

Day 311 - TUESDAY: December 12th

2 Samuel 15

2 Samuel 15:1-37 NKJV

After this it happened that Absalom provided himself with chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him. Now Absalom would rise early and stand beside the way to the gate. So it was, whenever anyone who had a lawsuit came to the king for a decision, that Absalom would call to him and say, "What city are you from?" And he would say, "Your servant is from such and such a tribe of Israel." Then Absalom would say to him, "Look, your case is good and right; but there is no deputy of the king to hear you." Moreover Absalom would say, "Oh, that I were made judge in the land, and everyone who has any suit or cause would come to me; then I would give him justice." And so it was, whenever anyone came near to bow down to him, that he would put out his hand and take him and kiss him. In this manner Absalom acted toward all Israel who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel. Now it came to pass after forty years that Absalom said to the king, "Please, let me go to Hebron and pay the vow which I made to the LORD. For your servant took a vow while I dwelt at Geshur in Syria, saying, 'If the LORD indeed brings me back to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD.' " And the king said to him, "Go in peace." So he arose and went to Hebron. Then 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 reigns in Hebron!' " And with Absalom went two hundred men invited from Jerusalem, and they went along innocently and did not know anything. Then Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his city—from Giloh—while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy grew strong, for the

people with Absalom continually increased in number. Now a messenger came to David, saying, "The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom." So David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, "Arise, and let us flee, or we shall not escape from Absalom. Make haste to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly and bring disaster upon us, and strike the city with the edge of the sword." And the king's servants said to the king, "We are your servants, ready to do whatever my lord the king commands." Then the king went out with all his household after him. But the king left ten women, concubines, to keep the house. And the king went out with all the people after him, and stopped at the outskirts. Then all his servants passed before him; and all the Cherethites, all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men who had followed him from Gath, passed before the king. Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, "Why are you also going with us? Return and remain with the king. For you are a foreigner and also an exile from your own place. In fact, you came only yesterday. Should I make you wander up and down with us today, since I go I know not where? Return, and take your brethren back. Mercy and truth be with you." But Ittai answered the king and said, "As the LORD lives, and as my lord the king lives, surely in whatever place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also your servant will be." So David said to Ittai, "Go, and cross over." Then Ittai the Gittite and all his men and all the little ones who were with him crossed over. And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people crossed over. The king himself also crossed over the Brook Kidron, and all the people crossed over toward the way of the wilderness. There was Zadok also, and all the Levites 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 finished crossing over from the city. Then the king said to Zadok, "Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the LORD, He

will bring me back and show me both it and His dwelling place. But if He says thus: 'I have no delight in you,' here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him." 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, Ahimaaz your son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. See, I will wait in the plains of the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me." Therefore Zadok and Abiathar carried the ark of God back to Jerusalem. And they remained there. So David went up by the Ascent of the Mount of Olives, and wept as he went up; and he had his head covered and went barefoot. And all the people who were with him covered their heads and went up, weeping as they went up. Then someone told David, saying, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." And David said, "O LORD, I pray, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness!" Now it happened when David had come to the top of the mountain, where he worshiped God—there was Hushai the Archite coming to meet him with his robe torn and dust on his head. David said to him, "If you go on with me, then you will become a burden to me. But if you return to the city, and say to Absalom, 'I will be your servant, O king; as I was your father's servant previously, so I will now also be your servant,' then you may defeat the counsel of Ahithophel for me. And do you not have Zadok and Abiathar the priests with you there? Therefore it will be that whatever you hear from the king's house, you shall tell to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. Indeed they have there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz, Zadok's son, and Jonathan, Abiathar's son; and by them you shall send me everything you hear." So Hushai, David's friend, went into the city. And Absalom came into Jerusalem.

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: "Chapter 15 of 2 Samuel opens with Prince Absalom beginning to present himself as successor to the throne

(verse 1). He also presents himself as one who empathizes with the plight of the people and their personal grievances. There may be a measure of truth in David being busied with affairs of state and somewhat cut off from the citizenry. Absalom may even sincerely resent this, considering David's mishandling of his own situation. Perhaps he really does believe he would do a better job of caring for the populace. Still, even if he is thinking this way, it may simply be a way to rationalize his personal ambition. He wants to be king. And, by personal charm and promises, Absalom, the premier politician, over time steals the hearts of the people from his father.

Absalom finally conspires with others to instigate a full-scale revolt. He engineers to have himself declared king in Hebron, where David was first crowned (2 Samuel 2:1-7; 2 Samuel 5:1-5). As we'll examine further later, Absalom is even joined by Ahithophel, "David's counselor" (2 Samuel 15:12)—this term perhaps implying *main* counselor, such as a prime minister or chief of staff (compare 1 Chronicles 27:33-34). After David sinned with Bathsheba and Uriah, God told him through Nathan, "Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house" (2 Samuel 12:11). And indeed, his own son has now become his chief adversary—leading a national rebellion against him. David is now reaping what he sowed in his own *personal* rebellion against God (compare Galatians 6:7-8).

Informed of what is happening, David wisely flees from Jerusalem with his trusted servants, lest Absalom's armies trap them all. They head east across the Kidron Valley toward the Judean wilderness. A Levitical contingent led by Zadok and Abiathar bring the Ark of the Covenant to strengthen and encourage the king. But he sends them back to the city with it. "It was David who was going into exile, not the Lord; the symbol of God's presence with his people would remain in the place of worship for the entire community" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on 2

Samuel 15:24-26). David also believes the priests will serve well as effective spies. As for whether David will be restored to his place in Jerusalem as well, he leaves that in God's hands. When he first fled, he apparently felt God would give the city back to him, as he otherwise would probably not have left 10 concubines there to take care of the palace (verse 16). Interestingly, this decision will have incredible consequences. Indeed, as we will see, this will lead to one of the punishments God had decreed for David because of his adultery with Bathsheba.

While the priests return the ark to its place on Mount Zion, David and his company ascend the Mount of Olives, east of the city, with outward signs of mourning (compare Jeremiah 14:3; Ezekiel 24:17). Upon reaching the top, David worships God (2 Samuel 15:32), no doubt looking across the Kidron Valley to Mount Zion, where the ark and its tent sit next to his palace. He has just received the terrible news that Ahithophel has joined the rebellion—terrible because, besides being a personal betrayal that may be reflected in Psalms 55:12-14 and Psalms 41:9 (also prophetic of Christ's betrayal by Judas), Ahithophel gave brilliant counsel (2 Samuel 16:23). And as David is worshiping and beseeching God over the matter, he receives an answer to his prayers in the appearance of another of his advisers, Hushai—whom he sends to infiltrate Absalom's court and work against Ahithophel.” [END]

Verses 3 to 5 – Any person who is in need of having their case heard, wants to hear that they are right. This is politics, essentially kissing babies and trying to win favor. Absalom promises that if he were in power, he would hear their case and rule in their favor.

He then represents himself as a close person to them, by taking and kissing their hand, versus being treated like royalty. Absalom is no fool to how to win the hearts of the people.

Verse 7 – Regarding the 40 years, the John Gill commentary states “Or four years; so long it was from the reconciliation of Absalom to David, as Josephus says; and so read Theodoret on the place, the Syriac and Arabic versions: but some say it was either forty years from the time Israel first had a king; and which might be an era of reckoning with the Jews, as the era of Seleucidae was with the Greeks, on the like account; or from the time Saul slew the priests at Nob, as Jerom; or from the time of David's being anointed by Samuel; or this was the year of Absalom's age, or of David's reign: but these, and other attempts made to account for this passage, are not entirely satisfactory; and therefore one may be tempted to conclude there must be a mistake in the copy, of "arbaim" for "arba", forty for four; which makes it quite easy, and confirms the first sense:” [END]

Verse 11 – A vow offering, was a type of peace offering (Leviticus 7:16) and all who were clean could share in the offering. Here it appears that Absalom invites a large group to partake in the feast from the Peace Offering (Vow), but they have no idea about his real plan.

Verse 27 – The Adam Clarke commentary states: “That is, As thou art the only organ of the public worship, that worship cannot be carried on without thee; and as thou art the priest of God, thou hast no cause to fear for thy personal safety: the nation has not abandoned their God, though they have abandoned their king. It appears also, that he wished these priests, by means of their sons, Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar, to send him frequent intelligence of the motions and operations of the enemy.” [END]

