the warning to them, but a boy saw them first and reported their whereabouts to Absalom
 - c.) When they saw that they had been seen, Jonathan and Ahimaaz, moved their location to Bahurim, NE of Jerusalem
 - They are now on the path to the Jordan Ford
 - When they arrived, a woman let them into a well and covered them with a cover and topped it with grain
 - Absalom's servants were advised that they had crossed the brook, but they couldn't find them
- d. (17.21-23) Ahithophel sees that his plan hasn't been followed
 - 1). Dismayed, he returns home, puts his affairs in order
 - 2). Then he commits suicide by strangling (hanging) himself
 - 3). How much like Judas
 - a.) He committed treason against his friend and king
 - b.) He advised his enemies, then saw the cause lost
 - c.) When he saw that vengeance would come on him, he took his own life

These notes were originally written as I composed this study for our Faculty & Staff Bible Study at the local university. It is important to note that they follow the narrative in *Old Testament Survey Series: The Books of History* by James E. Smith (1995, College Press Publishing Company) very closely. It is the best summary I found, so it is the foundation for the study. In many cases, I used Dr. Smith's words directly, sometimes paraphrased them for clarity, sometimes enlarged on them with other resources. Since I didn't expect to publish the notes, I did not cite them at the time. It is now difficult to distinguish quotes from Dr. Smith, material from other resources, or what thoughts the Spirit gave me. Suffice to say that, if it is insightful to your spiritual growth, give all the glory to the Spirit, some credit to Dr. Smith, and none to me. I'm just the Spirit-led editor and teacher.

Bob Kostrubanic, November 5, 2021

