

# 2 Samuel 15 - Absalom's Treason; David Flees From Jerusalem, Strategizes On A Return

III. David's foes (13:1—20:26)

(1) Turmoil in David's immediate family (13:1—18:33)

(B) Absalom's rebellion (14:1—18:33)

(b) Absalom gains control of the nation and David flees into exile (15:1—16:14)

## 2 Samuel 15

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**1** Sometime later, Absalom acquired a chariot equipped with horses and recruited 50 men to accompany him.

**1** And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him.

- Absalom began a vigorous campaign to win the loyalty of the tribes

— His method was to meet persons in the gate, the court of ancient Israel, find out their native cities, suggest to them his interest and availability, and hope that they would return to their district and become ambassadors for his cause.

— This was his first step in the overthrow plan: promoted himself, and secure military weapons and strategy

Absalom was never God's choice to succeed David, and David knew this, although we don't know if Absalom knew it (Cf. 12:24-25; 1 Chr 22:9-10). Whether he knew it or not, Absalom's attempt to undermine confidence in the Lord's anointed, and eventually dethrone him, was contrary to God's will and doomed to fail. Even though he initially received God's blessing (14:27), his devious plan eventually brought God's punishment on himself and his premature death.

2 And Absalom used to rise early and stand beside the road to the gate; and when any man who had a lawsuit was to come before the king for judgment, Absalom would call out to him and say, "From what city are you?" And he would say, "Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel."

2 Absalom used to rise early and stand beside the way to the gate; and when any man had a suit to come to the king for judgment, Absalom would call to him and say, "From what city are you?" And he would say, "Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel."

2 Then he would get up early, stand near the passageway to the palace gate, and when anyone arrived to file a legal complaint for a hearing before the king, Absalom would call to him and ask, "You're from what city?" If he replied, "Your servant is from one of Israel's tribes,"

2 And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel.

- Absalom's first move to achieve his purposes of revenge was to make himself conveniently available (by the side of the road leading to the city gate, with his chariot and 50 men) to hear the complaints of the citizens

- Absalom was apparently next in line for David's throne. Pardoned from the law, he lusted after royal power by ambitiously went into the public square to get the people's affection and undermine his father's rule.

3 Then Absalom would say to him, "See, your claims are good and right, but you have no one to listen to you on the part of the king."

3 Then Absalom would say to him, "See, your claims are good and right, but no man listens to you on the part of the king."

3 Absalom would respond, "Look, your claims are valid and defensible, but nobody will listen to you on behalf of the king."

3 And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee.

- Step two: undermine his father's administration publicly

4 Moreover, Absalom would say, "Oh that someone would appoint me judge in the land, then every man who has a lawsuit or claim could come to me, and I would give him justice!"

4 Moreover, Absalom would say, "Oh that one would appoint me judge in the land, then every man who has any suit or cause could come to me and I would give him justice."

4 Who will appoint me to be a judge in the land? When anyone arrived to file a legal complaint or other cause, he could approach me for justice and I would settle it!"

4 Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!

- Cleverly, he insinuated that the king was too busy to hear them and that David had not even provided lesser judges to adjudicate their cases

— If only he were chief judge, he would listen to one and all and deal impartially in every matter

— Step three: self-promotion, promising to rule better than David

5 And whenever a man approached to prostrate himself before him, he would put out his hand and take hold of him and kiss him.

5 And when a man came near to prostrate himself before him, he would put out his hand and take hold of him and kiss him.

5 Furthermore, if a man approached him to bow down in front of him, he would put out his hand, grab him, and embrace him.

5 And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him.

- Absalom used personal charm and flattery to gain support

6 Absalom dealt this way with all Israel who came to the king for judgment; so Absalom stole the hearts of the people of Israel.

6 In this manner Absalom dealt with all Israel who came to the king for judgment; so Absalom stole away the hearts of the men of Israel.

6 By doing all of this to anyone who came to the king for a hearing, Absalom stole the loyalty of the men of Israel.

6 And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

- Absalom exalted himself over David

— All of Absalom's activities were intended to attract attention to Absalom and remind the people that he was the natural heir to David's throne (Cf. 1 Kings 1:5)

— This strategy is in contrast to David's submission to Saul

David had won the hearts of the people through sacrifice and service, but Absalom did it the easy way—and the modern way—by manufacturing an image of himself that the people couldn't resist. David was a hero; Absalom was only a celebrity. [Wiersbe]

7 Now it came about at the end of **four years** that Absalom said to the king, "Please let me go and pay my vow which I have made to the LORD, in **Hebron**."

7 Now it came about at the end of forty years that Absalom said to the king, "Please let me go and pay my vow which I have vowed to the LORD, in Hebron."

7 And so it was that forty years after Israel had demanded a king, Absalom asked the king, "Please let me go to Hebron so I can pay my vow that I made to the LORD,

7 And it came to pass after forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD, in Hebron.

- "...four years" - for four years, Absalom had been weaning the people away from David

-- The KJV and the Hebrew reads "40 years" but it's more likely four years [NIV, LXX] as is clear from other chronological references (LXX, Josephus)

— The timing was 980-976 BC, a time when David was building his palace in Jerusalem, constructing a new dwelling place for the Ark, and making preparations for the temple (5:9-12)

— These may have been some of the reasons that David was not meeting the needs of his people as well as he might otherwise had done—assuming Absalom's criticisms were valid

- "...Hebron" - Absalom's birthplace; he likely chose this city to announce his rebellion because his support was probably strongest there

— The city still bore a grudge against David because he had moved the seat of government to Jerusalem

— Also, the allied clans of the Negev, through whose good offices David first mounted the throne, were jealous of the northern tribes—now the dominant partner in the united kingdom—because of their power and influence with the king

8 For your servant made a vow while I was living in Geshur in Aram, saying, 'If the LORD will indeed bring me back to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD.'

8 For your servant vowed a vow while I was living at Geshur in Aram, saying, 'If the LORD shall indeed bring me back to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD.'

8 because when I was living at Geshur in Aram, your servant made this solemn promise: 'If the LORD ever brings me back to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD.'

8 For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the LORD shall bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD.

- Feeling that his popular support was overwhelming, Absalom requested and received permission from the king to go to Hebron, allegedly to pay a vow to the LORD which he had made while in exile in Geshur (Cf. 13:37)

9 The king said to him, "Go in peace." So he got up and went to Hebron.

9 The king said to him, "Go in peace." So he arose and went to Hebron.

9 The king replied to him, "Go in peace!" So Absalom got up and left for Hebron.

9 And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to Hebron.

Did David know about Absalom's treasonous actions? Whatever the case, David persisted in his choice of inactivity as king and father. David's dependence on a false peace and the status quo would prove too costly.

10 But Absalom sent spies throughout the tribes of Israel, saying, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then you shall say, 'Absalom is king in Hebron!'"

10 But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then you shall say, 'Absalom is king in Hebron.'"

10 But Absalom sent agents throughout all of the tribes of Israel, telling them, "When you hear the sound of the battle trumpet, you're to announce that Absalom is king in Hebron."

**10** But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron.

- The time was ripe for revolution. When Absalom reached Hebron, the very center of the Davidic dynasty, where David had begun his reign (3:2-3), Absalom announced his usurpation of power.

11 Then two hundred men went with Absalom from Jerusalem, who were invited and went innocently, for they did not know anything.

11 Then two hundred men went with Absalom from Jerusalem, who were invited and went innocently, and they did not know anything.

11 Meanwhile, 200 men left Jerusalem with Absalom. They had been invited to go along, but were innocent, not knowing anything about what was happening.

11 And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, that were called; and they went in their simplicity, and they knew not any thing.

- The 200 men (and Ahithophel) were won over to Absalom's cause, but were unaware that he had his sights set on usurping David's throne

12 And Absalom sent for **Ahithophel** the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his city Giloh, while he was offering the sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong, for the people continually increased with Absalom.

12 And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his city Giloh, while he was offering the sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong, for the people increased continually with Absalom.

12 Absalom also sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, to come from his home town of Giloh while Absalom was presenting the sacrificial offerings. And so the

conspiracy widened, because the common people increasingly sided with Absalom.

12 And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, even from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom.

- "...Ahithophel" - Bathsheba's grandfather (Cf. 11:3; 23:34)

— His joining Absalom's cause is generally attributed to a desire to avenge the disgrace David brought upon his family through his adultery with Bathsheba, along with David's coverup murder of his son-in-law Uriah

**13** Then a messenger came to David, saying, "The hearts of the people of Israel are with Absalom."

**13** Then a messenger came to David, saying, "The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom."

**13** Then a messenger arrived to inform David, "The loyalties of the men of Israel have shifted to Absalom."

**13** And there came a messenger to David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom.

- The people of Israel had previously given the kingdom to David as a gift (5:1-3), but now they took that gift from him

14 So David said to all his servants who were with him in Jerusalem, "Arise and let's flee, for *otherwise* none of us will escape from Absalom. Go quickly, or he will hurry and overtake us, and bring disaster on us and strike the city with the edge of the sword."

14 David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, "Arise and let us flee, for *otherwise* none of us will escape from Absalom. Go in haste, or he will overtake us quickly and bring down calamity on us and strike the city with the edge of the sword."

14 So David told all of his staff who were with him in Jerusalem, "Let's get up and get out of here! Otherwise, none of us will escape from Absalom. Hurry, or he'll overtake us quickly, bring disaster on all of us, and execute the inhabitants of the city!"

**14** And David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee; for we shall not else escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword.

- News quickly reached the capital that Absalom had effected a coup and that all was lost

— David, apparently convinced of the hopelessness of his cause and anxious to spare his own life and the city from destruction, departed and headed east for the Transjordan

David's decision to abandon Jerusalem has been a constant puzzle to historians:

- Some have supposed that his courage failed temporarily

- Some, that he had valid grounds for suspecting the loyalty of the population, perhaps still predominantly Jebusite
- Others, that he wished to spare the city the horrors of a siege
- And still others, that, if the revolt prospered in the north while Absalom was marching on him from the south, he would be caught in Jerusalem as a trap

15 Then the king's servants said to the king, "Behold, your servants *will do* whatever my lord the king chooses."

15 Then the king's servants said to the king, "Behold, your servants *are ready to do* whatever my lord the king chooses."

15 "Look!" the king's staff replied. "Your servants will do whatever the king chooses."

**15** And the king's servants said unto the king, Behold, thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint.

- The fact that David's loyal followers did not question his decision indicates that his decision was not based on cowardice but upon the cold calculation of an experienced military specialist

— The statement of support by David's loyalists would be a great statement for believers today to adopt as an expression of their devotion to Christ

16 So the king left, and all his household with him; but the king left ten concubines behind to take care of the house.

16 So the king went out and all his household with him. But the king left ten concubines to keep the house.

16 So the king left, taking his entire household with him except for ten mistresses, who were to keep the palace in order.

16 And the king went forth, and all his household after him. And the king left ten women, which were concubines, to keep the house.

- He left behind 10 housekeeping concubines

— This implies that David planned to return to Jerusalem: he was fleeing from an attack, not going into exile

Absalom's rebellion against God's anointed king is similar to the reaction of the Jews to Jesus, the Lord's Messiah. They did not want Him to reign over them. Consequently Jesus departed from them and returned to heaven, from which He will return to reign over them eventually.

17 The king left, and all the people with him, and they stopped at the last house.

17 The king went out and all the people with him, and they stopped at the last house.

17 The king left, along with all of his people with him, and they paused at the last house.  
17 And the king went forth, and all the people after him, and tarried in a place that was far off.

It was perhaps at this point, after he crossed the Jordan River, that David wrote Ps 3-4.

18 Now all of his servants passed by beside him, and all the **Cherethites**, all the **Pelethites**, and all the Gittites, six hundred men who had come with him from Gath, passed by before the king.

18 Now all his servants passed on beside him, all the Cherethites, all the Pelethites and all the Gittites, six hundred men who had come with him from Gath, passed on before the king.

18 All of his staff were going on ahead of him—that is, all of the special forces and mercenaries, all of the Gittites, and 600 men who had come to serve him from Gath, went on ahead of the king.

18 And all his servants passed on beside him; and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men which came after him from Gath, passed on before the king.

- "...Cherethites...Pelethites" - David's bodyguard

- The people, including 600 Gittites: these were the men who had gathered around David on his flight from Saul and emigrated with him to Gath (1 Sam 23:13; 27:2; 30:9)

— Afterward they lived with him in Ziklag, and eventually followed him to Hebron and Jerusalem

— In all probability, they formed a separate company of well-trained veterans, or a kind of bodyguard in Jerusalem and were well known as the Gittites

— These foreigners remained loyal to David, even when his own son deserted him

— Note the parallel to Jesus' experience (John 1:11-12)

**19** Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, "Why should you go with us too? Return and stay with your king, since you are a foreigner and an exile as well; *return* to your own place.

**19** Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, "Why will you also go with us? Return and remain with the king, for you are a foreigner and also an exile; *return* to your own place.

**19** Then the king suggested to Ittai the Gittite, "Why should you have to go with us? Return and stay with the new king, since you're a foreigner and exile. Stay where you want to stay.

**19** Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us? return to thy place, and abide with the king: for thou art a stranger, and also an exile.

20 You came *only* yesterday, so should I make you wander with us today, while I go wherever I go? Return and take your brothers back; mercy and truth be with you."

20 You came *only* yesterday, and shall I today make you wander with us, while I go where I will? Return and take back your brothers; mercy and truth be with you."

20 It seems only yesterday that you arrived, so should I make you wander around with us while I go wherever I can? Go back, and take your brothers with you. May gracious love and truth accompany you!"

20 Whereas thou camest but yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us? seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth be with thee.

21 But Ittai answered the king and said, "As the LORD lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king may be, whether for death or for life, there assuredly shall your servant be!"

21 But Ittai answered the king and said, "As the LORD lives, and as my lord the king lives, surely wherever my lord the king may be, whether for death or for life, there also your servant will be."

21 "As the LORD lives," Ittai answered in reply, "and as your majesty the king lives, wherever your majesty my king may be—whether living or dying—that's where your servant will be!"

**21** And Ittai answered the king, and said, As the LORD liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be.

- David urged Ittai to return to Jerusalem and remain loyal to him there, but Ittai insisted on accompanying the king

— Ittai's commitment to David recalls Ruth's commitment to Naomi (Ruth 1:16-17)

— David later repaid Ittai, another former resident of Gath, for his loyalty by making him commander of one-third of his army (18:2)

22 Then David said to Ittai, "Go and cross over *the brook Kidron*." So Ittai the Gittite crossed over with all his men and all the little ones who *were* with him.

22 Therefore David said to Ittai, "Go and pass over." So Ittai the Gittite passed over with all his men and all the little ones who *were* with him.

22 So David replied, "Come along, then!" So Ittai the Gittite went along also, accompanied by all of his men and all of his little ones.

**22** And David said to Ittai, Go and pass over. And Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that were with him.

23 While all the country was weeping with a loud voice, all the people were crossing over. The king was also crossing over the brook Kidron, and all the people were crossing over toward the way of the wilderness.

23 While all the country was weeping with a loud voice, all the people passed over. The king also passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over toward the way of the wilderness.

23 With all of the people in the territory crying loudly, everybody passed over the Kidron brook, along with the king. Then everyone headed out toward the road that leads to the wilderness.

23 And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over: the king also himself passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness.

- David crossed the Kidron Valley immediately east of Zion and moved up the Mount of Olives that stood on the other side of the valley

— In this, he previewed the movement of Jesus, who also crossed the Kidron Valley to pray on Mt Olivet during His Passion (John 18:1)

**24** Now behold, **Zadok** also *came*, and all the Levites with him, carrying the ark of the covenant of God. And they set down the ark of God, and Abiathar came up until all the people had finished crossing over from the city.

**24** Now behold, Zadok also *came*, and all the Levites with him carrying the ark of the covenant of God. And they set down the ark of God, and Abiathar came up until all the people had finished passing from the city.

**24** Meanwhile, Zadok showed up also, along with all of the descendants of Levi with him, carrying the Ark of the Covenant of God. They set down the Ark of God and Abiathar approached while all the people finished abandoning the city.

**24** And lo Zadok also, and all the Levites were with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God: and they set down the ark of God; and Abiathar went up, until all the people had done passing out of the city.

- "...Zadok" - "Righteous"; this family of priests won out over the house of Abiathar (of the line of Eli) during the reign of Solomon

— The NT Sadducees claimed descent from the house of Zadok

25 And the king said to Zadok, "Return the ark of God to the city. If I find favor in the sight of the LORD, then He will bring me back and show me *both* it and His habitation.

25 The king said to Zadok, "Return the ark of God to the city. If I find favor in the sight of the LORD, then He will bring me back again and show me both it and His habitation.

25 The king told Zadok, "Take the Ark of God back to the city. If I'm shown favor in the LORD's sight, then he'll bring me back again and show me both it and the place where it rests.

25 And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation:

26 But if He says this: 'I have no delight in you,' *then* here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him."

26 But if He should say thus, 'I have no delight in you,' behold, here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him."

26 But if he should say something like 'I'm not pleased with you,' well then, here I am—let him do to me whatever seems right to him."

26 But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.

- David's treatment of the Ark shows his submission to God's authority

— He did not treat the Ark as a good luck charm, as the Philistines and Saul had done

David may have written Ps 63 at this time.

27 The king also said to Zadok the priest, "Are you *not* a seer? Return to the city in peace, and your two sons with you, your son Ahimaaz and Jonathan the son of Abiathar.

27 The king said also to Zadok the priest, "Are you *not* a seer? Return to the city in peace and your two sons with you, your son Ahimaaz and Jonathan the son of Abiathar.

27 The king also asked Zadok the priest, "Aren't you a seer, too? Go back to the city in comfort, along with your son Ahimaaz and Abiathar's son Jonathan.

27 The king said also unto Zadok the priest, Art not thou a seer? return into the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar.

- Zadok was both a priest and a prophet (seer)

28 See, I am going to wait at the river crossing places of the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me."

28 See, I am going to wait at the fords of the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me."

28 Look! I'll camp at the wilderness fords until you send word to inform me."

28 See, I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness, until there come word from you to certify me.

29 So Zadok and Abiathar returned the ark of God to Jerusalem and remained there.

29 Therefore Zadok and Abiathar returned the ark of God to Jerusalem and remained there.

29 So Zadok and Abiathar returned the Ark of God to Jerusalem and remained there.

29 Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jerusalem: and they tarried there.

- Zadok and Abiathar, the two chief priests, were sent back to Jerusalem by David

— He knew that if it was God's will for him to return as king, he would do so. Hence there was no need to keep the Ark away from the sanctuary.

— After all, it was David, not the Lord, who was in flight. Besides, the priests' two sons (Ahimaaz, Zadok's son and Jonathan, Abiathar's son) could carry to David any revelations which God might give their fathers.

At this time there were two leading priests in Israel: Zadok (who was also a prophet, v27) and Abiathar. Zadok was probably responsible for worship in Jerusalem where David built a new structure to house the Ark. Abiathar seems to have functioned for many years as David's personal chaplain. Earlier, Zadok had been in charge of the Gibeon sanctuary (1 Chr 16:39-42). God's "habitation" (v25) most likely refers to the new tent David had recently completed in Jerusalem (Cf. 1 Chr 15:1).

There may be another reason for Absalom's rebellion and the support he enjoyed: many of the Israelites probably considered David's projects of building a new tabernacle and bringing the Ark into Jerusalem inappropriate, since Jerusalem was formerly a Canaanite stronghold. Many other people may have shared Michal's reaction (6:16-20).

### **Warning to Parents**

Eli's failure as a parent, and its penalty, should serve as a warning to all parents, even religious ones, and all in authority, to guard against laxity in ruling children and subordinates in the fear of the Lord, punishing strictly, though in love, all sin, jealous for God's honor even at the cost of offending man. Condoning sin is cruelty to children and dishonoring to God. Children will respect the parent who respects God. He who cannot rule his own house is unfit to rule the house of God (1 Tim 3:5).

**30** And David was going up the ascent of the *Mount of Olives*, weeping as he went, and his head was covered, and he was walking barefoot. Then all the people who were with him each covered his own head, and they were going up, weeping as they went.

**30** And David went up the ascent of the *Mount of Olives*, and wept as he went, and his head was covered and he walked barefoot. Then all the people who were with him each covered his head and went up weeping as they went.

**30** David then left, going up the Mount of Olives, crying as he went, with his head covered and his feet bare. All of the people who were with him covered their own heads and climbed up the Mount of Olives, crying as they went along.

**30** And David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up.

- David's trek up the Mount of Olives, with covered head and unshod feet, indicate he was attired for mourning

— Mount of Olivet was only a few hundred yards from the City of David

**31** Now *someone* informed David, saying, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." And David said, "LORD, please make the advice of Ahithophel foolish."

**31** Now someone told David, saying, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." And David said, "O LORD, I pray, make the counsel of Ahithophel foolishness."

**31** Just then, someone told David, "Ahithophel is one of Absalom's conspirators!"

So David prayed, "LORD, please turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness."

**31** And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.

- To make matters worse, David discovered that his trusted adviser Ahithophel had joined Absalom's cause

**32** It happened as David was coming to the summit, where God was worshiped, that behold, Hushai the Archite met him with his coat torn, and dust on his head.

**32** It happened as David was coming to the summit, where God was worshiped, that behold, Hushai the Archite met him with his coat torn and dust on his head.

**32** Just as David was coming to the top of the Mount of Olives where God was being worshipped, there was Hushai the Archite to meet him, with his coat ripped and dust all over his head!

**32** And it came to pass, that when David was come to the top of the mount, where he worshipped God, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head:

- Hushai was a "friend" (counselor, advisor; Cf. 1 Kings 4:5) of David

— He came from a family that evidently lived on Ephraim's southern border between Bethel and Ataroth (Joshua 16:2). He was probably quite old at this time.

**33** And David said to him, "If you go over with me, then you will become a burden to me.

**33** David said to him, "If you pass over with me, then you will be a burden to me.

**33** David greeted him, "If you come along with me, you'll be a burden to me.

33 Unto whom David said, If thou passest on with me, then thou shalt be a burden unto me:

34 But if you return to the city and say to Absalom, 'I will be your servant, O king; even as I was your father's servant in time past, so now I will also be your servant,' then you can foil the advice of Ahithophel for me.

34 But if you return to the city, and say to Absalom, 'I will be your servant, O king; as I have been your father's servant in time past, so I will now be your servant,' then you can thwart the counsel of Ahithophel for me.

34 So go back to the city and tell Absalom, 'I'll be your servant, your majesty! Just as I served your father in the past, I can be your servant now.' That way you can manipulate Ahithophel's advice to my benefit.

34 But if thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; as I have been thy father's servant hitherto, so will I now also be thy servant: then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel.

- To circumvent Ahithophel's effectiveness, David recruited Hushai and persuaded him to return to Jerusalem and attach himself to Absalom's court as a counselor

— His mission would be to contradict the advice of Ahithophel and to communicate Absalom's plans to Zadok and Abiathar, whose sons (Cf. v27), in turn, would relay those plans to David (Cf. 17:21; 18:19)

35 Are Zadok and Abiathar the priests not with you there? So it shall be that whatever you hear from the king's house, you shall report to Zadok and Abiathar the priests.

35 Are not Zadok and Abiathar the priests with you there? So it shall be that whatever you hear from the king's house, you shall report to Zadok and Abiathar the priests.

35 Won't Zadok and Abiathar the priests be there with you? So whatever you hear from the king's palace, you're to report to Zadok and Abiathar the priests.

35 And hast thou not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests? therefore it shall be, that what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house, thou shalt tell it to Zadok and Abiathar the priests.

36 Behold their two sons are there with them, Ahimaaz, Zadok's son and Jonathan, Abiathar's son; and by them you shall send me everything that you hear."

36 Behold their two sons are with them there, Ahimaaz, Zadok's son and Jonathan, Abiathar's son; and by them you shall send me everything that you hear."

36 Their two sons—Zadok's son Ahimaaz and Abiathar's son Jonathan—are with them there. You'll be sending me everything that you hear through them."

36 Behold, they have there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz Zadok's son, and Jonathan Abiathar's son; and by them ye shall send unto me every thing that ye can hear.

37 So Hushai, David's friend, came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem.

37 So Hushai, David's friend, came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem.

37 So David's friend Hushai went back to the city just as Absalom was arriving in Jerusalem.

**37** So Hushai David's friend came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem. David then continued in his flight, but Absalom took firm control of Jerusalem.

- David's forced flight from Jerusalem not only put his own kingship in jeopardy, but it also opened the door to further contention for the throne between the dynasties of Saul and David

— Absalom was apparently in the process of seizing power in Jerusalem, but this by no means implied that he could also gain control over the Northern tribes

— In fact, this turmoil in David's own family revived hope among the Northern tribes that they might be able to recover the kingdom for themselves

## **Friendship**

This chapter teaches us a lot about friendship. Absalom is the negative example, and David's supporters as he left Jerusalem are positive ones. David lost Absalom as a friend because he failed to reach out to him in genuine forgiveness. David won the friendship of many others in Israel because he had a heart for God that expressed itself in lovingkindness for people (Cf. Matt 22:37-39). This made people love David, and we see the marks of their friendship in their dealings with David in this chapter. The king's servants modeled true service by offering to do whatever David needed them to do (v15-18). Ittai expressed his friendship by being a companion to David (v19-23). Zadok and Abiathar became informants and made sure their friend had the information he needed to guarantee his welfare (v24-29). Hushai was willing to risk his own safety to defend David in the presence of his enemies (v30-37). These people proved to be "sheltering trees" for their friend in his hour of need.