



# A BETTER KING

## A SERIES IN 2 SAMUEL



### 2 Samuel 15 – David's Darkest Hour

October 22, 2023

## 1. Politics Absalom-style

### A. Absalom tried to look important.

After this Absalom got himself a chariot and horses, and fifty men to run before him.  
2 Samuel 15:1 (ESV)

Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.  
Psalm 20:7 (ESV)

"Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts,..."  
Luke 20:46 (ESV)

### B. Absalom made promises he could never keep.

And Absalom used to rise early and stand beside the way of the gate..."  
2 Samuel 15:2a (ESV)

...And when any man had a dispute to come before the king for judgment, Absalom would call to him and say, "From what city are you?" ... 2 Samuel 15:2b (ESV)

...And when he said, "Your servant is of such and such a tribe in Israel," Absalom would say to him, "See, your claims are good and right, but there is no man designated by the king to hear you." 2 Samuel 15:2c-3 (ESV)

Then Absalom would say, "Oh that I were judge in the land! Then every man with a dispute or cause might come to me, and I would give him justice." 2 Samuel 15:4 (ESV)

### C. Absalom was a schmooser.

And whenever a man came near to pay homage to him, he would put out his hand and take hold of him and kiss him. 2 Samuel 15:5 (ESV)

Thus Absalom did to all of Israel who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel. 2 Samuel 15:6 (ESV)

## 2. Taking power Absalom's way

And at the end of four years Absalom said to the king, "Please let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed to the LORD, in Hebron." 2 Samuel 15:7 (ESV)

For your servant vowed a vow while I lived at Geshur in Aram, saying, 'If the LORD will indeed bring me back to Jerusalem, then I will offer worship to the LORD.' " 2 Samuel 15:8 (ESV)

The king said to him, "Go in peace." So he arose and went to Hebron. 2 Samuel 15:9 (ESV)

But Absalom sent secret messengers throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then say, 'Absalom is king at Hebron!'" 2 Samuel 15:10 (ESV)

With Absalom went two hundred men from Jerusalem who were invited guests, and they went in their innocence and knew nothing. 2 Samuel 15:11 (ESV)

And while Absalom was offering the sacrifices, he sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his city Giloh... 2 Samuel 15:12a (ESV)

Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me. Psalm 41:9 (ESV)

I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. (Speaking of Judas) But the Scripture will be fulfilled, 'He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.' John 13:18 (ESV)

...And the conspiracy grew strong, and the people with Absalom kept increasing. 2 Samuel 15:12b (ESV)

## 3. David ran for his life.

And a messenger came to David, saying, "The hearts of the men of Israel have gone after Absalom." 2 Samuel 15:13 (ESV)

Then David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, "Arise, and let us flee, or else there will be no escape for us from Absalom. Go quickly, lest he overtake us quickly and bring down ruin on us and strike the city with the edge of the sword." 2 Samuel 15:14 (ESV)

O Lord, how many are my foes! Many are rising against me; many are saying of my soul, "There is no salvation for him in God." Selah Psalm 3:1-2 (ESV)

So the king went out, and all his household after him. And the king left ten concubines to keep the house. 2 Samuel 15:16 (ESV)

And the king went out, and all the people after him. And they halted at the last house. 2 Samuel 15:17 (ESV)

And all his servants passed by him, and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the six hundred Gittites who had followed him from Gath, passed on before the king. 2 Samuel 15:18 (ESV)

Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, "Why do you also go with us? Go back and stay with the king, for you are a foreigner and also an exile from your home. You came only yesterday, and shall I today make you wander about with us, since I go I know not where? Go back and take your brothers with you, and may the LORD show steadfast love and faithfulness to you." But Ittai answered the king, "As the LORD lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king shall be, whether for death or for life, there also will your servant be." And David said to Ittai, "Go then, pass on." So Ittai the Gittite passed on with all his men and all the little ones who were with him. 2 Samuel 15:19–22 (ESV)

And all the land wept aloud as all the people passed by, and the king crossed the brook Kidron, and all the people passed on toward the wilderness. 2 Samuel 15:23 (ESV)

And Abiathar came up, and behold, Zadok came also with all the Levites, bearing the ark of the covenant of God. And they set down the ark of God until the people had all passed out of the city. 2 Samuel 15:24 (ESV)

Then the king said to Zadok, "Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me back and let me see both it and his dwelling place." 2 Samuel 15:25 (ESV)

But if he says, 'I have no pleasure in you,' behold, here I am, let him do to me what seems good to him." 2 Samuel 15:26 (ESV)

The king also said to Zadok the priest, "Are you not a seer? Go back to the city in peace, with your two sons, Ahimaaz your son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. See, I will wait at the fords of the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me." So Zadok and Abiathar carried the ark of God back to Jerusalem, and they remained there. 2 Samuel 15:27–29 (ESV)

But David went up the ascent of the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went, barefoot and with his head covered. And all the people who were with him covered their heads, and they went up, weeping as they went. 2 Samuel 15:30 (ESV)

And it was told David, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." And David said, "O LORD, please turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness." 2 Samuel 15:31 (ESV)

While David was coming to the summit, where God was worshiped, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat torn and dirt on his head. 2 Samuel 15:32 (ESV)

David said to him, "If you go on with me, you will be a burden to me. But if you return to the city and say to Absalom, 'I will be your servant, O king; as I have been your father's servant in time past, so now I will be your servant,' then you will defeat for me the counsel of Ahithophel. 2 Samuel 15:33–34 (ESV)

Are not Zadok and Abiathar the priests with you there? So whatever you hear from the king's house, tell it to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. Behold, their two sons are with

them there, Ahimaaz, Zadok's son, and Jonathan, Abiathar's son, and by them you shall send to me everything you hear." 2 Samuel 15:35-36

So Hushai, David's friend, came into the city, just as Absalom was entering Jerusalem. 2 Samuel 15:37 (ESV)

## Applications

1. In a crisis, I must submit to God's will for the outcome AND develop a plan of action to address the problem.
2. In a crisis, David gave us four steps to follow.
  - A. Submit the outcome to God's will.
  - B. Develop a plan of action.
  - C. Pray and ask for help in specific ways.
  - D. Expect God's answer to our prayers to come through ordinary people.
3. Am I like Absalom? Do I pretend to care about others while manipulating them to serve myself?
4. David's exit from Jerusalem was a preview of Jesus' exit (See John 18:1-2).

## Life Group Questions

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1. **Read 2 Samuel 15.** What did you learn in this chapter that you didn't know?
2. What tactics did Absalom use to gain power? Where do you see religious and political leaders using those tactics today?
3. Absalom pretended to care about people, but in reality, he used people to achieve his selfish ambitions. How can we use people to achieve our selfish ambitions instead of genuinely caring about them?
4. David submitted his future to the will and wisdom of the LORD, but he also took strategic steps to ensure his own survival. Does that show inconsistency between David's words and actions? If not, what does this teach us?
5. What factors enabled Absalom to quickly turn a nation's heart against his father and toward himself? What can we learn from that today to guard our church and nation against leaders like Absalom who want to overturn leadership for their own selfish ambition?
6. When David walked out of Jerusalem in tears and shame, it was a preview of Jesus walking that same path in his last days. (See John 18:1-2 where John intended to tie Jesus' exit from Jerusalem with David's exit.) In what ways were David's and Jesus' exit from Jerusalem similar? How are they different?