

2 Samuel 16:15-19 Chapter Study

INTRO

III. David's Troubles Chs. 11-20:22

C. Absalom's Rebellion Chs. 15-19

1. Absalom wins the peoples' heart 15:1-13

2. David flees Jerusalem 15:14-16:14

David wrote *Psalms* 3 while fleeing from Absalom's coup.

This was a time in David's life when it seemed everything was coming apart.

Long time friends were *betraying* him. His own son took the lead in wanting to *kill* him & steal his throne.

The rebellion against him was strong. Those who hadn't taken an *active* part in backing Absalom were taking a wait & see position; waiting to throw in their lot with the one who was clearly going to come out on top.

And though things were a mess & his life was in peril, David never grew angry at God or questioned His love.

Walking in faith, he humbly accepted all that was happening as the *discipline* of God for his sins with Bathsheba & Uriah.

I read something last week I want to share tonight. In His book on the life of David, after listing the trials he experienced at this time, Alan Redpath writes –

Such were the strokes of the Father's rod that fell thick & fast upon his child. They appeared to emanate from the [evil] & hate of man; but David looked into their very heart, & knew that the cup which they held to his lips had been mixed by Heaven, & that they were *not* the punishment of a Judge, but the chastisement of a Father.

Outside the story of Christ there is nothing in the Bible more beautiful than his behavior as he passed through this tangled growth of thorns. "Carry back the ark of God," he told [the priests]; "he may bring me again to see both it and his habitation; but if not, behold, here I am, let him do to me as seems good to him." And when Shimei called him a [worthless murderer] David said to [the one who wanted to kill Shimei], "Let him alone. Who knows – it might be God who sent him to curse me." In a similar way] when Judas brought the bitter cup to the lips of Christ, the Master said, "It is the cup my Father has given me to drink."

Let us never forget the lesson. Pain & sorrow may be devised against us by the evil of an Ahithophel, a Shimei, or a Judas; but if God permits such things to teach us, by the time that they have passed through the thin wire of his sieve, *they have become His will for us*; & we may look up into His face and know that we are not the sport of chance or wild misfortune or human caprice, but are being trained as sons. Without such chastisement we might fear that we were not God's children at all.

3. Absalom takes Jerusalem 16:15-19

16:15-19

When Hushai presented himself to Absalom, he asked if he wasn't still loyal to David.

Hushai said his loyalty was *to the throne* – not a man. In the *strictest* sense, that was true.

The thing is – Hushai knew David was the real king & was there in Absalom's court serving David.

4. Competing counsel 16:20-17:23

20-23

David & Absalom had a history of being at odds & patching things up.

Ahithophel knew Absalom's supporters were uneasy about Absalom's determination to go through with his coup.

Absalom needed to do something to make it clear to his supporters there'd be no reconciliation with Dad.

Here was a way for Absalom to burn all bridges to reconciliation—have sexual relations with the concubines David had left behind.

So a tent was set up in plain view of everyone. This was a *public* renouncing by Absalom of his father.

One of the ways ancient kings affirmed & finalized their succession to the throne was by talking over the royal harem of the preceding king.

17:1-4

The second part of Ahithophel's counsel was that while Absalom was busy with the concubines, he'd personally lead an attack on David.

No one need die except the old man.

This is where Ahithophel tips his hand & reveals the bitterness that's driving him, as we saw 2 Sundays ago.

The whole reason he had betrayed David & joined Absalom's rebellion was to exact reevege for Uriah & Bathsheba, his grand-daughter.

5-14

Hushai's counsel sounded better to Absalom because it appealed to his vanity.

Why let Ahithophel have the credit for slaying David when Absalom could be the star?

Hushai appealed to the fierce reputation of David's mighty men who still backed him as the basis for not attacking immediately as Ahithophel counseled.

Like a bear robbed of her cubs, David & his men would be so furious they'd go berserk if Absalom's men showed up now.

Let the hardships of life in the wilderness soften David up a bit, then attack.

15-22

Hushai sent a secret message out through the priests as David had already arranged.

The messengers were almost caught but managed to get away & brought word to David.

He then fled & hid out in the hills across the Jordan.

23

When Absalom rejected Ahithophel's better plan in favor of Hushai's nonsense, he realized he'd thrown in his lot with a fool & went home, set his affairs in order

for his family, & committed suicide.

His life had been defined by one thing – getting even with David. Once the possibility for that was past, there was nothing left to live for, so he took his life.

People commit suicide for different reasons, so we need to be careful about passing judgment on people who do.

Some are not in the right state of mind, their thinking badly warped by conditions beyond their control.

But *generally speaking*, suicide is about the most selfish act someone can commit.

It often leaves loved ones with huge feelings of guilt & regret, feeling if they'd been more loving or kind or whatever, the person would not have been driven to such drastic & final action.

One of the most common diagnosis you hear today for suicide is a crippling low self-esteem.

The reasoning goes that someone ends their life is because they feel so *poorly* about him/herself.

Depression is a common symptom in many suicides.

But depression isn't a sign of low self-esteem – it's the *opposite*.

A person is depressed because of a *heightened* sense of self-esteem!

They believe they *DESERVE BETTER* than they have & are depressed they don't have it.

The ultimate influence behind suicide is Satan who hates men & women & wants nothing more than to destroy them.

The lies he spins to start someone on the path toward depression is like a spider's web of deceit that once a person gets caught in can be hard to get out of.

The solution, the remedy, is faith; to believe in God & trust in His love & power.

If there was anyone in this whole thing who ought to have been prone to depression & suicide, it was David!

But because he was abiding in God, he was just fine, chillin' in the wilderness.

5. Absalom's defeat 17:24-18:32

24-25

Mahanaim, where David took his stand was an important city on the Jabbok River in the region of Gilead.

Absalom rallied the army of Israel, put his cousin *Amasa* as commander over it, just as Joab was David's commander.

26-29

Though David was in exile, still being disciplined by God, the Lord took care of his needs by moving the hearts of these wealthy men to bring supplies.

It was dangerous for them to do so because if the rebellion succeeded, anyone who supported David would bear Absalom's wrath.

These guys knew the risk they were taking but did it anyway because of the love & loyalty they felt toward David.

How this had to both 1) encourage David & 2) serve all the more to *break him* of the betrayal he'd shown Uriah.

He was tasting the bitter dregs of betrayal by Absalom & Ahithophel.

As difficult as that was to bear, what was *worse* was the totally undeserved *loyalty* these guys showed!

Ziba had brought food to David in ch. 16 as a means to win his favor & snake his master's property from him.

But these guys had *nothing to gain* by the relief they bring – & David knew it. This act of kindness went *farther* to break him of his former sin than the bitterness of betrayal.

Romans 2:4 says it's the *kindness* of God that brings us to repentance.

When we look at the cross, at what Jesus did there for us when we were totally undeserving, it breaks our hearts & moves us to repentance.

I don't know about you, but I am far more moved to be reconciled to God by the message of the Cross than by the threat of judgment.

18:1

Word went out from Mahanaim that David would make his stand there against the rebellion.

This moved many of those who'd remained uncommitted to side with David and they went to Mahanaim to join his ranks.

2-4

The army was divided into 3 battalions to cover the main approaches to the city. David planned on leading the overall force himself – but the troops knew he was the prize that would determine the battle.

A chance arrow striking David would mean Absalom's victory, so they said the best chance they had of winning was for David to stay safe & secure in Mahanaim.

5-8

David's 3 battalions rejoined forces after clearing the approaches to the city & faced Absalom's force in a densely wooded area along the eastern side of the Jordan.

David's supporters were veterans under proven military leaders. They easily routed Absalom's upstarts, killing 20,000 of them & scattering them in forests so tangled, many never made it out.

As the troops left Mahanaim, David asked them to be merciful to Absalom when they caught up to him.

Even though he'd imperiled the nation like this, David still loved & wanted to be restored to his wayward son.

The problem is, with a rebellion like this – there's only one way it can end – with the death of either David or Absalom.

9-13

That long hair of Absalom's that had been his distinctive mark of pride became the means of his undoing.

It caught in the branches of a tree & left him dangling in midair as the mule he was riding kept going.

When the report of Absalom's whereabouts was brought to Joab, the commander asked if the guy had gone ahead and *offed* the King's son. He said there was no way he would – he'd heard David's command & was loyal.

14-17

Though this was a clear, bold violation of David's order, Joab *killed* Absalom.

There's probably a good dose of bitterness behind Joab's actions here, just as there'd been with Ahithophel.

Joab had been the one who'd brought Absalom back from exile in Syria, then a few years had brought David & his estranged son back together.

Absalom had badly betrayed Joab's trust.

But Joab seems to also be someone who was above all things concerned for his own neck & position in David's court.

If Absalom's rebellion had succeeded, he'd have been out of a job.

He did this to make sure Absalom never presented a threat again.

With Absalom's defeat, his supporters melted away.

18-19

Ahimaaz was one of the messengers Hushai'd sent to warn David. Remember, he'd almost been caught.

He was a known supporter of David's and couldn't return to Jerusalem, so he stayed with David's forces.

He asked Joab for permission to return to Mahanaim with the news Absalom was dead.

20-23

Joab knew Ahimaaz didn't know about Absalom's death, so he told him to sit still while an Ethiopian mercenary was sent to carry word to David about the outcome of the battle.

All Ahimaaz knew was that David's forces had been victorious, & he wanted to go share that with the king.

Finally, because Ahimaaz kept pestering Joab, he let him go.

Ahimaaz knew a shorter route to Mahanaim & got there before the Ethiopian.

24-32

David was more concerned about his son's fate than the outcome of the battle.

He doesn't rejoice at news the rebellion has been put down – his only concern is what's happened to Absalom.

Ahimaaz didn't know but the mercenary did & told David his son was dead.

In v. 22, after Joab had sent the 1st messenger, Ahimaaz said, "Whatever. Just let me run too!"

He had a lot of *zeal*, but not much knowledge.

All he could really say was that David's forces had won, but he could give the king no details – which is what a king would want & *need* to hear.

Ahimaaz is a good example of people who get excited about something & want to tell others, but they don't really know what they're talking about.

They're more interested in the *idea of saying something* than in the something they're saying.

In other words, they aspire to *be a messenger*, not to carry an important message.

They want *to preach*. **What** they preach isn't all that important, just so long as they get to stand before people & talk.

6. David mourns 18:33-19:7

This isn't the way David wanted the battle to end.

He'd hoped for a defeat of the insurrection, but that he & Absalom could be reconciled.

The loss of his son is too much & he says he wishes it had been him who'd died instead!

David's love for his rebel son is moving. And knowing how closely he was walking with God at this time, we can safely draw the conclusion what we're catching a glimpse of here is nothing less than the heart of God, who grieves over all the rebels who foolishly defy Him.

19:1-7

The depths of David's grief were probably caused by the awareness of all the mistakes he'd made, both with Bathsheba, & in how he'd raised his kids.

He's feeling like a failure, with his children having to pay the price for his errors; 4 of them now → Absalom, Amnon, Tamar, & Bathsheba's first child.

His grief overwhelms him and he ends up losing perspective as he climbs into the hole of self-pity.

Joab comes to him with a needed stern word of warning. David better pull it together quick or all those who've risked their lives for his that day are going to turn on him in a rebellion that will make Absalom's look like nothing!

You know, Joab was a blood-thirsty, power-hungry, creep!

But for all that, he was very good at what he did as a military commander.

And he brought David a badly needed word of advice.

Though what he said was *harsh* – it had to be because David was wallowing in a deep, dark pit of despair.

Sometimes people with no spiritual perception at all are the ones God uses to tell us what we need to hear.

Sometimes it's the guy or gal who's barely hanging on spiritually themselves, who muster up the courage to tell us what no one else dares say.

Don't automatically reject the rebuke or challenge of someone just because they aren't positioned where you expect such a word to come from.

Joab was a jerk – but he was also, in this case – right on!

7. David's return 19:8-19:43

a. the elders' invitation 19:8-14

8-10

David rose from his mourning, refreshed himself and took his place as the ruler in the gate of Mahanaim.

Immediately, the common people began to ask – “Now what? Shouldn't the elders invite David back to Jerusalem?”

11-14

Knowing public support was with him, David asked the priests to counsel the elders of the tribe of Judah to make a formal invitation of David to return.

Included in the message was a request for Amasa, his nephew, who'd been Absalom's chief commander, to replace Joab, whom David would now fire because he'd disobeyed his order about killing Absalom.

The invitation came, and David returned.

b. the return 19:15-18a

15-18a

Shimei had come out to *curse* David when he fled Jerusalem a few days before, claiming David had murdered the family of Saul, which of course was totally bogus.

David had ignored his insults.

Now that he's returning to the throne, Shimei knows he's done for and comes out to meet David with a huge display of contrition.

He's mustered a thousand fellow Benjamites to make it clear to David that he knows he was wrong to curse or make the charge he did, and the Benjamites, Saul's tribe – make no claim on the throne of Israel; they declare it belongs to David.

c. David's mercy 19:18b-30

1) to Shimei vs. 18b-23

18b-23

In ch. 16, when Shimei first cursed David, it was Abishai who'd wanted to kill him.

Now that Shimei admits his error, Abishai once again wants to get him.

Both times, David rebuked Abishai as a unmerciful brute.

When Shimei had cursed David, David let it go saying it might be part of God's discipline for his sins.

If so, he didn't want to be guilty of resisting God. If not, then the insults couldn't hurt.

Now David says, God has restored him and the throne has been affirmed – so why worry about Shimei?

There's a great lesson in this for us – it's to not get worked up by the turmoil others try to drop on us.

If we're walking in the Spirit, living by faith, trusting God is still on His throne and all things are working together for good for us, then we don't need to worry about what's going on – because ultimately God's in control.

2) to Mephibosheth vs. 24-30

24-30

Mephibosheth was Jonathan's only surviving son & David had sort of adopted him.

On the night David fled Jerusalem, Ziba, Mephibosheth's servant, told David Mephibosheth had sided with the rebellion in the hopes Absalom & David would wipe each other out and the throne would fall to him as Saul's grandson.

But that was a lie! Ziba was using the turmoil & crisis of the rebellion to steal Mephibosheth's property.

David believed him, and gave title to the lands to him.

But now he finds out he's been hoodwinked by Ziba.

It was because Mephibosheth was lame he'd not gone into exile with David.

His lack of attention to his personal needs proves how David's exile has been the cause of mourning for him.

Realizing he'd been tricked, David offered to restore half of Mephibosheth's

property to him.

But Mephibosheth doesn't care – just so long as he's able to sit at David's table & be counted as one of his family again.

d. rewarding Barzillai 19:31-39

31-39

Barzillai was one of those who'd brought relief to David in exile.

Now that David was returning to Jerusalem, he invited Barzillai to go with him so he could properly reward & honor him.

Now – it's impolitic to decline the invitation of a king – but there's one guy who can get away with it – the aged man, and Barzillai plays his trump card on David's royal invite here.

His son Chimham can go in his place.

e. Judah versus Israel 19:40-43

40-43

As the procession moves from the western bank of the Jordan River to Gilgal, the ranks swell with people from the other 10 tribes.

Then a complaint is voiced by them about why the tribe of Judah looks like it's trying to single-handedly return David to power.

They want to know why they were not a part of the official welcoming committee; is Judah trying to claim David as solely their king?

The men of Judah say that David is after all from their tribe so it's to be expected they would want to see him restored to the throne.

The whole thing turns into a rather immature shouting match about how likes David more.

Since there are more men from Judah, & since they may be a bit more motivated than the other 10 tribes, they shout them down.

The reason Judah was more motivated was because they were the one's who been Absalom's main backers!

Where had he gone to start the rebellion? Hebron – the capital of the tribe of Judah and David's former capital before Jerusalem.

The men of Judah had something to prove in taking the lead in returning David to Jerusalem – that they'd wrongly back Absalom and now wanted to make things right.

Parallels from David to Jesus

Both were born in the obscure little burg of Bethlehem,

Both began by not being esteemed among their brothers.

David & Jesus were first *welcomed*, then *rejected* by the leaders of Israel.

Both fled Jerusalem, crossed the Kidron, & wept on the Mt. of Olives overlooking Jerusalem.

Both were rejected but rightful kings.

Both faced betrayal by a close friend on the Mt. of Olives → David by Ahithophel, Jesus by Judas.

Both fled with a small band of loyal followers.

Both went into hiding where those who still honored them as King go out to pay homage.

Absalom, the pretender king is a picture of the *antichrist*.

He was good looking, popular, powerful, & stole the hearts & loyalty of the people.

He claimed the throne of Jerusalem, which rightly belonged to God's anointed. For a short time, Israel followed him until their eyes were opened & they realized they'd been duped by an sinister rebel.

Absalom was assisted by **Ahithophel**, a type of the *false prophet* who will assist the antichrist.

Ahithophel counseled Absalom to lie with David's *concubines* – whom the King had left behind, saying, "You can't go with me."

They're a picture of the carnal, apostate church left behind after the rapture that the antichrist will use to cement his power over the religious sphere, at the direction of the false prophet.

Concubines are not *real wives*; they're pretend, wanna-be brides, much as the modern lukewarm church is today. They will be easy pickin's for the antichrist's bid for power.

Then Absalom led his army on an attack against on the eastern hiding place of the remnant of the faithful.

The antichrist will send his armies out to attack the remnant of faithful Jews who've rejected him & fled for protection to a hiding place in the Eastern wilderness.

It's in that attack that the antichrist will finally defeated, just as Absalom was in his attack.

David came back to Jerusalem when the eyes of Israel were opened & they realized their error in rejecting him.

David *wanted* to return, but couldn't until the leaders invited him.

In the same way, Jesus said, "You shall see Me no more until you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the LORD,'" an invitation by the leaders for Jesus to return.

David sent a message to the 2 priests he'd left in Jerusalem to tell the leaders to invite him back to reclaim the throne.

Revelation says during the reign of the antichrist, the *Tribulation Absalom*, God will raise up 2 mighty witnesses who will powerfully preach the gospel, urging the Jews to come to faith in Jesus.

When the remnant of the Jews is in the wilderness, facing annihilation by the antichrist's forces, the leaders of Israel will finally heed them & cry out for Messiah Jesus to return.

He will then come, defeat the forces of antichrist & take the throne that belongs to Him in Jerusalem – ushering in a grand & glorious Golden Age, just as happened under David & his son, Solomon.