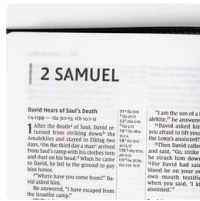


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2 Samuel 15 - 16



2 Samuel - Steve Gregg

In this segment, Steve Gregg discusses the events that unfold in 2 Samuel chapters 15 and 16. He highlights the drama surrounding David's sons and Absalom's attempts to take charge. Gregg dives into the psychological effects of David's ruling and the role of Ahithophel as a wise and shrewd counselor, who eventually turns against David. The segment concludes with the question of the fulfillment of promises made by God to David's kingdom, which remains uncertain due to the family's ambiguous actions.

Transcript

We're starting now at 2 Samuel chapter 15, and there's been a lot of drama just in the last two chapters. There's been a rape of one of David's daughters by one of his sons, Amnon, a half-sister. He has raped her and discarded her and ruined her life, and apparently been heartless about it, and went on with his life.

However, her full brother Absalom has not forgotten it, and plots the death of Amnon and carries it out, and Amnon is killed for his dastardly deed. Absalom, however, now is on the outside of the law, and he flees out of the country to his grandfather's country, who is his grandfather's king of Geshur, and so he goes and stays there, and he's there for three years. And after David has finished mourning for Amnon, he begins to mourn the loss of Absalom, too, but he will not do anything about it, because there are outstanding criminal charges.

He won't extradite Absalom from Geshur and bring him back to be prosecuted, but he misses him and wishes he was back, but he can't easily bring him back. He can't easily just issue a pardon. Now, he can.

The king can issue a pardon, but he could not easily do so, because he realized that this would be, in a sense, an unjustified pardon. It would be something done only because it was his son. It would look like David was being unjust and showing favoritism to a criminal just because it was his own son, and so he does not act on this until Joab convinces him to bring Absalom back into the country.

So David finally agrees, so Absalom comes back to the country and stays in his own

house, but he couldn't come to David's house. He couldn't come and see his father. So it's as if he is forgiven, but he's not really forgiven.

It's as if he's been given amnesty, but he's not been given reconciliation. And there really is that middle place that is totally not okay to be in a relationship. I mean, Jesus talks about when you stand praying, forgive if you have ought against anyone.

So this is in Mark chapter 11, I think it's verse 25. He says you should just forgive people who have done things wrong to you. That means in your heart you forgive them.

That means you absolve them from responsibility, so to speak. But that doesn't mean you have a relationship with them again. In another place Jesus said if your brother sins against you, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him.

In other words, in addition to forgiving him in your heart unilaterally, there is the desire to restore a relationship. So you actually approach him, you confront him, you resolve the issue, you elicit his repentance. And when you have his repentance, then you forgive him and things are back to where they should be.

There's two steps to reconciliation. One is that you release them in your heart. The other is that you go and restore the relationship.

And David, in a sense, has done the first step, but not the second. He has absolved Absalom of guilt and granted amnesty, but he has not confronted him. He has not asked Absalom to repent or done anything else that would restore the relationship.

There is sort of this limbo. Absalom is not pleased with that. And whether he's not pleased because this keeps him out of the position where he can finagle to get in power again, as he wants to do, or whether it's just that he resents his father for not having a relationship with him, it's hard to say.

In any case, he prevails upon Joab to prevail upon David to be decisive for a change and either kill him, Absalom, that is, do not absolve him of his crime, or else fully restore him. And so David agrees, seemingly reluctantly, and does let Absalom come and meet him, and they appear to be reconciled. But the delay on David's part has caused Absalom to have many years to have resentment toward his father, and to begin to feel like his father is not a good king, not a good father, and not a good king.

Absalom, after all, is more decisive than his father is. When there is a crime against Tamar, it was Absalom who took it upon himself to execute justice, he thought, where his father had just been flabby in the area, had done nothing. And then, of course, in deciding whether Absalom's crime should be punished or fully absolved, David had been sort of undecided about that.

And so Absalom has decided David is not really the man he used to be, he has no

backbone. And he may know that it is very much because David had himself compromised, and he was ashamed, and he felt somewhat guilty of what he had done, and the problems he had caused. And therefore, Absalom may have just decided David's time as a ruler is obviously at an end, as a good ruler.

He doesn't have any spine, and he doesn't make decisions in a responsible way. And so Absalom begins to think, well, I'm more responsible than my dad is, I'd make a better ruler. Also, by this time, Absalom was probably the oldest surviving son.

Amnon had been the oldest son, but now he was dead. Cheliab was the second son, also known as Daniel in 1 Chronicles. We know nothing about him except that he was the second son of David.

He may have died young, which would explain why he's not mentioned anymore. He's listed in a list of David's sons as the second one born to David, but he has no role in any of the stories. If he was living, he'd be the next in line for the throne, but he may well have been dead.

He may have died in infancy or something like that. If so, the third son, Absalom, would be the one who's the successor to the throne. And we do find Absalom making a play for the throne, but we don't find him making any efforts to get rid of Cheliab, who would be the main rival for the throne.

So it would seem that Cheliab was not around. The second son of David probably was not living at this time, and pretty soon the third son would not be either. And that was Absalom, who decided it was time for him to make a power grab.

Now, Absalom probably would have become king in due time, although maybe his crime would have caused him to be bypassed. Who knows? After all, Solomon was now alive as a baby, and Solomon had been renamed Beloved of the Lord. And it may be that Absalom realized that though he was the oldest surviving son, his claim to the throne might be challenged on the basis that he had done questionable acts, that he had a capital crime on his record, and that his father might show favoritism towards Solomon instead.

And so Absalom decides to make a move to get the throne before David's even dead, before there becomes a competition between the heirs for the throne. And after this had happened, Absalom provided himself with chariots and horses and 50 men to run before him. Now, as a prince, he could do this.

This was not an act of war, although chariots and horses were war vehicles. But as a rich son of the king, now officially on good terms again, he could begin to order his affairs in a regal manner. And he could get a bodyguard of 50 charioteers and runners who run before him and proclaim him.

He's not being humble or modest at all in his position as a prince. He's trying to cause himself to be viewed by the public as a regal person, a person who might make a good king perhaps. Instead of just seeing him as one of the flunkies, one of the chief ministers beside David, as the sons of David were said to be earlier, he wants to be seen more as a royal personage.

Now, Absalom would rise early and stand beside the way to the gate. Now, the gate of the city was where people would come to bring their legal disputes. The elders and the magistrates sat at the gate of the city and would handle disputes.

Well, Absalom, as a prince, could put himself in that position. And he got up every morning early and went and sat at the gate to wait for people to come who had disputes. And then he was going to rule in their favor.

Or whoever came, he'd always say, you're right. And this is how he's going to win people over to himself. He sat beside the way of 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. And Absalom would say to him, look, your case is good and right. But there's no deputy of the king to hear you.

Moreover, Absalom would say, oh, that I were made judge in the land. He didn't say king, because that would be treason. He said, oh, if I were only a judge, you know, I could really see to it that cases like yours got the attention they deserve.

The king's a mighty busy man. There's no one really who's going to be able to bring your case to the king. And that's a shame, too, because you've got a good case here.

You'd probably win this if it could get the king's attention. But he's just not really interested in cases like yours. I would be if I were the judge.

I'd see to it that you got what you deserved. He says, 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. We're told that Absalom was standing by the gate, not sitting. It's possible that he was not really in the position of a judge.

And that there were judges there that would have been more loyal to David than Absalom was. But that he was intercepting people who came. That he's standing there outside the gate before people actually get to the place where the magistrates are sitting and saying, I'm here to preview your case.

Tell me about your case. Oh, that's a good case you've got. These judges, I don't know if they'll even hear you.

Because they don't have the people's concerns on their heart like I do. But boy, if I were the judge, then you'd really have a friend in court in me. I would give justice.

And so it was, whenever anyone came near him 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 Absalom was the most good looking man in the country, remember? There was no one like him for good looks. And then he was a charmer. When people came with disputes, he'd charm them with showing them respect.

He was a prince, but he'd treat them like equals. He'd greet them with a kiss, which is the way that people would greet. Generally speaking, the prince wouldn't greet all the commoners with that kind of respect.

He would usually be more aloof. But Absalom was coming down to the people's level and saying, I'm one of you. I'm the people's candidate.

I'm the populist. What the people want, that's what I would stand for if I were elected. Of course, there were no elections, but the idea is planting in people's minds that things could be better for them if Absalom was the one in charge instead of David.

And so he stole the hearts of the men of Israel this way over a period of time. And it came to pass, it says, after 40 years that Absalom said to the king, please let me go down to Hebron and pay the vow which I vowed to the Lord. Now, after 40 years, there are several authorities that say this was four years, not 40.

Josephus says four years. Now, some other people think that this is 40 years after some other event. One explanation is that David had won the hearts of Israel 40 years earlier when he slew Goliath, and this is 40 years after that.

And now Absalom's winning the hearts of Israel. So that is certainly one way of seeing it. Forty years or four years, in any case, some time elapsed that Absalom was involved in winning these people over.

And when he decided that he had the popularity that he needed, he decided to make his play to become the king, which would, of course, mean that David would either have to abdicate or be killed. In fact, even if David did abdicate, Absalom would have to kill him because there would always be people, a certain percentage, including Joab and other important people who would stand by David. So David would have to be eliminated.

And at this point, Absalom is just angry enough at his father that he doesn't mind not only taking his throne, but killing him in the process. And so at that point, Absalom came to David and said, Please let me go to Hebron and pay the vow which I have vowed to the Lord. For your servant vowed a vow while I dwelt in Geshur in Syria, saying, If the

Lord indeed brings me back to Jerusalem, then I will serve the Lord.

He's saying, While I was away, I promised God I'd make certain sacrifices at Hebron if I could come back to the country. And now I'm back in the country, I should pay these vows. Now Hebron, of course, is where David had first been crowned.

David was now ruling in Jerusalem. But he had first ruled for seven and a half years in Hebron. Jerusalem was not specifically a Judean city.

It was on the border of Judea and Benjamin. And therefore, it was not strictly speaking of the tribe of Judah, although David was. But Hebron was a Judean city.

And therefore, if Absalom wanted to become king, it would be very symbolic that he would do so with the support of his own tribe in the very city where David had been anointed by his own tribe as king. The symbolism of it is most important. Whenever somebody is trying to overthrow the existing king and put himself in that position, he's really got to count on the value of symbolism.

I mean, getting enough people to proclaim Absalom as king was very key. And yet, a whole bunch of people saying Absalom is king doesn't make it so. He's got to count on the psychological effect that will have on people.

If he can get a whole bunch of people to say Absalom is king, hail king Absalom, then if that has a sufficient psychological impact on others, they'll say, oh, okay, I guess so. And they'll just go along with it. But if people say, well, wait a minute.

Why should Absalom be king? I think David's king. Then the whole thing flops. You've got to have all the psychological impact that you can get.

And so going to Hebron would be one of the things that would contribute to that. That's the place where historically the Judean kings had been anointed, David being the only one previously to this, though. And so 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 200 men from Jerusalem who were invited, and they went along innocently and did not know anything.

Absalom had a lot of friends now. A lot of people loved Absalom. And so he invited 200 men to go with him to a sacrifice, and a sacrifice always involved a feast.

Of course, you sacrifice a lot of animals, but you burn certain parts and eat the rest. So a major event where a lot of animals are sacrificed was also a big barbecue. And so to invite your friends to that was common.

And so he invited 200 of his friends to come. They didn't know he intended to proclaim

himself king, so they were innocent of the matter. Then Absalom sent for Ahithoel, the Giloite, David's counselor, from his city, namely from Gilo, while he offered sacrifices.

And the conspiracy grew strong, for the people with Absalom continually increased in number. Now, apparently while he was there with his 200, that was sort of a seed crowd that attracted others. And he invited Ahithoel to come.

Now, Ahithoel might have been Bathsheba's grandfather, but we don't know that. Remember, there is a son of Ahithoel named Eliab, and also a man by that name was the father of Bathsheba. It's possibly the same man, but that's not known.

But Ahithoel obviously was considered to be somebody that Absalom would like to have in his camp, and apparently did have in his back pocket. Why did Ahithoel side with Absalom and not David? We're not told. But Ahithoel was a very wise man, shrewd we could say, and he may well have seen which way the wind was blowing in Israel.

David was a weak leader now. He had once been a hero, he's no hero now. He's indecisive and weak, and now there's an up-and-coming strong leader who is decisive, and Ahithoel and others may have all agreed that Absalom would really be a better ruler.

However, he could not fail to know that if Absalom did become king, it would be over David's dead body. Not because David would fight to the death, David would never fight his own son, but because his son would have to kill David, because David would always be a potential rival. And so Ahithoel, by siding with Absalom, actually was not only taking a stand for Absalom being a better king, but actually for the ultimate overthrow of David, and even David being killed.

And we'll find that after David flees the city, Ahithoel actually advises Absalom to send armies out to kill David as quick as he can. So Ahithoel's a very nasty fellow, as it turns out, though he had previously been a very esteemed counselor of David. Now he's come over to the other side, to the dark side.

But the conspiracy of Absalom increased continually, which seems to mean that more and more people were being drawn to him, and this is partly due to the fact that he sent out spies, it says, I think probably just messengers would be what we're talking about, who went out into all the areas, so that at the sound of the trumpet, there would probably be a signal given that would tell everyone, at that time, proclaim Absalom king, not only in Hebron, but throughout the country people would be saying, Absalom is reigning in Hebron, which is where David had originally reigned from. A messenger came to David saying, the hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom. So David said to all his servants, who are with him in Jerusalem, arise and let us flee, or else 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. Now David, of course, probably knew that he'd have a good chance of defeating Absalom in battle. He did.

Eventually his forces that were with him did defeat Absalom in battle, and David had never been a wimp. Even if he was fighting against the whole army of the Philistines, with his own men, or being pursued by the armies of Saul, David never really had any lack of confidence in battle. But he could certainly not bring himself to fight his son, and kill his son.

He'd rather abdicate, he'd rather leave a vacuum, and that way Absalom wouldn't have to come and kill all of the people who were loyal to David. So let's all get out of here. We'll just vacate the capital and let him take it.

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, in case he would make it back safely. These were obviously women that he didn't value very highly.

Concubines were slave wives. They were used basically for having children, but they weren't really usually women that were very valuable to the man. They were slaves.

And David had a lot of wives, and apparently a lot of concubines, and leaving ten concubines behind to take care of things, of course put them at risk, as we shall see, and he certainly knew that would be so. But they were women he could spare, apparently. 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, which were the Philistine bodyguard that he had, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, these were people from Gath, Philistines, 600 men who had followed him from Gath, passed before the king. Now here he's reached the outskirts of the city, and rather than fleeing to safety himself, he waits for his servants to pass over to safety before himself. He's deferring to his underlings, basically looking out for their safety rather than his own primarily.

Of course he's looking out for his two, they're all fleeing, but he's letting them go ahead of him, because he's letting them put more distance between themselves in danger than he's placing between himself and danger in this case. And so these 600 Gittites, these Philistines, all went with him, and he let them pass before him and ahead of him. And the king said to Ittite, the Gittite, why are you also going with us? Return and remain with the king, for you're a foreigner, and also an exile from your own place.

In other words, you're a Philistine, you have no reason to be loyal to me, why don't you stay with Absalom? That's the side of the bread the butter's going to be on. If you side

with Absalom, you can stay in a good position. You go with me, and you're looking for trouble.

You may end up dying with me. Return and remain with the king. In fact, he says, 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.

In other words, he's saying, I'm not expecting you to be loyal to me. You're not even a countryman of mine. I appreciate the fact that you're on my side, but I don't want you to put yourself at risk.

Just go back and be loyal to my enemy, and I give you my blessing. Mercy and truth be with you. And Ittai answered the king and said, As the Lord lives, that is, as Yahweh 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 we can see in the Old Testament that godliness, again, is found among Gentiles as well as Jews, in this case even a Philistine. So if we have the impression that in the Old Testament the Jews ethnically were God's people and Gentiles were not, this is not the way it's portrayed. Absalom was not one of God's people, yet he was a Jew.

Ittai the Gittite was one of God's people, and he was not a Jew. Being part of Israel, being part of God's people in the Old Testament as well as in the New, has more to do with your faithfulness to God and to standing with God than it has to do with anything about your bloodline. Absalom had a perfect Judean bloodline, but he was an evil man, he was a man of Satan, not a man of God.

And David was sort of a mixed bag, but he still stood with the Lord, even though he did wrong and wasn't a great king. But this man was a Philistine, he had no ethnic or cultural or historical background with the people of Israel, but he had joined them only yesterday, David said, hyperbole. He had recently come over from the Philistines to be part of Israel, and he said, I'm going to die with you if necessary.

I'm committed to Yahweh and to my king. 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, they took their whole families too.

And all the country wept with a loud voice and all the people crossed over. The king himself also crossed over the Kidron and all the people crossed over toward the way of the wilderness. So now they're heading, if possible, out of the country and hopefully beyond the range of Absalom and his vengeance on his father.

There was Zadok also and all the Levites with him bearing the Ark of the Covenant of

God. And they sat 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, who was of course the priest, 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 habitation. But if he says thus, I have no delight in you. Here I am.

Let him do to me as seems good to him. Then the king also said to Zadok, the priest, are you not a seer? And Zadok was also a prophet apparently as well as a priest. Return to the city in peace, you and your two sons with you, Ahimeaz 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, remember Abiathar was descended from Eli and Zadok was not, but they were both priests at this time for some reason. They carried the Ark of God back to Jerusalem and they remained there.

So they were going to feign loyalty to the new king. But they were really loyal to David and therefore they could be informants for David. They could, if they would overhear things, strategies of Absalom, they could send messages to warn David.

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 he 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, that's Mount of Olives, where he worshipped God, that 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, you will become a burden to me. Perhaps this man was elderly and couldn't travel fast and David would feel obligated to watch out for him. He says, But if you return to the city and say to Absalom, I will be your servant, O king, just as I have been your father's servant previously, so I will now be your servant, then you may defeat the counsel of Ahithophel for me.

Now apparently Hushai, the Archite, who we had not known previously, was apparently a wise and elderly servant of David who could be expected to be consulted along with Ahithophel. About strategies and so forth. The kings always would consult wise men about their battle plans and so forth.

Ahithophel is said to have been so wise that he was reputed as being so wise that to inquire of Ahithophel was like inquiring of the Oracle of God. It's almost like he was a prophet. He was not, he was just intelligent.

And he usually gave intelligent counsel. Hushai apparently had at least a rival reputation to that of Ahithophel, as we shall see. Hushai was consulted along with Ahithophel by Absalom, and David knew this would be so.

So having Hushai in his corner in the palace of Absalom would be advantageous to David because he could defeat the counsel of Ahithophel. He knew that Ahithophel would give very cogent and wise counsel against David to Absalom. And therefore if Absalom followed Ahithophel's counsel he'd be following some strategy that might be wiser than what David could come up with to defeat it.

But Hushai could give, if he's even smarter than Ahithophel or craftier, he could give other counsel and make it sound better. That was going to be quite a task. But David had confidence that Hushai was able to do that.

And he says to Hushai, 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 Ahimeaz, 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. Chapter 16 When David was a little past the top of the mountain there was Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth who met him with a couple of saddled donkeys and on them 200 loaves of bread 100 clusters of raisins 100 summer fruits and a skin of wine. Provisions obviously for David and those who were fleeing with him.

And the king said to Ziba what do you mean to do with these? So Ziba said the donkeys are for the king's household to ride on the bread and summer fruit is for the young men to eat and the wine for those who are faint in the wilderness to drink. Then the king said and where is your master's son? Meaning Saul's grandson really, Mephibosheth. And Ziba said to the king indeed he is staying in Jerusalem for he said today the house of Israel will restore the kingdom of my father to me.

So the king said to Ziba here all that belongs to Mephibosheth is yours. And Ziba said I humbly bow before you that I may find favor in your sight oh my lord my lord oh king. Now here's a case of a man judging a matter before he hears it.

You know first his own cause seems right until his neighbor comes and examines him it says in Proverbs 14, 18 I guess it is. But anyway the point is that Ziba comes and brings an accusation against his master Mephibosheth. The accusation seems to have been false although we're never really made clear if that's true or not.

But we later hear Mephibosheth's side of the story and it sounds credible. Ziba apparently is trying to you know get favor from David and he gets it. David says okay all

the land that was Saul's land that I gave to Mephibosheth that's now going to be yours Ziba.

So Ziba who has been a servant until now is now a rich landowner. And he's done this by accusing his master Mephibosheth of treason. Essentially he's saying that Mephibosheth hearing of Absalom's play for power has decided oh this is my chance to become king again.

Mephibosheth of course was the last surviving or known at the time the last known heir of Saul who might claim the throne of Saul if people wish to restore Saul's dynasty. However there was no evidence that people were moving that direction. They were installing Absalom.

This was not to the advantage of Saul's dynasty necessarily in fact Absalom might well be less merciful to the survivors of the previous dynasty than David was. It's very possible that had Absalom's plot survived and succeeded and Absalom had become king that within a matter of time he might have had Mephibosheth killed as a possible rival. Absalom had no scruples about killing rivals and so it seems unlikely that Mephibosheth would have really reasoned this way.

Ziba seems to be making up a story it seems to me and Mephibosheth later certainly denied the story and gave an alternative story that sounds frankly more likely than this one. But anyway David's not using very much discernment he's distracted he's got other things on his mind so he just kind of rashly says okay all that was Mephibosheth that's yours Ziba. Now when the king David came to Behurim there was a man from the family of the house of Saul whose name was Shimei the son of Gera coming from there he came out cursing continuously as he came and he threw stones at David and at all the servants of the king David and all the people and all the mighty men who were on his right hand and on his left now that's a risky thing to do throw rocks at the military generals and at the king and Shimei said thus when he cursed come out you bloodthirsty man you rogue Yahweh has brought upon you all the blood of the house of Saul in whose place you have reigned and the Lord has delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom your son so now you are caught in your own evil because you are a bloodthirsty man.

Now what's interesting about this is it was true but not true this man was of the house of Saul or of the he was of the somehow related to Saul's household he was a man of the family of the house of Saul and he thought these bad things were happening to David because of David having replaced, supplanted Saul well David had nothing to do with that God replaced Saul with David God rejected Saul and sought David a man after his own heart to replace him David did nothing to the house of Saul David didn't kill one of Saul's heirs. Saul led his own sons to death in battle by his own foolishness and the only heir that David was aware of he had shown honor to and so to say that God is doing this

to David because of the injustices that David had done to the house of Saul, this man was like whacked out, this guy was loony this guy was way out of touch with reality yet he was saying to David that this is happening to you because you are a bloodthirsty man and David knew very well that it was happening to him because of his sin which included shedding innocent blood. David couldn't really deny that there was truth in the accusation even though the accusation was really wrong the accuser didn't know what he was talking about, but David could hear a ring of truth in it.

Maybe the Lord was speaking through this man to him. It says Abishai who was Joab's brother the son of Zeruiah said to the king why should this dead dog curse my Lord the King? Please let me go over and take off his head and the king said what have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah so let him curse because the Lord has said to him curse David, who then shall say why have you done so? And David said to Abishai and all his servants see how my son who came out from my own body seeks my life. How much more now may this Benjamite.

Let him alone and let him curse for so the Lord has ordered him it may be that the Lord will look on my affliction and that the Lord will repay me with good for his cursing this day. As David and his men went along the road Shimei went along the hillside opposite them and cursed as he went threw stones at him and kicked up dust now the king and all his people who were with him became weary and so they refreshed themselves there they camped out. Now as David fled and was walking with his gloomy procession this man followed and continued to make these really false accusations but David heard the voice of God in it he said the Lord has told him to bring this up.

If I respond well maybe God will have mercy on me and will repay me good for this man's cursing but I, he says I don't know that God didn't send him to curse me because there is, there is some truth in this. You know my own conscience is hearing something in it that's true and I cannot really blame him because it may be God's taunting me about this. Now of course God was not taunting him God had forgiven him and God doesn't taunt you for things that he's forgiven you of but David's conscience taunted him and he realized that he did deserve this this was something that had come upon him because of his sin and therefore he just kind of accepted it as from the hand of the Lord.

Even this mockery from this person who whom David could easily have sent Abishai over to kill him and end that but David said listen what do I care about this Benjamite what he says my own son wants to kill me why do I care about this cursing of this non-person just let him curse and let God vindicate. Meanwhile Absalom and all the people, the men of Israel came to Jerusalem that is from Hebron Absalom had been in Hebron where he declared himself king and then when he found that David had vacated Jerusalem he thought he'd move into those royal quarters taking the place of his father in all ways symbolically for the nation to see he now reigned in Jerusalem and Ahithophel was with him and so it was when Hushai the Archite, David's friend came to Absalom that Hushai

said to Absalom long live the king, long live the king so Absalom said to Hushai is this your loyalty to your friend, why did you not go with your friend and Hushai said to Absalom no but whom the Lord and his people and all the men of Israel choose this I will be his I will be and with him I will remain furthermore whom should I serve should I not serve in the presence of his son as I have served in your father's presence so I will be in your presence so with these words he managed to convince Absalom of his loyalty then Absalom said to Ahithophel give counsel as to what we should do and Ahithophel said to Absalom go into your father's concubines whom he has left in the house and all Israel will hear that you are abhorred by your father then the hands of all who are with you will be strong so they pitched a tent for Absalom on the top of the house and Absalom went into his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel and the counsel of Ahithophel which he gave in those days was as if one inquired of the oracle of God so was all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom so Ahithophel said you'll establish yourself permanently and remove any possibility of anyone thinking that you and your father can be reconciled by going in and sleeping with his wives his concubines and so they did this in a public place they put a tent on the roof where people from their rooftops could see it apparently and he went in and slept with these different wives of David and in doing so of course he was doing a symbolic action Absalom could have had any woman in the kingdom he wanted and as many as he wanted but he probably didn't care about these older women who were his father's concubines but it was symbolic when a man slept with the wife of the previous king it meant I'm in his place and he would certainly stop me if he could one thing a man would be the last thing to relinquish is his wives to somebody else and therefore that the wives were in the power of another man would be the most symbolic way of saying that the original husband of those wives is gone and what's more there's no hope that David and Absalom will ever be reconciled after this kind of an offense so the nation of Israel would not be waffling like well are we with Absalom or with David who knows maybe it will all be reconciled maybe this is just something that will blow over you know maybe they've been reconciled before or maybe they will this time but Ahithophel says you've got to do something that will tell the whole nation that there's no hope of David ever coming back with you reigning here you've got to create such a rift between yourself and David that no one will ever dream that he could ever come back while you're reigning and they'll give up all hope of David and just accept your reign and they'll see that you are powerful because you've run David out of his own house and you're now sleeping with his wives and so this is all a very symbolic gesture like everything else about taking the kingdom over from someone else I mean usually there'd be two ways to become king one would be to actually wage a war an outright war against the existing king and defeat him and the other would be to simply get the people to think you're the king and act like you're the king once they've decided that you're the king then the old king even if he's still living doesn't really have anything he can do if he doesn't have the people's support and that's what requires all these symbolic acts that Absalom's doing now the next day or the same day actually Ahithophel was going to give counsel to Absalom about waging war with his father

because he knew that David was not going to be just lay down and die if David and the men with him could regroup and recoup and gather their strength they could possibly wage a successful war against Absalom and those who were with him and therefore David had to be dealt with and killed as far as Ahithophel was concerned and so he's going to counsel a certain way to Absalom along those lines and that comes up in the next chapter which we don't have time to go into now but we see that God does use Hushai to overcome the counsel of Ahithophel and it's a good thing too because it gave David a chance to escape whereas if Ahithophel's counsel had been followed probably David would have been greatly disadvantaged however the idea that David would be killed in this situation is not I mean David may well have thought that all the curses that were brought on him were the end of his reign but remember God had said that he would establish David's son forever now Absalom was David's son but we don't know whether he knew at this time that Solomon was to succeed him because Nathan the prophet had named Solomon Jebediah beloved of the Lord and of course Solomon was the one who succeeded him, I don't know how much that was known to David at this point but he wasn't sure but that his reign was over at this point and that his son Absalom was going to reign in his place and that's how God was going to fulfill the promises though it was through a very unacceptable means and so I'm sure David was quite confused about what God was going to do in this situation he wasn't sure that God would restore him and partly because he felt like his sins had possibly cancelled out the promises God had earlier made to him about his kingdom, see God had made those glowing promises about David's kingdom back in 2 Samuel chapter 7 but because of his sin in chapter 11 and the curses that came on his family David might, it might be ambiguous to David whether God's still going to fulfill those promises or whether David had disqualified himself for them so he's not sure how things are going to go but as it turns out of course David does return to the throne but of course only with great grief, his latter years could only be full of grief because of the loss of so many of his children which he would easily take personal responsibility for because of his misdeeds but we'll see how this battle progresses next time, we are out of time for it now and we'll continue tomorrow