

2 Samuel 16:15 – 17:29

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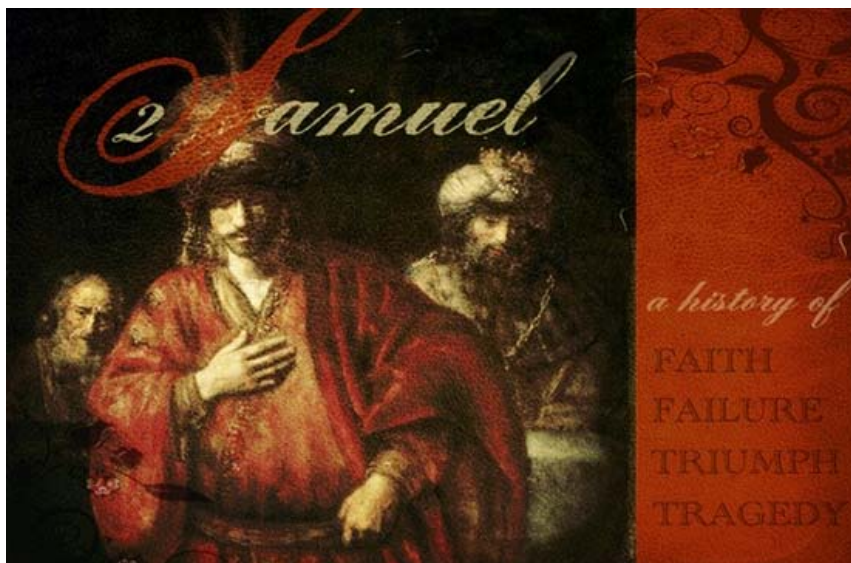
Monday at Metro

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2 Samuel 16:15-17:29

Related Topics: David; Absalom; Hushai; Ahithophel; Certainty of Prophecy; Reality of Sowing and Reaping; Veracity of Scripture; Vanity; Satan's Devices Overthrown; Suicide; Suicidal Forces – Cowardice, Pride, Wisdom and Madness, Temporal Concerns vs. Eternal Concerns

In our last study we saw the response of David to two scoundrels in the midst of circumstances that were both emotionally devastating and life threatening.



The first was Ziba – the servant of Mephibosheth.

Mephibosheth was the crippled son of Jonathan to whom David showed great kindness to back in 2 Samuel 9. Ziba APPEARS to be a loyal man offering help in David's moment of great need – Not only bringing supplies to David and his company, but also informing David that Mephibosheth was in Jerusalem waiting for the opportunity to take the throne of Israel back to the household of Saul. Ziba wickedly used David's crisis for his own benefit. He got exactly what he came for – David granted to Ziba all of Mephibosheth's lands and possessions.

David's response was UNWISE – It was based upon first impressions – and was processed through a wounded mind and heart.

We learned about the importance of:

- The Body of Christ – TWO are better than one
- And WAITING in the moment of crisis to be in a space to clearly make those kinds of decisions.

In VERSE 5 we were introduced to the second scoundrel – Shimei.

1. VERSE 5 - as he came he cursed continually.
- VERSE 6 - he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David
2. VERSES 7-8 He began to give his interpretation of WHY David was in such trouble

NONE of his accusations were true – But TRUTH is irrelevant when blinded by bitterness. David's response to Shimei was comprised of THREE actions –

- 1) LOOKED ABOVE (realize that God allowed it)
- 2) LOOKED ABOUT (Looking at his own failures he understood that he was probably worse than Shimei claimed David to be)
- 3) LOOKED AHEAD (God sees what is happening and will reward David for suffering unjustly)

We closed by saying that if we are to find victory in all of this we must LOOK AFRESH at Jesus

As we pick up the scene shifts back to Jerusalem.

2 Samuel 16:15 Now Absalom and all the people, the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him.

There is no trace of resistance – no trace of opposition.

2 Samuel 16:16 And when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, came to Absalom, Hushai said to Absalom, "Long live the king! Long live the king!"

We remember Hushai from 2 Samuel 15:32-34.

Hushai wanted to leave with David and support him. But we remember that David thought it was better to send Hushai back to Absalom - To spy on Absalom – And be on the inside of Absalom's leadership to undermine the counsel of a man named Ahithophel.

2 Samuel 16:17 And Absalom said to Hushai, "Is this your loyalty to your friend? Why did you not go with your friend?"

DON'T MISS THIS – Absalom is SHOCKED by the presence of Hushai! Absalom KNEW that Hushai was too good a man – too good a friend of David – to throw in with the likes of Absalom or support his cause. There is some huge stuff for us here between the lines.

- Absalom's shock at the presence of Hushai was a silent confession that he and his crew were a godless bunch!
- Hushai didn't fit because men of God – men of integrity – didn't fit with godless traitors!

QUESTION:

Doesn't it just make you crazy when a godless political figure is caught in adultery – then incessantly lies and denies – and then finally admits to it – and then after about 24 hours everyone acts as if nothing ever happened at all? BUT – Let an outspoken proponent of Christianity is caught in the same sin – And it's 24/7 media coverage. The most godless figures are the ones deploring the Christians hypocrisy. With giant Broad-strokes they paint all Christians as lying hypocrites never to be trusted or respected.

MY POINT – They respond in that manner for this simple reason: They KNOW themselves to be godless. Though they know themselves to be godless – and have no concern or desire for godliness or genuine Biblical faith – They BELIEVE certain things about Christianity.

They BELIEVE and EXPECT Christians to live in a way that is CONSISTENT with their professed godliness.

Absalom's shock is essentially a godless man understanding the truth of 2 Corinthians 6:14.

2 Corinthians 6:14 For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?

Absalom KNOWS that he and those around him are lawless men – living in spiritual darkness. He is shocked that a righteous man – who is walking in the light would be not just around them but appearing to JOIN them in their lawlessness. JOIN them in spreading moral and spiritual darkness over the people of God.

2 Samuel 16:18-19 And Hushai said to Absalom, "No, for whom the Lord and this people and all the men of Israel have chosen, his I will be, and with him I will remain. 19And again, whom should I serve? Should it not be his son? As I have served your father, so I will serve you."

Hushai is a spy — like any good spy hides his true intentions.

QUESTION: Are we saying that it's O.K. to lie for a good cause?

First — I don't think Hushai lied here — I think that Hushai could have said everything here without ever lying.

QUOTE: Adam Clarke —

Hushai meant in his heart that God and all the people of Israel had chosen David; but he spake so as to make Absalom believe that he spoke of him: for whatever of insincerity may appear in this, Hushai is alone answerable. What he says afterwards may be understood in the same way.

2 Samuel 16:20-21 Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, "Give your counsel. What shall we do?" 21Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Go in to your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house, and all Israel will hear that you have made yourself a stench to your father, and the hands of all who are with you will be strengthened."

Ahithophel's advice is intended to produce three outcomes.

- 1.) Destroy — with absolute finality — any possibility of a reconciliation between David and Absalom — you have made yourself a stench to your father.
- 2.) The breach between father and son would FORCE the people to take sides — all Israel will hear that you have made yourself a stench to your father.
- 3.) The act itself would give courage to Absalom's followers — and the hands of all who are with you will be strengthened."

In the ancient world, taking the king's concubines was an act of treason. The wives of the conquered king were always the property of the conqueror; and in possessing these, he appeared to possess the right to the kingdom.

Herodotus — was a Greek historian who lived in the 5th century BC (c. 484 BC-c. 425 BC) and is regarded as the "Father of History" in Western culture.

Smerdis, having seized on the Persian throne after the death of Cambyses, espoused all the wives of his predecessor, lib. iii., c. 68.

QUOTE: Adam Clarke —

for a son to take his father's wives was the sum of abomination, and was death by the law of God, Leviticus 20:11. This was a sin rarely found, even among the Gentiles.

As a result — But for the Israelite of the day — and the follower of Absalom — this course of action would leave no doubt as to the RESOLVE of Absalom to end his father's rule.

2 Samuel 16:22 So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof. And Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.

This incredibly TWISTED act reveals crucial truths concerning the Word of God:

1.) The CERTAINTY of the prophetic nature of God's Word and how it proves the existence of the True and living God, who lives outside of time.

2 Samuel 12:11-12 Thus says the Lord, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house. And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun.

Isaiah 46:9-11 remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, 10 declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose 11..... I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it.

2.) The REALITY of Sowing and Reaping

Galatians 6:7-8 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. 8For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

As we read the Scriptures we see this LAW of Sowing and Reaping -

- You always reap the same thing you have sown
- You can't sow to the Spirit and reap of the flesh
- You can't sow to the flesh and reap of the Spirit
- You can't sow to the Spirit and reap death
- You can't sow to the flesh and reap life
- You don't reap it right away
- And you always get MORE

Years have passed and David is now reaping what he had sown - with interest. From this same palace roof

top David saw and took Ahithophel's grand daughter for his own sexual gratification. Now Ahithophel counsels Absalom to take TEN of David's concubines on to that roof top and have sex with them in broad daylight for all of Israel to see.

3.) The VERACITY of God's Word – (God says what He means and means what He says)

Hebrews 12:15 (NLT) ...watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many.

Ahithophel is a LIVING EXAMPLE of the power of bitterness. He allowed his bitterness towards David to GROW over the years – and because it GREW he became a TROUBLED man. So TROUBLED that this man – whose advice was received as the very Word of God – could become the chief adviser of David's traitorous son! THAT is a troubled man.

And that bitterness was now so big and powerful that it would CORRUPT many.

Ahithophel was willing to:

- See TEN women abused
- See Absalom grievously sin
- See the kingdom of Israel suffer greatly
- Simply to satisfy his longing for bitter revenge

2 Samuel 16:23 Now in those days the counsel that Ahithophel gave was as if one consulted the word of God; so was all the counsel of Ahithophel esteemed, both by David and by Absalom.

CHAPTER 17

2 Samuel 17:1-4 Moreover, Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Let me choose twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue David tonight. I will come upon him while he is weary and discouraged and throw him into a panic, and all the people who are with him will flee. I will strike down only the king, and I will bring all the people back to you as a bride comes home to her husband. You seek the life of only one man, and all the people will be at peace." And the advice seemed right in the eyes of Absalom and all the elders of Israel.

Ahithophel advises TWO things here –

1.) A sudden and selective attack against David

2.... I will strike down only the king

2.) Urgency – Attack while David was still west of the Jordan River.

INTERESTING –

2.... I will strike down only the king

It would appear that this slip of the tongue betrayed the fact that deep in his heart, Ahithophel knew that David was the TRUE king – but once again – TRUTH doesn't matter to the man overcome by bitterness.

By the standard of man's wisdom Ahithophel's plan

- Was Smart
- Was Bold
- Had a high probability of success
- Would spare Israel a protracted civil war between the supporters of David and the supporters of Absalom – an almost bloodless revolution.

DON'T MISS THIS –

EVERYTHING is stacked against David ever returning to the throne. Ahithophel was so convinced of the advantages of his plan that it seemed IMPOSSIBLE that the plan could be opposed.

PROBLEM –

Ahithophel was meticulous in regards to every political and military factor in formulating his counsel. But he failed to take into account the MOST CRITICAL factor of all – GOD! He failed to factor in the fact that -

Psalm 125:2 As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people, from this time forth and forevermore.

He failed to factor in the MANY TIMES and METHODS that God had employed in the past to protect David:

- When David was just a boy – God had provided David the strength of arm and courage of heart to save David from a lion and a bear.
- He had delivered David by guiding a single stone from David's sling into the forehead of Goliath.
- He had delivered David from Saul once by way of David's wife – who lowered David from a window.
- He delivered David from Saul on another occasion by way of Jonathan.
- He delivered David a third time from Saul by way of a Philistine invasion.

NOW – God was going to deliver David from Absalom by causing a strategically weak proposal by Hushai to find more favor than the far better advice of Ahithophel.

2 Samuel 17:5-7 Then Absalom said, "Call Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear what he has to say." 6And when Hushai came to Absalom, Absalom said to him, "Thus has Ahithophel spoken; shall we do as he says? If not, you speak." 7Then Hushai said to Absalom, "This time the counsel that Ahithophel has given is not good."

AGAIN – This is great drama!

We can only try to imagine just how hard Hushai's heart was pounding. He is standing as spy before the man who wants to kill the true king. He has already seen him hear – receive – and act upon the counsel of Ahithophel – with ZERO moral reservations! He has just heard further advice from the man whose counsel was respected as the very words of God. And the counsel was GREAT – In fact it was the very advice Hushai most feared Absalom would hear and act upon. But he shows tremendous composure!

Hushai comes up HUGE here. He shows tremendous composure, tremendous skill in

- recommending a plan that would undermine Absalom's revolt
- making bad advice appear to be the best!

He opens with an implied compliment: Ahithophel's counsel is not good at this time. In other words – This advice is the exception to his otherwise perfect counsel.

HE FOLLOWS WITH –

2 Samuel 17:8-10 Hushai said, "You know that your father and his men are mighty men, and that they are enraged, like a bear robbed of her cubs in the field. Besides, your father is expert in war; he will not spend the night with the people. 9Behold, even now he has hidden himself in one of the pits or in some other place. And as soon as some of the people fall at the first attack, whoever hears it will say, 'There has been a slaughter among the people who follow Absalom.' 10Then even the valiant man, whose heart is like the heart of a lion, will utterly melt with fear, for all Israel knows that your father is a mighty man, and that those who are with him are valiant men.

He reminds Absalom of the legendary courage and fighting skills of David and his loyal men – and the fact that all of Israel is familiar with them. They're like a bunch of Special Ops guys with a real beef to settle – hiding in some caves. No one knows how many there are – and they might at any moment come out of nowhere and kill a lot of your men – causing the bravest to panic and turn back to David as quickly as they had turned away.

HIS LAST ADVICE was the MASTERPIECE – A word of wisdom from God's understanding of Absalom's heart!

CRUCIAL:

The Lord directed Hushai to address Absalom's besetting sin!

- Absalom was a man who prepared chariots and horses and fifty men to go before him.
- Absalom was a man who would cut his hair once a year and WEIGH the amount that was cut!
- Absalom was known and praised as the most handsome man in all of Israel

GOD KNEW THAT the subject of the courage of David and his men would not move Absalom as much as he would be moved by the mere THOUGHT of the magnificent spectacle of the whole of Israel rallying to him in Battle.

2 Samuel 17:11-14 But my counsel is that all Israel be gathered to you, from Dan to Beersheba, as the sand by the sea for multitude, and that you go to battle in person. 12So we shall come upon him in some place where he is to be found, and we shall light upon him as the dew falls on the ground, and of him and all the men with him not one will be left. 13If he withdraws into a city, then all Israel will bring ropes to that city, and we shall drag it into the valley, until not even a pebble is to be found there." 14And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, "The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of

Ahithophel."

For the Lord had ordained to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, so that the Lord might bring harm upon Absalom.

THIS IS SO AWESOME!

Satan had outsmarted himself!

He had so carefully and patiently nursed in Absalom vanity and self concern – all to the end that he might by Absalom overturn the throne of God's anointed king! NOW – the vanity that Satan had hoped to use in driving Absalom to defeat DAVID – has become the very means of defeating ABSALOM.

Satan had actually laid the foundation – not for David's ruin – but for Absalom's! The turning point in Absalom's mind as to the counsel he would follow – was mere thought of not just 12,000 men – but ALL of Israel – rallying to him in Battle.

Christians – be encouraged! Especially when it seems that things look most bleak for the Church.

Psalm 2:2-6 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, 3 "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us." 4 He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. 5 Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, 6 "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill."

The meeting is over – Again – we can only imagine the RELIEF Hushai is experiencing. Absalom withdraws – No doubt obsessed with thoughts of the great gathering to himself that will soon take place.

VERSES 15-21 Just as David had purposed in requesting Hushai to return to Jerusalem, Hushai gets word to Zadok and Abiathar, and by them messengers are sent to David.

2 Samuel 17:22-23 Then David arose, and all the people who were with him, and they crossed the Jordan. By daybreak not one was left who had not crossed the Jordan. 3When Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his donkey and went off home to his own city...

Ahithophel – deeply offended – overwhelmed with resentment – returns to his house.
CHECK THIS OUT!

2 Samuel 17:23He set his house in order and hanged himself, and he died and was buried in the tomb of his father.

THREE forces at work here

1.) Cowardice

Ahithophel was an extraordinarily bright man. He understood that he was co-conspirator in this plot against the king – and would face certain consequences if they failed. He knew they could only succeed if Absalom carried out BOTH parts of his plan. When Absalom rejected the second part of his counsel – Ahithophel KNEW that the coup was doomed.

Ahithophel was not going to wait for the inevitable reversal and return of David – and the resulting execution.

QUOTE: G. Campbell-Morgan –

“Suicide is always the ultimate action of cowardice. In the case of Saul, and in many similar cases, it is perfectly natural; but let it never be glorified as heroic. It is the last resort of the man who dare not stand up to life.”

2.) Arrogance – In his own way Ahithophel was as much a victim of vanity as Absalom! What a contrast between David and Ahithophel when it came to bearing disgrace and rejection.

REMEMBER DAVID –

His head hanging so low as he left Jerusalem. Yet his heart bore up so bravely that he could restrain his loyal friends from lashing out at Shimei when Shimei hurled insults – threw stones and wished David dead. THEN THERE IS AHITHOPHEL – who for the FIRST time had his advice rejected – and he can't bear to go on living!

3.) Earthly Concerns Over Eternal Concerns

QUOTE: Bishop Hall –

“What a mixture do we find here of wisdom and madness. Ahithophel will needs hang himself – there is madness; yet he will set his house in order.... And could it be possible that he that was so wise as to set his house in order was so mad as to hang himself? That he who should be so careful to order his house had no care to order his unruly passions? That he who had care for his house cared not for his body or soul? How vain it is for a man to be wise if he is not wise in God. How preposterous are the empty concerns of worldlings.... While they look at what they have in their coffers but forget what they have in their hearts.”

QUOTE: Spurgeon –

“Thousands set their houses in order, but destroy their souls; they look well to their flocks and their herds, but not to their hearts' best interests. They gather broken shells with continuous industry, but they throw away priceless diamonds. They exercise forethought, prudence, care, everywhere but where they are >most required. They save their money, but squander their happiness; they are guardians of their

estates, but suicides of their souls."

DOESN'T THAT SOUND LIKE AMERICA in the 21st Century? What are you caring about this evening?

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