



FEED MY SHEEP

PUBLISHED BY JAMES W. BRUGGEMAN
STONE KINGDOM MINISTRIES
P. O. BOX 5695
ASHEVILLE, NC 28813 U.S.A.
www.stonekingdom.org

Issue #102

May 2007

No Fatalism Here!

We have been studying the character of David and Saul for these many months, and although King Saul has long been removed from the scene, we have discovered that David's own son, Absalom, is of the same spirit as Saul. Thus, in our understanding of the types and shadows in the life of David, we recognize Absalom as another Saul type.

When we left off last time, Absalom had conspired with Ahithophel to effect a coup d'état, to topple David from the throne and take it for himself. When King David in Jerusalem got word that Absalom had amassed an army and was on his way to Jerusalem, David let it be known that any and all who wished to join him as he left Jerusalem were welcome to do so.

As they were in the Kidron Valley and later on the mount of Olives, David took several steps to try to thwart the plans of his rebellious son. He told the co-high priests, Zadok and Abiathar, to return to Jerusalem with the ark of the covenant. He told them that they could be his eyes and ears in the capital, and that they should use their respective sons, Ahimaaz and Jonathan, as couriers to bring reports to David.

Then, David also sent his good friend and trusted counselor, Hushai the Archite, back to Jerusalem. He instructed him to try to get close to Absalom and learn whatever intelligence he could. Hushai was to relay the intel to either of the high priests who would then send it back to David through their sons as couriers.

Finally, as David and his "Delta forces" are making their way through the territory of Benjamin (Saul's tribe), one of Saul's loyalists named Shimei began ston-

ing David. David restrained his commandos from eliminating this threat because David sensed God speaking through this enemy. Remember that? Are we learning to hear God speak through our enemies? Can we see those enemies, in the final analysis, as being for our good? That *should be* one of the goals of any prospective overcomer.

David and his sizeable entourage made it through Shimei's gauntlet and came to a place of rest, probably right on the west bank of the Jordan river.

2 Samuel 16:13 And as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along on the hill's side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust.

14 And the king, and all the people that were with him, came weary, and refreshed themselves there.

15 And Absalom, and all the people the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him.

When Absalom and his fellow conspirators came riding into Jerusalem, there were some—perhaps many—people who cast their lot with Absalom, and of course, would have welcomed him as a liberator. Among the cheering crowds would have been the two high priests—their sons remained outside of town—and also helping line the parade route was David's other undercover agent, Hushai.

16 And it came to pass, when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, was come unto Absalom, that Hushai said unto Absalom, God save the king, God save the king.

Hushai plays the role of the spy, pretending great friendship and loyalty to the new king. But Absalom is little suspicious at first and it takes a bit of play-acting and clever talking by Hushai to persuade him otherwise.

17 And Absalom said to Hushai, *Is this thy kindness to thy friend? why wentest thou not with thy friend?*

18 And Hushai said unto Absalom, *Nay; but whom the LORD, and this people, and all the men of Israel, choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide.*

19 And again, whom should I serve? *should I not serve in the presence of his son? as I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence.*

We notice that Hushai's first response to Absalom's questioning of his loyalty is to proclaim that "Well, David has fled; and you're here; and therefore it is obvious that Yahweh has chosen you to be king now." This is another lesson in how God's sovereignty works. It follows naturally on the similar point we made in a previous FMS, the point about the relationship between God's sovereignty and fatalism among Christians, or stated another way: it's about the relationship between God's sovereignty and apathetic attitudes on the part of believers.

Just as an aside, we all understand how people who believe in an any-moment-now rapture of all believers can easily develop a do-nothing and an apathetic attitude. But this is also a pitfall for those of us who believe in God's absolute sovereignty. In the situation in the narrative here, I see it like this: God indeed controls everything, down to the tiniest detail; and while we can truthfully state that whatever happens was meant to happen, that does not mean that we must be passive on-lookers to everything that happens. That is the Oriental philosophy of fatalism.

You see, Hushai's clever statements were meant to deceive Absalom by causing him to think that Hushai was a fatalist; i.e., that Hushai had the idea that "Well, if you're here and David's gone, then obviously, God meant for you to be king. And my job is to serve the king." This satisfies Absalom. He lets Hushai take his seat among his inner circle of counselors. But what Absalom did *not* know was that while Hushai *did* believe that God had ordained this event, Hushai also believed that God's sovereignty *ordained*

that Hushai be an undercover agent to work to overthrow the rebel Absalom.

The principle here that we must fully understand is that no matter what happens in our lives, we can always *choose* how to react. We must never allow laziness or apathy or fatalism to set in and become our mode of life. God gives us minds with great capabilities and He expects us to use them. In this case, both David and Hushai could have taken the fatalistic attitude that [in a whiney voice] "Well, Absalom seems to have the upper hand here. I guess that means that my reign as king is over. I guess I will just sit here and wait for him to come assassinate me because it's obvious that this is God's sovereign plan." Boo hoo hoo.

No, David did *not* think like that. He believed fully in the sovereignty of God, but because he really did *not* know what the outcome of Absalom's rebellion was going to be, from his perspective, he was free to choose how to react. So he was *decisive* and chose to send some undercover spies back to Jerusalem and to fight for his throne.

God indeed controls every detail of everyone's life from beginning to end, but the beauty of it, the utterly dazzling brilliance of the Father is that He does not let us know the future. Therefore, what is from His point of view the *illusion* of free will, is from our point of view and for all practical purposes, the apparent reality of free will. This is why David was not a fatalist. Let me repeat the key verses from our previous message.

2 Samuel 15: 25 And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, and show me *both* it, and his habitation:

26 But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, *here am I*, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.

You see, David did not know the future, and so for all practical purposes, from his perspective, he had free will to choose... to either roll over and die, ... or to use all his talents and resources to prevent the success of Absalom's attempted coup d'état. Therefore, he fled Jerusalem. Therefore, he sent Zadok and Abiathar back with the ark with instructions to set up an intelligence network. Therefore, he sent Hushai back to Jerusalem also, as his point man in Absalom's inner circle.

Of course, he did not know if Hushai would be successful in being accepted in Absalom's inner circle. If he failed to penetrate it, David would accept that failure as God's plan. But then the same choice would confront David again: does he then roll over and die, or does he use his mind to try to come up with another means to thwart Absalom's plan. I hope we all can grasp this very important principle of the sovereignty of God. (Our book, *Sacred Secrets of the Sovereignty of God*, is now being printed. At 352 pages, it is a very serious and in-depth treatment of this most critical subject.)

At this point in our story, Hushai is now in the personal presence of the man who would be king. Hushai's mind was getting a serious workout as he needed to choose his words to Absalom very carefully. One mistake and he would find himself being executed. By God's plan, though, Absalom fell for Hushai's affirmations of loyalty. It is thus ironic that we see Absalom, the man who had stood at the gates and gained the hearts of the people by flattery, was himself susceptible to be deceived by the flattery of Hushai. Then, having believed Hushai, Absalom calls for a cabinet meeting to decide upon his next course of action.

2 Samuel 16:20 Then said Absalom to Ahithophel, Give counsel among you what we shall do.

21 And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father: then shall the hands of all that *are* with thee be strong.

Ahithophel saw that now was not the time for half-measures. He needed to have Absalom do something that would immediately and forever make reconciliation impossible between David and Absalom. And only in this way, could Ahithophel feel that he and all the other co-conspirators were safe. He had to advise something from which there would never be any possibility of going back.

So he advised Absalom to do something that was so bold, so audacious—something that would be so “in your face” to David—that when David is unable to respond to this most heinous insult, it will demonstrate to all the people that “You, oh great Absalom, have the *power* now and you are the king of all Israel.”

Furthermore, in Ahithophel's mind, this advice

was equally self-serving because David, being the kind of character that he was, there was always the possibility that somehow David would find it in his heart to forgive Absalom, and then Ahithophel might not fare as well. He might be the one executed as the mastermind of the whole conspiracy—which he may indeed have been. We don't really know.

But if he could persuade Absalom to do such an atrocious act, this would most likely create a chasm which could never be spanned. Not only that, but regarding all those men would had been at the big, Texas barbeque party and were persuaded in the heat of an emotional oration to join Absalom's conspiracy, this would also force them all to continue in their support for Absalom. Being very much a man of the flesh, Absalom liked the in-your-face idea.

22 So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house; and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.

In my mind, it is also quite possible that Ahithophel—in his bitterness for what David had done to Uriah, Bathsheba and her family, of which he was her grandfather, you recall—that Absalom ravishing the harem would be giving David a taste of his own medicine. It was a revenge motive on the part of Ahithophel.

By the way, in what location does it say that they erected that tent? It was on the roof of the palace. In other words, this vile crime by Absalom takes place in the very place from which David gazed down upon Bathsheba and set all these events in motion. God does have His ways of balancing things out.

David had left ten concubines at the palace. What do they represent in type? Could they not represent the lost ten tribes who, over the centuries before and after Christ, have been ravished by Saul-types? ...That is, by corrupt leaders and “wannabe” leaders of church and state? Indeed!

What else could the ten concubines represent? Since David represents the overcomers, the barley company, perhaps the concubines represent the wheat company who are left behind. While David flees into the wilderness, he chooses not to take them along with him. They were not his beloved wives, merely concubines. It is likely that most of them had been acquired as guarantees of political treaties, as was the custom in those days.

So David and his company fled into the wilderness. In the church age, overcomers have often fled into the wilderness, both literally and figuratively. For example, in Europe in the Dark Ages, persecuted believers fled into the valleys of the Alps (the Vaudois), and into the Renne-le-Chateaux region of France. Figuratively, they have fled the established churches even to the present day and have been in the spiritual wilderness for a season. Those who remain behind in the denominational church system are ravished and abused by the Saul-types, the “Ab-saul-oms.”

Some might wish to make a link between the ten concubines and the ten virgins in the gospel parable. We do not see a connection there. The ten concubines were not split into two groups as were the five wise and five foolish virgins. If anyone has other ideas on the typical significance of the ten concubines, please let us know.

23 And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counselled in those days, was as if a man had enquired at the oracle of God: so was all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom.

This is a very curious verse and it leads us to two conclusions: First, this tells us that Ahithophel had a reputation for great sagacity, and therefore his advice would be highly valued; indeed had been greatly relied upon by David.

Secondly, we notice the very curious way in which we are told that Ahithophel is a very wise man. The sacred author states that Ahithophel’s counsel was “as if a man had enquired at the oracle of God.” What is another name for the oracle of God? It is the Holy of Holies compartment in the tabernacle or temple. It was called the oracle because that is where the ark of the covenant was located. The significance of that fact in this connection is that above the mercy seat of the ark is where God would commune with Israel. That is, God would communicate to the people in that place, at the oracle. And who alone was permitted to go into the Holy of Holies on behalf of the people of Israel? Only the high priest.

Therefore, when it says that Ahithophel’s counsel was as if a man had enquired at the oracle of God, it is associating Ahithophel with the high priest. Therefore, let us consider the kind of advice that this type of the high priest, Ahithophel, is giving. He is counseling Absalom to commit a very ungodly act,

and more than that, to flaunt it—to do it in broad daylight, in the sight of all Israel.

Remember how the sons of Eli the high priest lay with the women at the door of the tabernacle. So we see how this metaphorically and symbolically connects Ahithophel with the line of the Eli priesthood. It is a priesthood which is now on its way out, to be replaced shortly by the line of the Zadok priesthood, which culminates in Jesus.

Jesus was of the tribe of Judah, not of the priestly tribe of Levi. Therefore, the new priesthood after the order (or the line) of Melchizedek replaces the Levitical priesthood. The name Zadok is in Melchizedek. That is why in this age, it does not matter which tribe we are from in terms of the priesthood. We can all be priests in the order of Melchizedek; we are sub-priests under our eternal High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ.

My final comment on this verse is that it has an additional and double meaning. You see, in likening Ahithophel’s advice to the oracle of God, it is also likening *his* words to the Word of God. And in following Ahithophel’s advice, Absalom is fulfilling precisely the Word of God given by Nathan to David back in chapter 12, when the prophet confronted the king about his fornication with Bathsheba.

2 Samuel 12:11 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give *them* unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.

12 For thou didst *it* secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.

God’s disciplinary punishment upon David was delayed many years but it came without fail. Ironically, it came about through betrayal by David’s own trusted and senior counselor Ahithophel. How strange, how mysterious are the ways of God!

Feed My Sheep is a part of the teaching ministry of James W. Bruggeman and is sent out freely. We reserve the right to discontinue sending it at any time to any one. The tithes and gifts of those who are fed by this publication make it possible for us to continue in ministry. Gifts may be sent to P.O. Box 5695, Asheville, NC 28813. Thank you for your support.