

17. Absalom Seeks to Overthrow David

(2 Samuel 15–17)

6.5 Absalom Conspires Against David (2 Sam 15:1–12)

- 15:1 - Absalom is the first mentioned to acquire **chariots** - Samuel had predicted this in reference to the King: see 1 Samuel 8:11

It is interesting to note that in these early texts, the enemies of Israel used chariots: The **Egyptians** (see Exod 14:9–15:21; Deut 11:4; Josh 24:6), northern **Canaanites** (Josh 11:4–9; Judg 4:15; 5:19–22), and **Arameans** (8:4; 10:18). They all used them unsuccessfully against Israel. Absalom's chariots may signal that he is aligning himself as an enemy of Israel and that he will be unsuccessful.

- 15:2-6 - Absalom's "cunning humility" shows that he is shrewd/crafty just like his father!!!
- 15:7 - **Hebron** - was one of the key religious cities and also the place of Absalom's birth (see 2 Sam 3:2-3)
- 15:11 - In a brilliant move, Absalom brings with him 200 men from Jerusalem, most likely those who would counsel David in this dangerous time. Although we are not told why **Ahithophel** gives his allegiance to Absalom we should remember that he is Bathsheba's grandfather!!! (see 2 Sam 11:3; 23:34)

6.6 David Flees from Absalom (2 Sam 15:13–16:14)

- David seeks to avoid a bloody confrontation and so only leaves those who could oversee the administration of the city in his absence - those like the 10 concubines mentioned in 15:16.
- 15:18-19 - **Cherethites** and **Pelethites** were part of David's "elite forces" overseen by Benaiah (see 2 Sam 8:18, 20:7, 20:23). The **Gittites** from Gath were Philistines and so David had some concern over their continued loyalty. But **Ittai** pledges his allegiance to David in a profound way.
- 15:25 - **The Ark** - David saw the removal of the Ark from Jerusalem to be unacceptable since the LORD had chosen the city as His dwelling place. Instead, his hope was that the LORD would allow him to return.
- 15:31 - David prays that the LORD would turn Ahithophel's counsel to foolishness. In the very next very **Hushai** arrives and will be a spy

for David, accomplishing the very thing he had just asked the LORD to do!!!! Along **Zadok** and **Abiathar**, this trio would serve as spies for David and undermine Absalom's schemes.

- 16:1-4 It is clear from the later episode (see 2 Sam 19:24-30) that Ziba is lying about Mephibosheth.
- 16:5-14 - **Shimei's Cursing** of David and his "blood guilt" against the house of Saul could be related to David's role in handing over 7 of Saul's family to be hanged by the Gibeonites which will be recounted later in 21:5-9. Or, it could be that Shimei falsely believed that David had been complicit in the death of Saul.

6.7 **Absalom Takes Jerusalem and Falls Quickly** (2 Sam 16:15–18:18)

6.7.1 **Absalom enters Jerusalem and Hushai pledges his service** (2 Sam 16:15-19)

- 16:16, 18 - Just like David's **ambiguous pledges** to King Achish earlier, Hushai's **duplicity** is ironically hidden by his seemingly favorable responses: Is he talking about Absalom or David???

6.7.2 **Ahithophel counsels Absalom** (2 Sam 16:20-17:4)

- 16:21-22 - Ahithophel's counsel to Absalom to lay with his father's concubines was beyond foolish. Clearly, this was meant to be a payback for David's adultery with his granddaughter. However, Absalom's actions were so heinous they would bring the retaliation of the LORD. However, they also fulfilled the LORD's word against David in 12:11-12 after the sin with Bathsheba.

6.7.3 **Hushai gives Absalom an alternative plan** (2 Sam 17:5-14)

- 17:14 - Although Hushai's plan is more outrageous than Ahithophel's, it is accepted because the LORD had already ordained harm (Heb: "evil") against Absalom. Clearly, the LORD is on David's side!

6.7.4 **Hushai warns David and saves him** (2 Sam 17:15-29)

- 17:23 - Ahithophel's suicide - Absalom had asked the wise men of David's court for counsel. David, however, sought the Word of the LORD. Ahithophel's end serves as a warning that *human wisdom without Revelation can end in disaster*.
- 17:24 - **Mahanaim** - was the city Ish-Bosheth "ruled" from. This episode foreshadows the exile of Israel east of the Jordan with the last King taken captive in the enemy's capital city (see 2 Kings 24).