

David Part III

Study #17

2 Samuel 14:1-15:37

Text:

- v. 1 Joab son of Zeruiah knew that the king's heart longed for Absalom.
- v. 2 So Joab sent someone to Tekoa and had a wise woman brought from there. He said to her, "Pretend you are in mourning. Dress in mourning clothes, and don't use any cosmetic lotions. Act like a woman who has spent many days grieving for the dead.
- v. 3 Then go to the king and speak these words to him." And Joab put the words in her mouth.
- v. 4 When the woman from Tekoa went to the king, she fell with her face to the ground to pay him honor, and she said, "Help me, O king!"
- v. 5 The king asked her, "What is troubling you?" She said, "I am indeed a widow; my husband is dead.
- v. 6 I your servant had two sons. They got into a fight with each other in the field, and no one was there to separate them. One struck the other and killed him.
- v. 7 Now the whole clan has risen up against your servant; then say, 'Hand over the one who struck his brother down, so that we may put him to death for the life of his brother whom he killed; then we will get rid of the heir as well.' They would put out the only burning coal I have left, leaving my husband neither name nor descendant on the face of the earth."
- v. 8 The king said to the woman, "Go home, and I will issue an order in your behalf."
- v. 9 But the woman from Tekoa said to him, "My lord the king, let the blame rest on me and on my father's family, and let the king and his throne be without guilt."
- v. 10 The king replied, "If anyone says anything to you, bring him to me, and he will not bother you again."
- v. 11 She said, "Then let the king invoke the Lord his God to prevent the avenger of blood from adding to the destruction, so that my son will not be destroyed." "As surely as the Lord lives," he said, "not one hair of your son's head will fall to the ground."
- v. 12 Then the woman said, "Let your servant speak a word to my lord the king." "Speak," he replied.
- v. 13 The woman said, "Why then have you devised a thing like this against the people of God? When the king like this, does he not convict himself, for the king has not brought back his banished son?"

- v. 14 Like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be recovered, so we must die. But God does not take away life; instead, he devises ways so that a banished person may not remain estranged from him.
- v. 15 “And now I have come to say this to my lord the king because the people have made me afraid. Your servant thought, ‘I will speak to the king; perhaps he will do what his servant asks.
- v. 16 Perhaps the king will agree to deliver his servant from the hand of the man who is trying to cut off both me and my son from the inheritance God gave us.’
- v. 17 “And now your servant says, ‘May the word of my lord the king bring me rest, for my lord the king is like an angel of God in discerning good and evil. May the Lord your God be with you.’”
- v. 18 Then the king said to the woman, “Do not keep from me the answer to what I am going to ask you.” “Let my lord the king speak,” the woman said.
- v. 19 The king asked, “Isn’t the hand of Joab with you in all this?” The woman answered, “As surely as you live, my lord the king, no one can turn to the right or to the left from anything my lord instructed me to do this and who put all these words into the mouth of your servant.
- v. 20 Your servant Joab did this to change the present situation. My lord has wisdom like that of an angel of God - - he knows everything that happens in the land.”
- v. 21 The king said to Joab, “Very well, I will do it. Go, bring back the young man Absalom.”
- v. 22 Joab fell with his face to the ground to pay him honor, and he blessed the king. Joab said, “Today your servant knows that he had found favor in your eyes, my lord the king, because the king has granted his servant’s request.”
- v. 23 The Joab went to Geshur and brought Absalom back to Jerusalem.
- v. 24 But the king said, “He must go to his own house; he must not see my face.” So Absalom went to his own house and did not see the face of the king.
- v. 25 In all Israel there was not a man so highly praised for his handsome appearance as Absalom. From the top of his head to the sole of his foot there was no blemish in him.
- v. 26 Whenever he cut the hair of his head - - he used to cut his hair from time to time when it became too heavy for him - - he would weigh it, and it’s weight was two hundred shekels by the royal standard.
- v. 27 Three sons and a daughter were born to Absalom. The daughter’s name was Tamar, and she became a beautiful woman.
- v. 28 Absalom lived two years in Jerusalem without seeing the king’s face.
- v. 29 Then Absalom sent for Joab in order to send him to the king, but Joab refused to come to him. So he sent a second time, but he refused to come.

- v. 30 Then he said to his servants, “Look, Joab’s field is next to mine, and he has barely there. Go and set it on fire.” So Absalom’s servants set the field on fire.
- v. 31 Then Joab did go to Absalom’s house and he said to him, “Why have your servants set my field on fire?”
- v. 32 Absalom said to Joab, “Look, I sent word to you and said, ‘Come here so I can send you to the king to ask, “Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me if I were still there!’” Now then, I want to see the king’s face, and if I am guilty of anything, let him put me to death.”
- v. 33 So Joab went to the king and told him this. Then the king summoned Absalom, and he came in and bowed down with his face to the ground before the king. And the king kissed Absalom.
- 15:v. 1 In the course of time, Absalom provided himself with a chariot and horses and fifty men to run ahead of him.
- v. 2 He would get up early and stand by the side of the road leading to the city gate. Whenever anyone came with a complaint to be placed before the king for a decision, Absalom would call out to him, “What town are you from?” He would answer, “Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel.”
- v. 3 Then Absalom would say to him, “Look your claims are valid and proper, but there is no representative of the king to hear you.”
- v. 4 And Absalom would add, “If only I were appointed judge in the land! Then everyone who has a complaint or case could come to me and I would see that he get justice.”
- v. 5 Also, whenever anyone approached him to bow down before him, Absalom would reach out his hand, take hold of him and kiss him.
- v. 6 Absalom behaved in this way toward all the Israelites who came to the king asking for justice, and so he stole the hearts of the men of Israel.
- v. 7 At the end of four years, Absalom said to the king, “Let me go to Hebron and fulfill a vow I made to the Lord.
- v. 8 While your servant was living at Geshur in Aram, I made this vow: ‘If the Lord takes me back to Jerusalem, I will worship the Lord in Hebron.’”
- v. 9 The king said to him, “Go in peace.” So he went to Hebron.
- v. 10 Then Absalom sent secret messengers throughout the tribes of Israel to say, “As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpets, then say, ‘Absalom is king in Hebron.’”
- v. 11 Two hundred men from Jerusalem had accompanied Absalom. They had been invited as guests and went quite innocently, knowing nothing about the matter.
- v. 12 While Absalom was offering sacrifices, he also sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David’s counselor, to come from Giloh, his home town. And so the conspiracy gained strength, and Absalom’s following kept on increasing.

- v. 13 A messenger came and told David, “The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom.”
- v. 14 Then David said to all his officials who were with him in Jerusalem, “Come! We must flee, or none of us will escape from Absalom. We must leave immediately, or he will move quickly to overtake us and bring ruin upon us and put the city to the sword.”
- v. 15 The king’s officials answered him, “Your servants are ready to do whatever our lord the king chooses.”
- v. 16 The king set out, with his entire household following him, but he left ten concubines to take care of the palace.
- v. 17 So the king set out, with all the people following him; and they halted a place some distance away.
- v. 18 All his men marched past him, along with all the Kerethites and Pelethites; and all the six hundred Gittites who had accompanied him from Gath marched before the king.
- v. 19 The king said to Ittai the Gittite, “Why should you come along with us? Go back and stay with King Absalom. You are a foreigner, an exile from your homeland.
- v. 20 You came only yesterday. And today shall I make you wander about with us, when I do not know where I am going? Go back, and take your countrymen. May kindness and faithfulness be with you.”
- v. 21 But Ittai replied to the king, “As surely as the Lord lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king may be, whether it means life or death, there will your servant be.”
- v. 22 David said to Ittai, “Go ahead, march on.” So Ittai the Gittite marched on with all his men and the families that were with him.
- v. 23 The whole countryside wept aloud as all the people passed by. The king also crossed the Kidron Valley, and all the people moved on toward the desert.
- v. 24 Zadok was there, too, and all the Levites who were with him were carrying the ark of the covenant of God. They set down the ark of God, and Abiathar offered sacrifices until all the people had finished leaving the city.
- v. 25 Then the king said to Zadok, “Take the ark of God back into the city. If I favor in the Lord’s eyes, he will bring me back and let me see it and his dwelling place again.
- v. 26 But if he says, ‘I am not pleased with you,’ then I am ready; let him do to me whatever seems good to him.”
- v. 27 The king also said to Zadok the priest, Aren’t you a seer? Go back to the city in peace, with your son Ahimaaz and Jonathan son of Abiathar. You and Abiathar take your two sons with you.
- v. 28 I will wait at the fords in the desert until word comes from you to inform me.”

- v. 29 So Zadok and Abiathar took the ark of God back to Jerusalem and stayed there.
- v. 30 But David continued up the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went; his head was covered and he was barefoot. All the people with him covered their heads too and were weeping as they went up.
- v. 31 Now David had been told, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." So David prayed, "O Lord, turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness."
- v. 32 When David arrived at the summit, where people used to worship God, Hushai the Arkite was there to meet him, his robe torn and dust on his head.
- v. 33 David said to him, "If you go with me, you will be a burden to me.
- v. 34 But if you return to the city and say to Absalom, 'I will be your servant, O king; I was your father's servant in the past, but now I will be your servants,' then you can help me by frustrating Ahithophel's advice.
- v. 35 Won't the priests Zadok and Abiathar be there with you? Tell them anything you hear in the king's palace.
- v. 36 Their two sons, Ahimaaz son of Zadok and Jonathan son of Abiathar, are there with them. Send them to me with anything your hear."
- v. 37 So David's friend Hushai arrived at Jerusalem as Absalom was entering the city.

SUMMARY OF PARTS I AND II:

1. In David Part I we followed David from his anointing by Samuel at 16 at the house of Jesse to...
2. A tremendous victory over Goliath the Philistine in Episode #2.
3. In Episode #3 we saw the intensity of Saul's hatred and desire to kill David.
4. In Episode #4 we saw David flee to the Philistines and feign insanity in order to get away from there and ended up back at the Cave of Adullam.
(Turn around for David, inquired of the Lord, bring the Ephod.)
5. In Episode #5 because David really did have a restoration to fellowship with the Lord, we see victories over the enemies of the Lord's people, and also protection from Saul as David has a chance to kill Saul but only cuts off a portion of his skirt.
6. In Episode #6 we saw the experience with Nabal and Abigail.

7. In Episode #7 David once again has an opportunity to slay Saul and takes only his spear and water jug. It is at the conclusion of Episode #7 that David flees to the land of the Philistines again and is given the city of Ziklag as his town to reside in for his army and their families. (Making raids on towns around to support themselves.)
8. In the last Episode of Part I David faced with the possibility of going to battle with the Philistines against Saul's forces but is marvelously extricated from those circumstances, and upon return to Ziklag finds that the city is burned and all of the families have been taken captive by the Amalekites. As Part I ended, David was able to retrieve all the was lost.
(Only God could get him out of a mess like this and he does!)

In David Part II we saw the death of Saul and Jonathan at the hand of the Philistines, and David takes the throne over the tribe of Judah in the city of Hebron. He rules from age 30 to 37(1/2) just in Hebron over the tribe of Judah during a time of great civil war, at which time Ishbosheth, Saul's son, is endeavoring to rule the north under the leadership of Abner, Saul's general. When the smoke clears, Ishbosheth and Abner both are dead as a result of assassinations and David takes the throne over all Israel. He immediately moves the capital from Hebron to Jerusalem, and Hiram the King of Tyre builds him a palace and he prepares a tent for the ark of God in the city of Jerusalem. He has tremendous military victories as the Lord expands the boundaries of the kingdom.

(#9, #10, Vietnam, capital in Wash. D. C., white house, military victories, ark #11, No! on temple #12, kindness #13)

In the next episode David gets a no from the Lord with regard to the building of the temple but an unconditional covenant from the Lord that his kingdom and house will last forever.

In the next episode David is trying to show kindness to Mephibosheth and to the new king of the Ammonites.
(Eat at the kings table!!)

It is in the next episode that David has his encounter with Bathsheba, and murder and adultery result.
(Grass is always greener, looks like an oasis but you end up spitting sand.)

In episode #15 a year later, David is confronted by Nathan the prophet, and David experiences forgiveness and restoration to fellowship. In our last episode in the life of David we see the consequences of sin remaining long

after the forgiveness. Amnon, David's firstborn son, rapes his half-sister Tamar, and because David does not exercise any discipline or leadership in the situation, two years later Absalom, David's third-born son, murders Amnon and flees to his grandparents, the king of Geshur, 35 miles to the north of Jerusalem. He remained there for three years.

(Lost his little son | brother to Tamar | 5 years did nothing | Maacah-Talmi(Daughter)-Geshur(king)-Tamar- Absalom | Instant forgiveness but consequences last a lifetime!) As the scene of David, Part III, opens Absalom has been three years in Geshur with no word or action taken on the part of David in the situation.

(Late 50's)

Introduction:

James W. Reapsome has written an article called "Have You Hugged Your Kids Today?" and in it he cites the following illustration:

"One night at a junior high church camp six boys sneaked out and went on an escapade. They raided the icebox in the kitchen, squirted the hose in the girls' cabin window, pushed a trailer up the aisle of the auditorium, set some alarm clocks to go off in chapel the next morning, and topped off the evening with a midnight movie in town. Quite pleased with themselves, they returned to camp, took off their shoes, and crept up the dormitory steps. Suddenly, when they were halfway up the stairs, a voice from below commanded, 'Stop right where you are!' They knew it was their counselor. They froze. 'I don't know who you are, and I don't want to know,' he said. 'But I'm going to ask you to bow your heads while I pray.' This is how he prayed:

'Dear Lord, Up here on these steps are some boys who aren't where they ought to be. You know them all by name and they are your boys. Forgive them for breaking the rules of the camp and love them anyway. In the years to come help them to remember this night and protect them from serious trouble somewhere else. Now lead them to bed, and from now on help them to be more like Jesus, who kept the rules and still had fun. Amen.'

But that wasn't the end of it. The counselor added a benediction that worked. After the Amen, he said to the trembling gang, 'I have a flashlight in my hand, and I'm going to count to ten and then turn it on. Good night.'

I think all of us need that kind of wisdom and love, don't we? We all grow best when we know what our boundaries are and when we suffer the consequences of kicking over the traces. Too often we build a great divide between love and discipline. Sometimes we get the idea that if we love kids we won't enforce our rules too strictly or we won't mete out well-deserved punishment. Glossing over infractions has become equated with love. That's a tragic blunder. Actually, fair, consistent discipline is the most loving thing we can do for many children and youth today. Many of them who will be sent your way this summer will be hungry for discipline. Your staff may misread their sullenness or their rowdiness. In many cases it's a call for discipline, which to them is a sure sign we love them. They know very well when they deserve correction and instruction. They see us as weak when we fail to point out their misbehavior and when we fail to enforce our camp rules or when we threaten some kind of punishment but fail to do it. If we fail to permit children and youth to suffer the consequences of their misdeeds, we are going against the grain of the universe. When we catch it for our foolishness, we're intended to learn something that will lead to better behavior in the future. When kids get off scot-free for camp violations, they are not being loved, they are being set up for more serious things later on."

James Dobson in his book Dare to Discipline cites the following illustration:

"Nature has generously equipped most animals with a fear of things that could be harmful to them. Their survival depends on recognition of a particular danger in time to avoid it. But good old mother nature did not protect the frog quite so well; she overlooked a serious flaw in his early warning system that sometimes proves fatal. If a frog is placed in a pan of warm water under which the heat is being increased very gradually, he will typically show no inclination to escape. Since he is a cold-blooded creature, his body temperature remains approximately the same as the water around him and he does not notice the slow change taking place. As the temperature continues to intensify, the frog remains oblivious to his danger; he could easily hop his way to safety, but apparently thinking about something else. He will just sit there, contentedly peering over the edge of the pan while the steam curls ominously around his nostrils. Eventually, the boiling frog will pass on to his reward, having succumbed to an unnecessary misfortune that he could have easily avoided."

You never say David functioning with his kids except in a crisis situation.

Satisfying every material need and abundant love without discipline will lead to disaster. And we are going to see that in this particular study.

Loftin Hudson in his book Grace Is Not A blue-eyed Blond says, “Not all giving is self-giving. Actually, costly gifts for which one sacrifices may be merely a substitute for the giving of self. Unfortunately, many parents give their children toys, ponies, books, trips, automobiles, but they never get around to giving time, affection, conversation, or an eager ear.”

Proverbs 6:27-33

“Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned? Can a man walk in hot coals without his feet being scorched? So is he who sleeps with another man's wife. No one who touches he will go unpunished. Men do not despise a thief if he steals to satisfy his hunger when he is starving. Yet if he is caught, he must pay sevenfold, though it costs him all the wealth of his house. But a man who commits adultery lacks judgment. Whoever does so destroys himself. Blows and disgrace are his lot, and his shame will never be wiped away.”

Chap. 14:v. 1 Joab, son of Zeruah, knew that the king's heart longed for Absalom.

Our study opens with Joab, David's nephew and son of his sister Zeruah, and also his military commander, who knows David in his heart longed for Absalom.

It's been three years and why didn't David do something about the situation?

Joab, knowing David's desires, decides to take matters into his own hands.

Someone has said, “Parents who are afraid to put their foot down usually have children who step on their toes.”

Looking back at 2 Samuel 13:21, all we find is that David got very angry over Amnon's rape of Tamar his half sister.

As far as discipline is concerned, David is incapable of exercising any because how could he rebuke his son Amnon for his crime against his sister when David has the memory of Bathsheba in his heart.

How could he possibly discipline Absalom for murder when the death of Uriah was also on his conscience.

Proverbs 23:13 says,

“Without not correction from the child, for if you beat him with the rod, he shall not die.”

David watched his family fall apart and seemed to be totally incapable of doing anything about it. He was reaping what he had sown.

There is one more thing about Absalom that we need to take into consideration at this point: In murdering Amnon, Absalom had also laid what he thought was the foundation for succeeding his father to the throne, although Abigail's son Kileab, or Daniel as he is mentioned in the Chronicles records, never became a viable force to be reckoned with. Absalom cleared the way by the death of Amnon for the throne, since he would be the oldest son and primary heir to take David's place.

Verse 2 gives us the result of Joab's knowledge about David's heart longing for Absalom.

- v. 2 So Joab sent to Tekoa and had a wise woman brought from there. He said to her, “Pretend you are in mourning. Dress in mourning clothes, and don't use any cosmetic lotions. Act like a woman who has spent many days grieving for the dead.

Joab sends someone from the staff 10 miles south of Jerusalem to the city of Tekoa to locate this wise woman who is going to pretend mourning as she comes into the presence of the king.

- v. 3 Then go to the king and speak these words to him.” And Joab put the words in her mouth.

Joab is setting up a situation similar to what David experienced with Nathan the prophet when he was confronted with the parable that Nathan told which in the end condemned David.

The only other significance to the city of Tekoa in the Scripture is that it was the home of the prophet Amos.

Joab prepared a little speech for her to give when she came into the presence of the king pretending that she was in mourning.

- v. 4 When the woman from Tekoa went to the king, she fell with her face to the ground to pay him honor, and she said, “Help me, O king!”

After falling upon her face in an act of honor to the king, she says, “Help me, O king!”

v. 5 The king asked her, “What is troubling you?”

Immediately David gets involved in the situation with the question “What is troubling you?”

The rest of verse 5 is her response:

“She said, ‘I am indeed a widow; my husband is dead.

v. 6 I your servant had two sons. They got into a fight with each other in the field, and no one was there to separate them. One struck the other and killed him.

Here you have a picture of CAIN and ABEL way back in the book of Genesis, and also a graphic picture of Amnon and Absalom.

v. 7 Now the whole clan has risen up against your servant; they say, ‘Hand over the one who struck his brother down, so that we may put him to death for the life of his brother who he killed; then we will get rid of the heir as well.’ They would put out the only burning coal I have left, leaving my husband neither name nor descendant on the face of the earth.”

The woman’s plight as she describes it is that the rest of the family want to take the guilty son and put him to death for the life of his brother whom he killed. Then they will get rid of the heir as well.

The plight of the woman at this point described in the story is “They would put out the only burning coal I have left, leaving my husband neither name nor descendant on the face of the earth.”

v. 8 The king said to the woman, “Go home, and I will issue an order in your behalf.”

David has immediately gotten involved in the situation and commands the woman to go back to Tekoa and he will issue an order on her behalf that will protect her only remaining son.

I think David felt like this was a very short interview and it was already terminated, as far as he was concerned, with the promise that he would issue an order on her behalf.

- v. 9 But the woman from Tekoa said to him, “My lord the king, let the blame rest on me and on my father’s family and let the king and his throne be without guilt.”

(You are making an exception, let me bare the blame!)

Delitzsch points out, “The meaning of the words is this, if there should be anything wrong in the fact that this bloodshed is not punished, let the guilt fall upon me and my family.”

- v. 10 The king replied, “If anyone says anything to you, bring him to me, and he will not bother you again.”

(He can settle issues in the kingdom – Amalakite – Ishbosheth. Mete out justice.)

David says, “If you are any accusations of injustice that are made or any things that are perpetrated against you by anyone, bring that person to me and he will not bother you again.”

- v. 11 She said, “Then let the king invoke the Lord his God to prevent the avenger of blood from adding to the destruction, so that my son will not be destroyed.”

She now makes a plea that the king invoke the Lord his God to prevent the avenger of blood from adding to the destruction so that her son will be protected and not destroyed.

The rest of verse 11 records David’s response:

“As surely as the Lord lives,” he said, “not one hair of your son’s head will fall to the ground.”

David has gotten deeply and emotionally involved in this situation and now makes a commitment by an oath to the woman, “As surely as the Lord lives, not one hair of your son’s head will fall to the ground.”

- v. 12 Then the woman said, “Let your servant speak a word to my lord the king.” “Speak,” he replied.

Now the woman begins to reveal to David the real purpose in coming into his presence.

- v. 13 The woman said, “Why then have you devised a thing like this against the people of God? When the king says this, does he not convict himself for the king has not brought back his banished son?”

David, why is it that you’ve worked out this situation against the people of God for the protection of my son, and do you not convict yourself, for you have not made arrangements to bring back your own banished son?

I am sure that David now recalls the encounter with Nathan when, after telling the parable, he makes it personal by saying to David, “You are the man.”

- v. 14 Like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be recovered, so we must die. But God does not take away life; instead, he devises ways so that a banished person may not remain estranged from him.

(Rom. 6:23, Rom 5:8 – You know all about that David, don’t you!)

In order to persuade the king to forgive, the crafty woman reminds him of the brevity of human life and of the mercy of God. We must all die, and when dead our life irrevocably gone. God does not act like this. He does not deprive the sinner of life but is merciful and does not cast off forever.

How powerful is this message as David realizes that on the human plane he certainly is not acting like God has acted toward him on the vertical plane and forgiving he and Bathsheba and restoring them to fellowship with himself as soon as David expresses repentance.

Here in verse 14 we have the gospel in a nutshell. Because of man’s sin in the garden, Romans 5:12 tells us:

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men.”

But Jesus Christ coming in human flesh took that penalty of sin upon himself when he died on Calvary’s cross, and thus God devises a way so that a banished person - - you and I, sinners by nature and sinners by birth - - would no longer remain estranged from him, when by faith we appropriate the provision that God the Father has made for a restored relationship.

One of the great things we see in this passage is the patience that God exercises toward sinners. His law has been broken and yet he does not immediately take away the life of those who break it. He instead makes

provision for their restoration to his favor, even though they have banished themselves from him, yet they are not expelled or cast off forever.

We belong to God by purchase and creation, and he wants us back at his side. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

As David longed for Absalom, so the Lord longs for our banished souls and for us to come to the moment of reconciliation with himself.

(Prodigal son! Old man running toward reconciliation!)

v. 15 And now I have come to say this to my lord the king because the people have made me afraid. Your servant thought, 'I will speak to the king; perhaps he will do what his servant asks.

Here the woman of Tekoa now returns to her own situation and plight.

"The people have made me afraid by the fact that they're wanting the blood of my only son. And your servant thought, 'I will speak to the king; perhaps he will do what his servant asks."

v. 16 Perhaps the king will agree to deliver his servant from the hand of the man who is trying to cut off both me and my son from the inheritance God gave us.'

v. 17 And now your servant says, 'May the word of my lord the king bring me rest, for my lord the king is like an angel of God in discerning good and evil. May the Lord your God be with you.'"

In essence, the woman is expressing her wish that the word of the king will bring her rest because the king is like an angel of God coming to confirm a covenant in discerning the good and the evil. "May the Lord your God be with you."

The ANGEL OF GOD, according to Delitzsch, refers to the angel of the covenant, the mediator of the blessings of divine grace to the nation.

v. 18 Then the king said to the woman, "Do not keep from me the answer to what I am going to ask you." "Let my lord the king speak," the woman said.

David smells a skunk in the wood pile, and he warns the woman not to keep the answer to the question that he is going to ask of her. She in turn invites the king to ask her whatever he will.

- v. 19 The king asked, “Isn’t the hand of Joab with you in all this?” The woman answered, “As surely as you live, my lord the king, no one can turn to the right or to the left from anything my lord the king says. Yes, it was your servant Joab who instructed me to do this and who put all these words into the mouth of your servant.

The woman immediately responds with transparent truthfulness, commending the king for his wisdom and insight in asking the question, and then acknowledges the fact that Joab is the one who had instructed her to do it and who actually put all the words that she has spoken in her mouth.

- v. 20 Your servant Joab did this to change the present situation. My lord has wisdom like that of an angel of God - - he knows everything that happens in the land.”

Once again she refers to him as “an angel of God” and reveals Joab’s whole purpose in the thing was to change the present situation.

(Dismisses the woman and gets Joab on the phone.)

- v. 21 The king said to Joab, “Very well, I will do it. Go, bring back the young man Absalom.”

After the lady from Tekoa leaves, David summons Joab and says to him, “Very well, I’ll do it.” He has been convinced by the woman’s story and the decision he made in her case as being what he needs to do in this situation. And he tells Joab he’ll do it. He commands Joab to go 35 miles to the north and bring back the young man Absalom.

(Don’t turn the page! How is he going to handle this? Complete forgiveness?)

- v. 22 Joab fell with his face to the ground to pay him honor, and blessed the king. Joab said, “Today your servant knows that he has found favor in your eyes, my lord the king, because the king has granted his servant’s request.”

(Reconciliation and forgiveness makes everybody feel so good why don’t we do more of it?)

Joab is excited about David's cooperation with the plan to bring back Absalom and points up the fact that he is grateful for the favor he has found in the eyes of David on this occasion by the granting of the request.

v. 23 Then Joab went to Geshur and brought Absalom back to Jerusalem.

(70 mile round trip!)

You would think that if David were responding to this situation in a godly fashion, he would have been watching from the roof of the palace for Absalom and Joab to appear on the horizon and would have run to get his arms around the boy to bring about reconciliation and a restoration of the relationship.

v. 24 But the king said, "He must go to his own house, he must not see my face." So Absalom went to his own house and did not see the face of the king.

It is really unfortunate that David doesn't want to see his son. It actually sets the stage for Absalom's rebellion which takes place in the next chapter.

David only half-heartedly forgives his son, and this just sows the seeds of a worse rebellion.

It is also interesting to note that there is no evidence of any penitence or sorrow on the part of Absalom, either. David's forgiveness of Absalom was completely inadequate, leading only to a further outbreak of sin. God's forgiveness, on the other hand, is completely adequate and is a great deterrent to continued sin.

David didn't forgive his son, like God had forgiven David. It is hard for us to understand because David knew the forgiveness of God and he still was a man after the heart of God, even while he was going through this period of his life after God's forgiveness. God did not forgive David half-heartedly. God did not say, "Well, I forgive you but we'll not have fellowship anymore. I will not restore you to the joy of your salvation." When God forgives, he forgives completely.

(Restore to me the joy of my salvation. O Lord thou art ready to forgive and plenteous in mercy!)

Ephesians 4:32

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Matt. 18:21ff

“Then Peter came and said to him, ‘Lord how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say up to seven times but up to seventy times seven. For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a certain king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. And when he had begun to settle them, there was brought to him one who owed him ten thousand talents. Since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold along with his wife and children and all that he had in repayment to be made. The slave, therefore, falling down, prostrated himself before him saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will repay you everything.’ And the Lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii, and he seized him and began to entreat him, saying, ‘Pay back what you owe.’ So his fellow slave fell down and began to entreat him, saying, ‘Have patience with me and I will repay you.’ He was unwilling, however, but went and threw him into prison until he should pay back what was owed. So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened. Then summoning him, his lord said to him, ‘You wicked slave. I forgave you all that debt because you entreated me. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, even as I had mercy on you?’ And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. So shall my heavenly Father also do to you if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.”

Laney points out, “David quickly recognizes Joab’s hand in the plan for reconciliation. The woman then told all and expressed her confidence in David’s wisdom to do what was right. The recall of Absalom from Geshur was immediately arranged, and the king’s son was escorted by Joab back to Jerusalem. However, although Absalom was back in Jerusalem, he was refused an audience with the king. That evidenced David’s unwillingness to completely forgive and bore bitter fruit in the heart of Absalom. Verses 25-27 are parenthetical and present Absalom as an attractive prince who could easily win the hearts of the people of Israel. According to verse 26 his head produced approximately 3(1/2) pounds of hair annually. The chapter concludes by recording the reconciliation between David and Absalom. Absalom had to burn Joab’s field to get any action on the matter. But after living in Jerusalem two full years, he was restored to favor with David, but the seed of bitterness had been sown; and for two years Absalom had nourished it in the anger of his heart. The seed would soon bear the fruit of

conspiracy and rebellion against his father David. Being shunned by David for two full years in Jerusalem caused Absalom to grow bitter. That bitter resentment eventuated in rebellion against his father the king.”

Ron Lee Davis in his book A Forgiving God in an Unforgiving World says, “The forgiveness we must build into our lives and which we seek to model to our children must be free. It must be immediate; it must be final and continuous. We must forgive and forget. That is what the forgiveness of Christ is like. So must our forgiveness be. Over the years I have heard a lot of teaching and preaching on the subject of Colossians 3:20 –

‘Children, obey your parents in everything for this pleases the Lord.’

Yet I’ve heard almost no teaching at all on the very next verse. Indeed, I believe Colosians 3:21 to be one of the most ignored verse in all the New Testament’s teaching on the Christian home. In the New International Version that verse reads:

‘Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.’

The New American Standard Bible says,

‘Fathers, do not exasperate your children that they may not lose heart.’

(Forgiveness & restored relationships are the key to God’s mighty working in our midst!)

In the original Greek that word ‘fathers’ literally means ‘parents’, Moms and Dads. What does the apostle Paul mean when he warns Moms and Dads “Don’t embitter your children. Don’t exasperate your children or they’ll become discouraged and lose heart.” I believe we exasperate or embitter our children when we fail in four areas:

1. When we fail to enjoy our children.
2. When we punish our children while failing to lovingly discipline them.
3. When we fail to make our children feel affirmed and unconditionally accepted.
4. When we fail to give them our time.”

It would be very difficult to imagine the emotional upheaval in Absalom's heart to know that he's been brought back to the city of Jerusalem and to his house, and yet he has not been restored and welcomed by his father. He still has to live day after day with the reality of rejection on the part of his father the king.

Hebrews 12:14,15

“Pursue after peace with all men, and after the sanctification, without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by it many be defiled.”

Ackroyd points out, “Again we observe the irony of the narrative. This turnabout in the affair will bring back Absalom but not to succession and well-being for the kingdom. David's security will be radically threatened. Absalom will die. The refusal of David to see Absalom represents the vacillation between favor and disfavor. It is as if the king cannot make up his mind to a full reconciliation.”

Redpath points out, “What kind of forgiveness is that? I'll tell you - - it is the kind we want from God but we never get. O God, forgive us, but please let us go on doing what we are doing. Don't demand of us repentance. Don't demand a broken heart. Don't demand from us a turning away from sin. Lord, please forgive us, for we need to be forgiven, but don't, please don't expect any change. God refuses those terms altogether. He will never forgive at the expense of justice. In this instance, David proved the utter futility of any attempt to do so.”

Vos points out, “Joab lost no time in bringing Absalom back to Jerusalem but David tragically did not forgive his son completely. Absalom was confined to his own house for two years without seeing the king. Thus he had plenty of time to nurse his disaffection for the king, and the gulf between them widened.”

Gulston says, “When a probably penitent Absalom returned from the far country, no welcoming father greeted him. No fatted calf, no robe, no ring for his royal finger. Let him return to his own house, Joab was told by the king, and let him not see my face. This was one of the cruelest orders David ever gave. It was out of character and incomprehensible when placed beside the cry that was later to burst from his heart, ‘O my son, Absalom! Would God I had died for thee!’”

(No shoes! He must go to his own house! He must not see my face!)

Lewis B. Smedes in his book Forgive and Forget says, “Forgiving seems almost unnatural. Our sense of fairness tells us people should pay for the wrong they do. But forgiving is love’s power to break nature’s rule.”

If we ignore the moral hindrance, as if it did not really matter, we take our first step into an opiated life where nobody really gives a damn.

Love - Not long ago the father of rock star Marvin Gaye shot and killed him. Friends of the artist whose music had gone to the top of the charts could have had anything he wanted. But a few weeks before his death Gaye had told them that all he ever wanted was his father’s love.
(19-3)

Smedes cites an illustration from Shakespeare’s Merchant of Venice when he says, “Did Shylock have a case? He is, ad all villain haters, known the classic unforgiver. But who looks at the business from Shylock’s point of view? We find Shylock in Shakespeare’s Merchant of Venice. He had been kicked around badly, and for no good reason. Listen to his complaint: ‘Antonio,’ he said, ‘hath disgraced me. Laughed at my losses, mocked my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated my enemies, and for what?’ Why did Antonio rub Shylock’s face in the muck? Had Shylock done him wrong? Were there scores to settle? No, Antonio was spurred only by the evil spirit of anti-Semitism. Shylock was brutalized only because he was a Jew. Why then should Shylock forgive Antonio, as if nothing had happened between them? He asked for no more than he had coming. Antonio had made a bargain. Let the wrongdoer pay his dues. One pound of flesh, please, as promised.”

v. 25 In all Israel there was not a man so highly praised for his handsome appearance as Absalom. From the top of his head to the sole of his foot there was no blemish in him.

(Macho image, worked on the weights; muscles ripped!)

v. 26 Whenever he cut the hair of his head - - he used to cut his hair from time to time when it became too heavy for him - - he would weigh it, and its weight was two hundred shekels by the royal standard.

These verses draw a picture of Absalom so we can fully appreciate what a fine specimen he was, that is, externally.

He was really very good looking. From the top of his head to the sole of his foot there was no blemish in him.

There is not a mark on him physically - - no birthmark, no scar, no deformity, not even a pimple. He is handsome from the top of his head to the soles of his feet.

(Could have been a great military man! All the potential in the world! He lost confidence in the administration and burned his draft card and joined the hippy movement.)

(Annual haircut!)

Verse 26 tells us that when he cut his hair, and he only cut it once a year, it weighed a little over 3 pounds. With a gorgeous head of hair like that, he probably attracted women from miles around. He must have been known for how good looking he was. Why else would he have his hair weighed if he hadn't been little bit vain. He had charm and he was a magnificent specimen with long, flowing hair.

I think these verse are included so that we can see that he was a boy that David could have really been proud of.

v. 27 Three sons and daughters were born to Absalom. The daughter's name was Tamar, and she became a beautiful woman.

(Gave David four grandchildren!)

The names of the sons are not mentioned here that are born to Absalom. He has three boys, and then he has one girl. And that daughter who was born to him has the name Tamar, the name of his sister who was raped by Amnon. In honor of his sister he names his daughter Tamar, and she became a beautiful woman.

So Absalom had four children, three sons and one daughter. I'm sure that David and Maacah, Absalom's mother, were both thrilled with Absalom's choice of naming his daughter Tamar.

It could be that Absalom waited to take a wife unto himself until these three years that he spent at his grandparent's place in Geshur.

v. 28 Absalom lived two years in Jerusalem without seeing the king's face.

Now in our story Absalom has lived three years in Geshur and now two years in Jerusalem without seeing his father's face. It has been five years now since the murder of Amnon, and seven years since the rape of Tamar.

(All David has done is get mad!)

Dr. Paul Jorden says, “For two full years Absalom lived in Jerusalem but did not see his father’s face. Finally, Absalom took matters into his own hands in an attempt to gain reconciliation. Absalom sent for Joab but the general would not come. He sent word another time but still Joab failed to come. So Absalom simply ordered Joab’s barley field to be set on fire, and that brought immediate response. What a sad thing to see a young man who literally has to set fire to a field in order to gain attention. The abnormal behavior of many young people today is simply a desperate attempt to gain attention from those they love. This is a sad commentary on the failure of many parents. The young man was so desperate that he had pleaded with Joab, ‘Let me see the king’s face, and if there be any iniquity in me, let him kill me.’ Absalom was willing to lose his life in order to see his father’s face. Do you see the desperation and the tragedy in this young man’s life? Do you see the power of the father’s indifference upon the son’s personality and behavior pattern? It took David five years after Absalom had killed Amnon to finally reconcile himself to his son. Three years of banishment in a foreign land and two years of exile from his father in Jerusalem.”

J. Vernon McGee points out, “God had not forgiven David halfheartedly. God did not say, ‘Well, I forgive you, but we will not have fellowship anymore. I will not restore completely. You and I are admonished, ‘And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ’s sake, has forgiven you.’ How are we to forgive other? The same way as God does. David should have forgiven Absalom. He is setting the stage for rebellion. David made a blunder in not forgiving his son as God had forgiven David. He will live to regret it.”

v. 29 Then Absalom sent for Joab in order to send him to the king, but Joab refused to come to him. So he sent a second time, but he refused to come.

You can sense the height of frustration that Absalom is experiencing. After being in exile for three years and now having 24 months of being back in the city of Jerusalem and no contact with his father, he again turns to Joab who basically affected the initial reconciliation.

Joab has had just about enough of it, and does not want to be involved, so he refuses to come to Absalom when he makes two separate requests.

v. 30 The he said to his servants, “Look, Joab’s field is next to mine, and he has barley there. Go and set it on fire.” So Absalom’s servants set the field on fire.

(So much of tragedy is the result of frustration.)

(Hold our anger in | fail to forgive | bury a bitter spirit | all of the sudden! explosion!! | the balloon pops | the gun goes off | the challenger explodes 73 seconds after liftoff.)

Here Absalom is going to do something to get Joab's attention, and so he commands his servants to set the barley fields on fire.

(fire trucks; hoses; flashing lights!)

v. 31 Then Joab did go to Absalom's house and he said to him, "Why have your servants set my field on fire?"

(What in the world are you doing man!)

v. 32 Absalom said to Joab, "Look, I sent word to you and said, 'Come here so I can send you to the king and ask, 'Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me if I were still there.'" Now then, I want to see the king's face, and if I am guilty of anything, let him put me to death."

(Rationalize his murder of Amnon.)

Gehrke points out, "The brilliant young man forces the issue with violent action and an ultimatum which shows that he is not only tired or marking time but also dissatisfied with the half-measures Joab and his royal father have so far taken. He demands either complete restoration or execution. The Joab undertakes Absalom's cause again, also this time successfully, for David finally grants Absalom the long-denied audience. Then Absalom, on his part, prostrates himself before his father; and David, on his part, falls upon his neck and kisses him. After seven long years, the prodigal son has come home, and the entire evil affair seems to have worked itself out well, but this is just the moment when a new and more deadly conflict will break out in David's house and empire."

v. 33 So Joab went to the king and told him this. Then the king summoned Absalom, and he came in and bowed down with his face to the ground before the king. And the king kissed Absalom.

Things will never really be right between Absalom and his father. And when they finally do come together here in this last verse, it's sort of a nice ritual but there is not a forgiving spirit. Joab has been the middleman all the way through because Absalom says, "Hey, I came to Jerusalem to see my dad, and I can't even see him. I might as well have stayed with Granddad Talmai." He is reaching out and he's saying, "I want to be with my dad, again."

We see Absalom as he lies down on the ground before the king and the king kisses him. Maybe this impresses you but it sure doesn't do much for me in the light of a reunion of father and son. The king leaned over and kissed him, and that was it. It's a formal nicety but there was not forgiveness and Absalom knew it.

Partial forgiveness leads only to BONDAGE AND BITTERNESS!

Genesis 46:29,30

“And Joseph prepared his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel. As soon as he appeared before him, he fell on his neck and wept on his neck long time. Then Israel said to Joseph, ‘Now let me die, since I have seen your face, that you are still alive.’”

Luke 15:20-24

“And he got up and came to his father, but while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fattened calf, kill it and let us eat and be merry. For this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again. He was lost and has been found, and they began to be merry.’”

Joyce Landorf in her book Irregular People says, “My friend Rueben Welch, in his sensitive and deeply moving book We Really Do Need Each Other writes, ‘You would not believe some of the letters that students show me from their parents. And parents wouldn't believe that students show them to me either. I read letters that say in all kinds of ways, I don't trust you. You aren't any good. When will you ever change? You are always late. Why don't you write? You aren't responsible. You are a disappointment. After all we've done for you. You will have to get married. You will get pregnant. I have seen the long arm of parental control and judgment reach across the miles from home to dormitory and almost destroy the precious growing, seeking life of a young college student.’”

David, I am sure, had a lot of bitterness inside because of what Absalom had done to Amnon. And Absalom had built up a lot of bitterness over the fact that David did not do anything to Amnon in disciplinary action for what he had done to his sister Tamar.

(Amnon raped Tamar - 2 yrs. - murder - 3 yrs. - Talmai king of Geshur - 2yrs - Jerusalem)

On this occasion there are no tears, no brokenness, no repentance. It's just surface ritual, surface forgiveness without dealing with the real problems.

(Forgiveness: 1. God 2. Yours!)

Chap. 15:v. 1 In the course of time, Absalom provided himself with a chariot and horses and with fifty men to run ahead of him.

An unhappy home breeds unbalanced children. His home was unhappy. He handled the kingdom but he couldn't handle his family. He failed miserably with his home.

Listen to what Billy Graham wrote: "The immutable law of sowing and reaping has felt its sway. We are now the hapless possessors of moral depravity and we seek in vain for a cure. The tares of indulgence have overgrown the wheat of moral restraint. Our homes have suffered. When the morals of society are upset, the family is the first to suffer. The home is the basic unit of society, and a nation is only as strong as its homes. The breaking up of a home does not often make headlines, but it eats like termites at the structure of a nation.

Children grow so fast. They can filter through our hands before we know it. An undisciplined family breeds insecurity and resentment. Our children have heaped upon them LUXURY, LEISURE, LAXITY no discipline, and it stinks. Absalom longed for security, even with an old grandfather. He couldn't find it with David. David lost the rod. He never disciplined his children; he was always too busy.

If you can't give your children time, you give them things and toys.

As the scene of the 15th chapter opens, Absalom now has his own chariot and horses and fifty men to run ahead of him.

He is now really acting out the role of royalty. He is a son of riches, and he's really living life to the hilt.

Absalom is acting the way he does here in chapter 15 because of the unresolved resentment against David. He still does not see David as he really is.

(Anger, bitterness, loneliness, hurt!)

David is keeping a safe distance from Absalom, and this is not good. Absalom really does not know his father intimately at all. Absalom wanted to know his real dad and he never did; and David never really knew Absalom. It was this formal, nice relationship sealed with a kiss.

At the end of chapter 14 we saw this halfhearted forgiveness by David, and that's what leads to the traumatic experiences of chapter 15.

(Ritual without reality, motion, meaning.)

Here in verse 1 we see Absalom with his own Porsche and pit crew available to wait upon him hand and foot.

Krummacher points out, "Absalom was man beautiful in his person. He was esteemed the most handsome in Israel, but the idea that in a fair body there must necessarily live a beautiful soul was falsified in his case. He seems to have valued very greatly the carefully cherished ornament of the unusually strong and luxuriant hair of his head. With his vanity there was associated a burning ambition, and he had long flattered himself with the hope of at some time ascending the throne of Israel, but that he should attain this in the way of peacefully succeeding to it as his father's heir was now, after all that had happened, greatly doubted by him. It now only remained for him to force open some other path to the glittering prize which hovered before his eyes. And what wonder is it that now in the many troubles that had come upon his royal father from the disaffected state of the people's minds toward him he thought the favorable moment had come."

(Wasn't sleazing around in the sack all day!)

- v. 2 He would get up early and stand by the side of the road leading to the city gate. Whenever anyone came with a complaint to be placed before the king for a decision, Absalom would call out to him, "What town are you from?" He would answer, "Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel."
- v. 3 Then Absalom would say to him, "Look, your claims are valid and proper, but there is no representative of the king to hear you."
- v. 4 And Absalom would add, "If only I were appointed judge in the land! Then everyone who has a complaint or case could come to me and I would see that he gets justice."

(took me 24 months to get an audience with the king and I'm his son.)

It is quite obvious from these statements of Absalom to the citizens of Israel that there is no communication between Absalom and David at all.

What Absalom is saying basically is “If only I were in the place of leadership in the land, then everyone could come to me and I would see that he or she gets justice.”

- v. 5 Also, whenever anyone approached him to bow down before him, Absalom would reach out his hand, take hold of him and kiss him.
- v. 6 Absalom behaved in this way toward all the Israelites who came to the king asking for Justice, and so he stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

Whereas, we have his words and complaints in verses 2-4, in verses 5 & 6 we have his benevolent actions toward the men of Israel.

(Shaking hands; hugging; kissing babies.)

Gehrke points out, “No matter what doubts David and Joab might have had about Absalom’s claim to the throne, the prince himself wastes no time in advertising himself as the next king by introducing the non-Israelite prestige symbols associated with royal status in the world of that day - - Chariots, horses, a fifty-man bodyguard. Besides such general public propaganda, a more guarded but equally effective technique is the criticism which he directs against the king’s seemingly inadequate provisions for the administration of justice. Absalom not only makes himself easily available to petitioners, but also halts their attempts at bowing and treating him as more than a helpful friend - - all in sharp contrast to the prevailing court ceremonial by means of which the king has made himself increasingly remote from his people. By such measures, Absalom seduces the hearts of the people, skillfully exploiting the sectional grievances of the northern tribes who feel that David has long since violated the covenant they had made with him by forcing them to costly expeditions for the advancement of his own personal empire.”

Absalom is no sooner restored to his place at court than he claims to be on the throne. He stations himself at the busiest gate of the city. When men with complaints come, he listens to them with a great show of sympathy. But first he got himself a chariot and horses and fifty men to run before it. Quite a conspicuous and fancy group. Imagine the people seeing this handsome young prince with his attendants in glittering uniforms and his prancing horses, and imagine them saying, “Now this is the kind of a king we should have now that we have become such a great nation. A king that looks that

part not an old man like David riding on a mule, unpretentious, old-fashioned, and far too religious.

I guess Absalom had learned from his Grandpa Talmai to multiply horses for himself.

We can also see that Absalom was a very good politician. He intimated that David was not giving them a fair deal and suggested the improvements which he would make in the government if he were king.

Oh if only I were judge in the land, everyone would get justice! Here he was, he himself should have been judged to death for murder and yet he thinks himself qualified to judge others. There is not one sentence in the Bible about Absalom's wisdom or his virtue or even his intelligence about the law. But he wants to be a judge.

This is the way a lot of people get elected to office these days. They have no qualifications other than the fact that they are good at hand shaking and back slapping. And we just love it. We fall for it every time. This is probably how the antichrist will gain his power. He'll be the greatest little back slapper that the world has ever seen.

v. 7 At the end of four years, Absalom said to the king, "Let me go to Hebron and fulfill a vow I made to the Lord.

Absalom has taken four years to campaign privately before the people with regard to his personal displeasure with the present administration and the promises have been made of what he would do if he were king.

It has now been eleven years since the rape of Tamar. Nine years since the murder of Amnon, six years since he returned to Jerusalem, and four years since he saw the face of David for the first time after being unable to do so for five years.

The rebellion now begins.

(1. Pray for my son! 2. How little we know what is going on in the lives of our children.)

(Absalom uses a religious cover to begin his conspiracy!)

Four years after all this campaigning has been going on under the hypocritical assumption of piety, he gets David's permission to go to Hebron. I imagine David was really overjoyed to hear that Absalom wanted to serve the Lord. But instead of paying a vow to the Lord he sent out spies to all the

tribes of Israel, saying, When they heard the trumpet, they should declare him king. He went to Hebron because this is where he was born. This is where David was king for seven years before he moved to Jerusalem.

In verse 6 it tells us "he stole away the hearts of the men of Israel. He set up a part-time kingdom until it could be full-time. David didn't spend time with Absalom. This boy had leisure, plenty of money, horses, and a chariot. And here he is out running his own way planning his own kingdom, and David doesn't even know it - - right under his nose. Fathers and mothers too can be so blind to the needs of their own children.

David points out, "Furthermore, there most likely was a very strong anti-Davidic feeling in Hebron. Many people in Hebron had probably not forgiven David for changing the capital from Hebron to Jerusalem, and took this occasion to express their dissatisfaction at the move. It was for this reason that Absalom returned to the place of his birth. There he could be assured of a sympathetic ear."

v. 8 While your servant was living at Geshur in Aram, I made this vow: 'If the Lord takes me back to Jerusalem, I will worship the Lord in Hebron.'

Here in verse 8 Absalom plays the religious game by recounting to his father that he had made a vow to the Lord that he would worship the Lord in Hebron if the Lord would take him back to Jerusalem.

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

Absalom is going back to his birthplace, and it is here that the beginnings of the conspiracy take place.

v. 10 Then Absalom sent secret messengers throughout the tribes of Israel to say, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpets, then say, 'Absalom is king in Hebron.'"

He sends out his secret service men throughout all of the tribes and told them that when the trumpets blow, they are to say in unison, "Absalom is king in Hebron."

v. 11 Two hundred men from Jerusalem had accompanied Absalom. They had been invited as guests and went quite innocently, knowing nothing about the matter.

- v. 12 While Absalom was offering sacrifices, he also sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, to come from Giloh, his home town. And so the conspiracy gained strength, and Absalom's following kept increasing.

When Absalom was in Hebron, he just sent down to the hill country of Judah for Ahithophel to come and join him in this conspiracy and counter-kingdom.

We are now preparing for civil war to return to the land.

The person that Absalom particularly courted and relied upon was Ahithophel, David's counselor, who was also Bathsheba's granddad. He probably held a grudge against David about her, but he did serve in David's cabinet.

Also, Ahithophel's son was a friend and comrade of Uriah, Bathsheba's husband. It is easy to understand why he would turn against David when this opportunity presented itself. Maybe he was behind the whole thing advising Absalom all along.

Epp points out, "Ahithophel and David had been close friends. They talked over spiritual problems, of victories and of defeats, they discussed matters of state, and went to the house of God together to inquire of the Lord which way they should turn. This man's wisdom had stood David in good stead time and again. Now Ahithophel had turned against him. The counselor deserted his king for Absalom, the usurper. This was hard for David to take, and hard to understand. At a later time, a greater David would suffer at the hands of Judas, one who had professed to be his friend, and yet who at the end turned against him and betrayed him to his enemies. There was no excuse for Judas to turn against our Lord. Neither is there any excuse for us. With regard to Ahithophel and David, however, there could have been a reason. Ahithophel was the grandfather of Bathsheba against whom David had so grievously sinned. Furthermore, Ahithophel's son was a friend and comrade of Uriah, Bathsheba's husband. David's sin was such that Ahithophel could not forget it. He was deeply hurt. It is easy to understand why we would turn against David when this opportunity presented itself."

David points out, "The right hand man and advisor of Absalom was Ahithophel a Gilonite. This man had been David's counselor for some years but he evidently had never really supported the throne genuinely, and this is understandable in the light of his relationship to Bathsheba. A comparison of 2 Samuel 11:3 and 2 Samuel 23:34 indicates that Ahithophel was the grandfather of Bathsheba. It is not impossible that ever since the violent

death of Uriah, Ahithophel had been looking for an opportunity for revenge. With the rebellion of David's son Absalom, his opportunity had arrived."

- v. 13 A messenger came and told David, "The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom."
- v. 14 Then David said to all his officials who were with him in Jerusalem, "Come! We must flee, or none of us will escape from Absalom. We must leave immediately, or he will move quickly to overtake us and bring ruin upon us and put the city to the sword."

David didn't inquire of the Lord or ask to bring the ephod. He immediately made a command to his officials, "Come! We must flee, or none of us will escape from Absalom. We must leave immediately, or he will move quickly to overtake us and bring ruin upon us and put the city to the sword."

It is possible that David might not have needed to leave Jerusalem. He might have mustered his men and defended his kingdom at this time. Why do you think he left? I think he had a desire to spare the city because he loved Jerusalem and to spare the innocent who would have suffered the most in warfare. David believed his own sins were the root cause of this trouble, and he looked upon Absalom's rebellion as God's chastening. I think he didn't want to press the issue with Absalom, for it was in David's heart to spare the life of his own son. He did not want harm to come to him.

Absalom and his men are only 18 miles south of Jerusalem, so David recognizes that he does not have a lot of time.

- v. 15 The king's officials answered him, "Your servants are ready to do whatever our lord the king chooses."

Once again you have the loyalty of David's administrative staff. They are ready to do whatever the king chooses. They are totally available and completely obedient.

- v. 16 The king set out, with his entire household following him; but he left ten concubines to take care of the palace.

David took all of his household except for ten concubines that he left behind to help take care of the palace.

- v. 17 So the king set out, with all the people following him, and they halted at a place some distance away.

This leaving of Jerusalem is one of the saddest episodes in the whole Bible, one of the most tragic moments in David's life. His very own son was causing him to run away. Probably the most pathetic thing of all was that deep down in his heart he was conscious that he deserved what he got.

- v. 18 All his men marched past him, along with all the Kerethites and Pelethites; and all the six hundred Gittites who had accompanied him from Gath marched before the king.

The Kerethites were the people responsible for executions in the kingdom. The Pelethites were the royal couriers who carried the mandates of the king to the distance point of the kingdom.

And our verse tells us that all 600 Gittites who had accompanied him from Gath marched before the king.

- v. 19 The king said to Ittai the Gittite, "Why should you come along with us? Go back and stay with King Absalom. You are a foreigner, an exile from your homeland.

- v. 20 You came only yesterday. And today shall I make you wander about with us, when I do not know where I am going? Go back, and take your countrymen. May kindness and faithfulness be with you."

What a pathetic picture David paints here. "Shall I make you wander just as I did in the days of King Saul, when I do not know where I am going?"

- v. 21 But Ittai replied to the king, "As surely as the Lord lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king may be, whether it means life or death, there will your servant be."

Ruth 1:16,17

"But Ruth said, 'Do not urge me to leave you, or turn back from following you. For where you go, I will go; and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die; and there I will be buried. Thus may the Lord do to me and worse if anything but death part you and me.'"

When you are placed in a day of crisis, you are going to find that many of your fair-weather followers are going to desert you. But there are going to be the faithful few who will share the fellowship of your sufferings.

Ackroyd points out, "I do not know where I am going' is rather a pedestrian translation of sentence which runs literally: 'As for me, I am going where I am going,' suggested David's acceptance that his fate is in God's hands."

Alan Redpath points out, "This little band of foreign men whose hearts had felt the warmth of David's presence, who had seen his patience in the time of suffering, who had walked with him in the days of his rejection, these men who were close to David loved him. Living so close to him made them conscious of his greatness, and his love broke up hardness of their hearts. So in the day of crisis, while other people who were what you might call fair-weather followers, were deserting him, this group of men followed him and shared the fellowship of his sufferings."

Krummacher points out, "Soon enough the king was made aware of what was in progress and how in Absalom he had only nourished a serpent in his bosom. The tidings of what he was doing threatened utterly to crush him to the ground; and so much the more did it oppress him, as in this calamity he was constrained to recognize a new chastisement measured out to him by the Almighty. For this reason, the state of mind into which he was brought by the dreadful tidings was not so much one of anger and revenge, as rather of humiliation and contrition of heart.

This grief piercing his heart as with a poisoned sting, David might perhaps have had in recollection, when, at a later period, by the inward operation of the Holy Spirit, he wrote that Messianic psalm, which forms, as it were, a program of the crucifixion of Christ, where he breaks out in these words, "I am a worm, and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people."

Ahithophel knew, however, how to clothe himself in an appearance of piety, through which even David had in his innocence allowed himself to be deceived. In the circle of David's friends Ahithophel was the Judas Iscariot. But at how many royal courts from those days down to the present time has there been met with in the person of someone of the most highly favored and most richly decorated with honors, the copy of Ahithophel.

v. 22 David said to Ittai, "Go ahead, march on." So Ittai the Gittite marched on with all his men and the families that were with him.

After David provided Ittai with the freedom to depart and go back to be a follower of King Absalom, and he refused to do so with a life and death commitment to David; David then tells him to "Go ahead, and march on with him."

- v. 23 The whole countryside wept aloud as all the people passed by. The king also crossed the Kidron Valley, and all the people moved on toward the desert.

It is a very sad and tearful procession that leaves the city of Jerusalem and heads for the desert.

Psalm 126:5,6

“Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting. He who goes to and fro weeping, carrying his bag of seed shall indeed come again with a shout of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.”

(Fiddler on the roof when everyone is leaving Anatephka.)

- v. 24 Zadok was there, too, and all the Levites who were with him were carrying the ark of the covenant of God. They set down the ark of God, and Abiathar offered sacrifices until all the people had finished leaving the city.
- v. 25 Then the king said to Zadok, “Take the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the Lord’s eyes, he will bring me back and let me see it and his dwelling place again.
- v. 26 But if he says, ‘I am not pleased with you,’ then I am ready; let him do to me whatever seems good to him.”

Why do you suppose David wants the ark back in the city? Maybe he feels that the ark and the priests will help bring Absalom closer to the Lord, or maybe he feels that Absalom will not bother it.

Paul Jordan points out, “In his depths of despair, David still recognized God was in control of his life. His confidence was in God.”

Romans 8:28

“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose.”

I will not doubt, though all my ships at sea
Come drifting home with broken masts and sails.
I will believe that hand which never fails
From seeming evil worketh good for me;

And though I weep because those sails are tattered,
Still will I cry while my best hopes lie shattered;
I trust in Thee.

I will not doubt, though sorrows fall like rain,
And troubles swarm like bees about a hive.
I will believe that heights for which I strive
Are only reached by anguish and by pain.
And though I groan and writhe beneath my crosses,
I yet shall see though my severest losses
The greater gain.

No chance hath brought this ill to me,
'Tis God's own hand, so let it be.
He seeth what I cannot see
There is a need-be for each pain.
Thou art the workman; I the frame.
Lord, for the glory of Thy name,
Perfect thine image in the same.

Carlson points out, "To see the ark and its dwelling once more is the guarantee of Yahweh's favor toward David. The ark is left in Jerusalem for political reasons in order to provide Zadok and Abiathar with their credentials as spies in David's service, their sons providing lines of communication."

David in verse 26 says, "Then I am ready; let him do to me whatever seems good to him."

2 Timothy 4:6,7

"For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course. I have kept the faith."

- v. 27 The king also said to Zadok the priests. Aren't you a seer? Go back to the city in peace, with your son Ahimaaz and Jonathan son of Abiathar. You and Abiathar take your two sons with you.
- v. 28 I will wait at the fords in the desert until word comes from you to inform me."

It is David's plan to have secret intelligence going on in the city through Zadok and Abiathar witnessing what is going on and then sending messengers by their two sons Ahimaaz and Jonathan.

v. 29 So Zadok and Abiathar took the ark of God back to Jerusalem and stayed there.

Ackroyd points out, "These two verses are interwoven with the ark theme. As the material stands, David's conduct is reminiscent of the advice before battle: 'Trust in God and keep your powder dry.' Here we find David taking precautions and ensuring a source of information about Absalom's plans."

v. 30 But David continued up the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went; his head was covered and he was barefoot. All the people with him covered their heads too and were weeping as they went up.

Here we witness David as a very broken man.

Gehrke points out, "Once the review of the entire company has been completed, the group begins to climb the Mount of Olives, procession of penitence and deep sorrow and lamentation. The king himself leading the way with feet bare, head covered, and robbed of all his royal glory. Thus stripped of all proud claims, he dares to hope that the Lord will have mercy on him. David's thoughts become clear when he hears the unnerving report that his wisest statesman Ahithophel has gone over to Absalom's side, thus assuring Absalom of the very best advice and increasing the gravity of the situation. David responds to that news with an appeal to the Lord to turn the wisdom of the traitor into foolishness."

v. 31 Now David had been told, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." So David prayed, "O Lord, turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness."

First the reports come that it was Absalom, his own son, and now Ahithophel, his wise counselor and confidante, likewise, has forsaken him and joined Absalom's conspiracy.

Gulston points out, "It was on the slopes of the Mount of Olives, just after he had crossed the Kidron Brook, that David learned of Ahithophel's treachery. Here, many years later, Judas was to betray Jesus."

v. 32 When David arrived at the summit, where the people used to worship God, Hushai the Arkite was there to meet him, his robe torn and dust on his head.

- v. 33 David said to him, "If you go with me, you will be a burden to me.
- v. 34 But if you return to the city and say to Absalom, 'I will be your servant, O King; I was your father's servant in the past, but now I will be your servant,' then you can help me by frustrating Ahithophel's advice.

David prays in verse 31 that the Lord would turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness. Now we read in verse 34 David is sending Hushai the Arkite back for this purpose of frustrating Ahithophel's advice.

- v. 35 Won't the priests Zadok and Abiathar be there with you? Tell them anything you hear in the king's palace.
- v. 36 Their two sons, Ahimaaz son of Zadok and Jonathan son of Abiathar, are there with them. Send them to me with anything you hear."
- v. 37 So David's friend Hushai arrived at Jerusalem as Absalom was entering the city.

Hushai was so touched by David's feelings he met David and bore the marks of compassion and feeling. He just came to be with David. He didn't say anything. He just was there.

He was old, and David gave him a very significant task: Go be a spy in the city. Thwart the counsel of Ahithophel. You can help me in that way.

Hushai was to get messages to David where he was camped. There was a whole line of communications that led to the overthrow of Absalom. Hushai, Zadok, Abiathar, an unknown girl who took a message, Jonathan, Ahimaaz, an unknown woman who his two messengers is a disguised well, and finally the errand boy who ran the message to David.

Winter points out, "These three men, Zadok, Abiathar, and Hushai were to do their best to undermine Absalom's plans. Jonathan, Abiathar's son, and Ahimaaz, Zadok's son were to carry messages back and forth. This is David's scheme for putting down Absalom's rebellion."

Conclusion:

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

- Lesson #1: Satisfying every material need and abundant love without discipline will lead to disaster.

- Lesson #2: Partial forgiveness leads to bondage and bitterness.
- Lesson #3: David never functions with his kids except in a crisis situation.
- Lesson #4: David and Absalom are never reconciled in their relationship.
- Lesson #5: Absalom was a bitter young man looking for a father.
- Lesson #6: In the midst of a crisis you will always find your true friends.
- Lesson #7: David submits himself to God's sovereign purpose in this situation.

Maclaren says, "The psalms which probably belong to the period of Absalom's rebellion correspond well with the impression of his spirit gathered from the historical books. Confidence in God, submission to his will, are strongly expressed in them. And we may almost discern a progress in the former respect as the rebellion grows. The flame brighter and brighter in the deepening darkness. We may allocate with a fair amount of likelihood the following psalms to this period:

Psalm 3

"O Lord, how my adversaries have increased!
Many are rising up against me.
Many are saying of my soul,
"There is no deliverance for him in God."
But Thou, O Lord, art a shield about me,
My glory, and the One who lifts my head.
I was crying to the Lord with my voice,
And He answered me from His holy mountain.
I lay down and slept;
I awoke, for the Lord sustains me.
I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people
Who have set themselves against me round about."

Psalm 4

"Many are saying, 'Who will show us any good?'
Lift up the light of Thy countenance upon us, O Lord!
Thou hast put gladness in my heart,
More than when their grain and new wine abound.
In peace I will both lie down and sleep,
For Thou alone, O Lord, dost make me to dwell in safety.

Psalm 25

“To Thee, O Lord, I lift up my soul.
O my God, in Thee I trust,
Do not let me be ashamed;
Do not let my enemies exult over me.
Indeed, none of those who wait for Thee will be ashamed;
Those who deal treacherously without cause will be ashamed.
Make me know Thy ways, O Lord;
Teach me Thy paths.
Lead me in Thy truth and teach me,
For Thou art the God of my salvation;
For Thee I wait all the day.
Turn to me and be gracious to me,
For I am lonely and afflicted.
The troubles of my heart are enlarged;
Bring me out of my distresses.
Look upon my affliction and my trouble,
And forgive all my sins.
Look upon my enemies, for they are many,
And they hate me with violent hatred.
Guard my soul and deliver me;
Do not let me be ashamed, for I take refuge in Thee.”

Psalm 28

“Blessed be the Lord,
Because He has heard the voice of my supplication.
The Lord is my strength and my shield;
My heart trusts in Him, and I am helped;
Therefore my heart exults,
And with my song I shall thank Him.
The Lord is their strength,
And He is a saving defense to His anointed.
Save Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance;
Be their shepherd also, and carry them forever.”

Psalm 58

“The righteous will rejoice when he sees the vengeance;
He will wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.
And men will say, “Surely there is a reward for the righteous;
Surely there is a God who judges on earth!”

Psalm 61

“Hear my cry, O God;
Give heed to my prayer.
From the end of the earth I call to Thee, when my heart is faint;
Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.
For Thou hast been a refuge for me,
A tower of strength against the enemy.
Let me dwell in Thy tent forever;
Let me take refuge in the shelter of Thy wings.

Psalm 62

“My soul waits in silence for God only;
From Him is my salvation.
He only is my rock and my salvation,
My stronghold; I shall not be greatly shaken.
My soul, wait in silence for God only,
For my hope is from Him.
He only in my rock and my salvation,
My stronghold; I shall not be shaken.
On God my salvation and my glory rest;
The rock of my strength, my refuge is in God.
Trust in Him at all times, O people;
Pour out your heart before Him;
God is a refuge for us.”

Psalm 63

“O God, Thou art my God, I shall seek Thee earnestly;
My soul thirsts for Thee, my flesh yearns for Thee,
In a dry and weary land where there is no water.
Thus I have beheld Thee in the sanctuary,
To see Thy power and Thy glory.
Because Thy lovingkindness is better than life,
My lips will praise Thee.
When I remember Thee on my bed.
I meditate on Thee in the night watches.
For Thou has been my help,
And in the shadow of Thy wings I sing for joy.
My soul clings to Thee;
Thy right hand upholds me.
But those who seek life, to destroy it,
Will go into the depths of the earth.

They will be delivered over to the power of the sword;
They will be a prey for foxes.

Psalm 109

“But Thou, O God, the Lord, deal kindly with me for Thy name’s sake;
Because Thy lovingkindness is good, deliver me;
For I am afflicted and needy,
And my heart is wounded within me.
I am passing like a shadow when it lengthens;
I am shaken off like the locust.
My knees are weak from fasting;
And my flesh has grown lean, without fatness.
I also have become a reproach to them;
When they see me, they wag their head.
Help my, O Lord my God;
Save me according to Thy lovingkindness.
And let them know that this is Thy hand;
Thou, Lord, hast done it.
With my mouth I will give thanks abundantly to the Lord;
And in the midst of many I will praise Him.
For He stands at the right hand of the needy,
To save him from those who judge his soul.”

Psalm 143

“Hear my prayer, O Lord,
Give ear to my supplications!
Answer me in Thy faithfulness, in Thy righteousness!
And do not enter into judgment with Thy servant,
For in Thy sight no man living is righteous.
For the enemy has persecuted my soul;
He has crushed my life to the ground;
He has made me dwell in dark places, like those who have long been
dead.
Therefore my spirit is overwhelmed within me;
My heart is appalled within me.
I remember the days of old;
I meditate on all Thy doings;
I muse on the work of Thy hands.
I stretch out my hands to Thee;
My soul longs for Thee, as a parched land.
Answer me quickly, O Lord, my spirit fails;
Do not hide Thy face from me,

Lest I become like those who go down to the pit.
Let me hear Thy lovingkindness in the morning;
For I trust in Thee;
Teach me the way in which I should walk;
For Thee I lift up my soul.
Deliver me, O Lord, from my enemies;
I take refuge in Thee.
Teach me to do Thy will,
For Thou art my God;
Let Thy good Spirit lead me on level ground.”