

Message #22

II Samuel 16:15-23

My sister and her husband spent this week in Egypt. We have been texting about key places for them to tour. One of the places we have discussed is Rameses. Rameses was a key staging area when Israel left Egypt (Ex. 12:37). It was also a key place where Joseph appointed for Jacob and his family (Gen. 47:11).

Now the story of Joseph is quite a story. You remember it from the book of Genesis. Joseph's brothers were jealous of him and sold him as a slave to the Egyptians. Joseph went to Egypt and became the number two man in the Egyptian world. Because of a famine, the brothers who sold Joseph had to go to Egypt and buy grain and supplies and eventually they came to realize that they were actually face to face with Joseph. They begged Joseph to forgive them (Gen. 50:17) and Joseph said to them "you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result" (Gen. 50:20).

What a grasp Joseph had of the sovereignty of God. His brothers were doing evil and God used it for good.

David's world had fallen apart. He had sinned and he paid the price for the sin. Things looked as dark as they could look. But we may be certain of this, God is still sovereign and in the end, His will would be done in David's life. What we see here in this text is this:

EVEN WHEN ONE DOES EVIL, GOD IS STILL SOVEREIGN AND STILL WORKING OUT HIS WILL IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS WORD AND HIS PLAN.

At this point, it appears as if it is all over for David. Everything seems to be against him. But David has faced those odds before in life and he learned when everything seemed to be against him, God was for him and he was the one who ended up the winner. That will eventually happen to him again.

There are eight historical facts we want to see here:

HISTORICAL FACT #1 – Absalom enters Jerusalem. **16:15**

Absalom entered Jerusalem and all the people and men of Israel entered with him. It was a takeover of the city. This is a big moment for Absalom. The optics of this appear as though Absalom has won.

Ahithophel, who was once David's closest advisor, was now with Absalom. We read in I Chronicles 27:33, "Ahithophel was counselor to the king; and Hushai the Archite was the king's friend." So at one point, Ahithophel had been very close to David. But he turned on him.

HISTORICAL FACT #2 – Hushai, who was David's friend, met with Absalom. **16:16**

Hushai was a Davidic plant specifically left in Jerusalem to keep David informed of what was happening (II Sam. 15:36). The Bible very clearly says Hushai was David's friend (15:37).

When Hushai gets before Absalom, as Robert Bergen said, “he began carrying out one of the most successful acts of deceit and subterfuge recorded in Israelite history” (*I, 2 Samuel*, p. 410).

When Hushai went in before Absalom, he started by saying twice “Long live the king.”

Now when you first read this, it appears like an “enthusiastic affirmation” of the fact that Hushai is on the side of Absalom. But read the text carefully. He doesn’t say long live Absalom. He says long live the king. Hushai believed David was the king, but Absalom was so arrogant that he would assume he was saying this about him.

HISTORICAL FACT #3 – Absalom questions Hushai. 16:17

Everyone knew that Hushai was David’s friend so Absalom questioned him as to why he did not leave Jerusalem and go with David. He said, “Is this your loyalty to your friend?” Actually yes it is. The reason why he is in Jerusalem is because he is loyal to David.

What Absalom doesn’t know is that Hushai’s loyalty to David is the reason he is meeting with Absalom and staying in Jerusalem.

HISTORICAL FACT #4 – Hushai responds to Absalom. 16:18-19

Hushai was a very smart man in his responses. Robert Bergen said, “Hushai’s cool-headed response once again reveals his cunning” (*I & II Samuel*, p. 313).

Hushai never mentions Absalom’s name but Absalom is so arrogant that he assumes he is saying this about him.

Hushai gives two responses to Absalom:

Response #1 - Hushai said I will remain with the one the Lord, the people and all the men of Israel have chosen. **16:18b**

Hushai said I will be his and be with him and remain with him. Now the tip off to all of this is the one the LORD has chosen. The one the LORD has chosen was not Absalom, it was David (I Sam. 16:1, 12; II Sam. 6:21). Nowhere in the Bible does it say Absalom was chosen by God.

Absalom just makes the assumption that this all refers to him.

Response #2 - Hushai said I will serve in the son’s presence as I did in the father’s presence. **16:19**

What Hushai actually says is that I will serve the same way I have always served. I will serve the same way I served your father. Again, Absalom doesn’t get it. Hushai served as a loyal friend of David and he would serve in that same capacity in front of Absalom.

Hushai was a loyal friend and servant of David and he would stay that way even though now he was in the presence of Absalom.

Absalom was so full of himself that he really thought everything Hushai said proved he was loyal to Absalom.

He was satisfied with his delusional conclusion that Hushai was on his side.

HISTORICAL FACT #5 – Absalom asks Ahithophel what he should do. **16:20**

Often times those who are doing wrong don't really think it through. Absalom is now in Jerusalem and quite honestly did not know what his next move should be.

When Absalom says “give your” advice, he uses a plural verb in Hebrew. So he apparently asked the question in the presence of more than just Ahithophel. He may have been so impressed with Hushai's answer that he included him in on the question.

He was wondering now that we are here in Jerusalem, what should be our next move.

But when he asked this question, Ahithophel was quick to answer.

Now that Absalom was in Jerusalem, he wanted to know what his next move should be. Ahithophel is a Satanic snake. He is a disloyal traitor, a Judas. So Absalom decided to consult him.

Now earlier in life, David was faced with a similar situation. He was wondering what he should do in regard to going to a city and he consulted God (II Sam. 2:1). If Absalom is so convinced that this is what he is supposed to do, the one he should be consulting is not Ahithophel, but God.

HISTORICAL FACT #6 – Ahithophel gives his advice to Absalom. **16:21**

Ahithophel was quick to give his advice. Ahithophel gives three pieces of advice to Absalom:

Piece of Advice #1 - Go have sexual relations with all your father's concubines. **16:21a**

Can you imagine this kind of counsel from someone who is supposed to be a sound-minded counselor? Only the king was allowed to have relations with the concubines. David prayed that God would “make the counsel of Ahithophel foolishness” (15:31). God answers that prayer.

Piece of Advice #2 - All Israel will hear that you are against your father. **16:21b**

If Absalom did this, all of Israel would hear and begin to think he truly is Israel's king. Ahithophel knew that this action would put a real “irreparable breach” in the relationship between David and Absalom.

Piece of Advice #3 - All with you will become stronger in their support. **16:21c**

All the people who were with Absalom would be cemented in their relationship with him because this would be the kind of thing that determines whose side you are on.

This would be a statement that we will soon be getting rid of David and anointing Absalom as our next king and we are with him.

HISTORICAL FACT #7 – Absalom listened to the advice of Ahithophel. **16:22**

You listen to the advice of the wrong people and they can lead you away from God and into His judgment. That is what happens here. Absalom listened to this godless advice.

The men pitched a tent on the roof of David's house. This was the very place where David had seen Bathsheba. We may remember that Bathsheba was the daughter of Eliam (11:3), who was the son of Ahithophel (II Sam. 23:34). So Bathsheba was the granddaughter of Ahithophel.

By setting the tent on the very place where David saw Bathsheba, and having Absalom have sexual relations with David's concubines, was, in Ahithophel's mind, very appropriate and justifiable.

So they set up a tent on top of the palace and one by one Absalom basically raped the concubines in front of all of Israel. This sin was out in the open. People could look up and see a tent on top of the palace and word was spreading what Absalom was doing in that tent.

What Absalom did not realize is that this act was so much worse than what David did and what God would do to Absalom would be far worse than what He did to David.

HISTORICAL FACT #8 – Ahithophel's advice was considered as coming from God. **16:23**

Do you see this? Both David and Absalom thought that Ahithophel's advice for him to rape the concubines was from the LORD.

Both David and Absalom saw this as coming from God and a fulfillment of the word of God.

The truth is, this actually was that. We may recall in II Samuel 12:11-12, God, through Nathan, said this to David: "Thus says the LORD, Behold I will raise up evil against you from your own household; I will even take your wives before your eyes and give them to your companion and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight. Indeed you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and under the sun."

As ugly as this is, God was still sovereign.