

Sunday Night Message

June 28, 2020

2 Samuel 16 – The Rebellion of Absalom, Continued

Topics – David; Absalom; rebellion

Series – *2 Samuel*

Introduction

We have been studying the life and reign of King David and have observed some of the problems that have taken place within his family. In chapter thirteen, we discovered that Amnon who was one of David's sons raped one of David's daughters, named Tamar. They were actually half-brother and sister, which does not make it any less vile. Tamar's full brother Amnon learns about how his sister was treated, and plots the murder of his older brother. After two years, Absalom finally goes through with his plan and kills Amnon for what he did to Tamar.

Absalom then fears punishment from his father David, and flees to Geshur, which is in Syria and was also the place where his mother was from. She was the King of Geshur's daughter. He remains there for three years. In chapter fourteen, Joab intervenes on behalf of Absalom and secures permission from David to bring him back to Jerusalem, but David doesn't see him for another two years.

When we left David and Absalom at the end of chapter fourteen there had been a full reconciliation between them. David agrees to see his son and it seems on the surface that all was well.

However, in chapter fifteen, we learned that there was war in the heart of Absalom, and he launched a full-scale rebellion against his father, David.

Last week, we saw Absalom seducing the people of Israel, convincing them that David was not a good king and that he could do a much better job. He blows the trumpet and declares himself to be king in Hebron. David knows that Absalom will make a move on Jerusalem so he abandons the city, in order to keep the battle away from there, thereby sparing the city much damage, and the citizens much danger.

In the last part of chapter fifteen, we see the leaders of Israel and supposed friends of David all choosing sides. Most will remain faithful to David, but some would betray him.

A. Ittai the Soldier (vs. 19 – 23)

Ittai was from Gath, the city of Goliath. You will recall that David spent some time in exile in the land of the Philistines, including the City of Gath (1 Samuel 21 and 27). Apparently, David had made some friends while he was there. A friendship that was strong enough to cause Ittai and his men to die defending David.

B. Zadok the Seer (vs. 24 – 30)

Zadok and Abiathar were the priests. Abiathar was the only one that escaped from King Saul's slaughter of the City of Nob. David took him in, and told him that he would be "in safeguard" as

long as he was with David. He wanted to stay with David, but David asked him to stay in Jerusalem and be his eyes and ears. Zadok and Abiathar would not be considered threats to Absalom as they were priests.

C. Ahithophel the Snake (vs. 12 & 31)

Ahithophel was a traitor.

D. Hushai the Spy (vs. 32 – 37)

Hushai would remain faithful and would act as a double agent. In chapter seventeen he will give advice to Absalom that would be preferred over Ahithophel's counsel.

In this chapter, we will continue to meet characters and see where their allegiances lie. Some will be for David; some for Absalom; but many would just be out for themselves.

Practical Point:

People will usually be for you as long as you can benefit them in some way. However, they will also often turn against you when it is in their interest to do so. That is the way of the world. The way of God is much higher; much more noble. We, as Christians, should always be on the side of what is right. We should be loyal to our friends as long as they are doing right.

I. Ziba the Faithful Servant or Phony Swindler? (vs. 1 – 4)

David needs the food and donkeys that Ziba supplies, but he was too hasty to make a decision regarding the land that belonged to Mephibosheth. You will recall that David had given all of the land that had one time belonged to King Saul to his grandson, Mephibosheth, who was also the son of Jonathan, David's friend.

In order to hear the other side of the story, you need to turn to 2 Samuel 19:24 – 30. We actually do not hear the truth from the Bible narrative; we only hear what Ziba, and later Mephibosheth have to say.

Is Ziba a faithful servant to David or is he a phony swindler, an opportunist trying to get over on David and betray his master, Mephibosheth.

Practical Point

Make sure that you listen to both sides of an issue before you make a judgment. It usually takes two to tango.

"He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him." (Proverbs 18:13)

II. Shimei the Furious Swearer and Stone Thrower (vs. 5 – 14)

Shimei was a man from the tribe of Benjamin who was not at all happy about the fact that the tribe of Benjamin lost the kingdom. After Saul died, the kingdom went to the tribe of Judah.

Shimei was accusing David of murder. He called him a "bloody man," and a "man of Belial," meaning a wicked or worthless man. Ely's sons were called "sons of Belial." Perhaps he thought

David to be responsible for Sau’s death; or Abner’s death; or Ishbosheth’s death; or the deaths of the seven sons of Saul (2 Samuel 21:1 – 14). This story though covered in 2 Samuel 21, may have actually occurred before the rebellion of Absalom historically.

Some believe that Shimei is “Cush the Benjamite” from Psalm 7.

See 2 Samuel 19:16 – 23 to hear about what happens to Shimei when David returns to Jerusalem. Notice that David does not retaliate against Shimei, though his men want him dead.

David warns his son, Solomon about Shimei (1 Kings 2:8 – 9); and Solomon eventually deals with him (1 Kings 2:36 – 45).

Practical Point – Shimei didn’t have the whole story. He made some assumptions about David based upon what happened to his family. He was blaming David for something that was all Saul’s fault. In order to make proper judgments, you need to be able to separate your emotions and logic your way through. People, like Shimei, sometimes can’t see clearly because they are way too emotional. Shimei was obviously a very angry man.

One of the problems that we are seeing in America today is that people are failing to see things logically, because their emotions are blinding them.

III. Hushai and Ahithophel – The Competing Counselors (vs. 15 – 23)

A. Hushai the Double Agent (vs. 15 – 19)

B. Ahithophel the Defector (vs. 20 – 23)

Ahithophel was David’s trusted counselor, but he jumped ship and went with Absalom. Absalom goes at first to Ahithophel for advice, but he will ask counsel of Hushai in the next chapter.

Practical Point – Be careful who you trust. At one time David trusted both of these men, but Ahithophel proved to be disloyal.

Conclusion

So far, we have four villains in this story:

Absalom who led the rebellion against his dad.

Ahithophel who was a trusted counselor, but apparently had nothing but his own ambition. He counsels Absalom to sleep with his father’s wives, and then seeks permission in chapter seventeen to kill David.

Shimei – a man who was very bitter and angry over what to his family in the past who now can’t see clearly to make the right judgment.

Ziba? Or Mephibosheth? – Personally, I think Ziba is the bad guy, but I can’t be sure.

