

2 Samuel 15

- We're back to our study of David's failings in 2 Samuel
 - The author of this book has chosen to organize the story of David's reign into sections of good and bad rather than in a chronological order
 - The first section of the book focused on David's rise to power and his triumphs as king
 - And the second section beginning in Chapter 9 chronicles David's short comings and their cumulative effect on the nation
 - The longest example in this second section focuses on David's failings in his family stemming from taking multiple wives
 - From multiple wives comes multiple sons of different mothers, which led to ancestral lust, rivalries and conflict
 - If that weren't bad enough, David compounds the problem by failing to hold sons accountable for their misdeeds
 - And in other cases, he fails to show forgiveness and mercy
 - Altogether, David's actions breed resentment and ultimately rebellion
 - We're in the middle of that story, and so today we return to Chapter 14 and the turmoil of Absalom, David's oldest living son
 - Absalom murdered his brother, Amnon, fled to his grandfather's home in Geshur, and has now returned to Jerusalem after 3 years
 - His son expected his father's forgiveness, but David seems unwilling to give Absalom that satisfaction as we read:

2Sam. 14:28 Now Absalom lived two full years in Jerusalem, and did not see the king's face.

- After his return, Absalom was ignored by for two years, barred from David's presence and from the privilege of the king's table
 - Even Saul's descendant, Mephibosheth, was eating at David's table, but David's oldest son and presumptive heir was excluded

- David is enforcing a justice on his son that is neither just in its approach nor effective in its outcome
- The Law didn't stipulate alienation as a punishment and it's just driving a wedge between father and son
- As James tells us:

[James 2:13](#) For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

- Initially, David was unwilling to hold Absalom accountable according to the Law's requirements
- But neither was David willing to extend Absalom his mercy later, preferring to hold Absalom in limbo
- So now Absalom takes matters into his own hands, which begins a pattern of behavior suggesting Absalom has had enough of his father's cold shoulder

[2Sam. 14:29](#) Then Absalom sent for Joab, to send him to the king, but he would not come to him. So he sent again a second time, but he would not come.

[2Sam. 14:30](#) Therefore he said to his servants, "See, 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.

[2Sam. 14:31](#) Then Joab arose, came to Absalom at his house and said to him, "Why have your servants set my field on fire?"

[2Sam. 14:32](#) Absalom answered Joab, "Behold, I sent for you, saying, 'Come here, that I may send you to the king, to say, "Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me still to be there."' Now therefore, let me see the king's face, and if there is iniquity in me, let him put me to death."

[2Sam. 14:33](#) So when Joab came to the king and told him, he called for Absalom. Thus he came to the king and prostrated himself on his face to the ground before the king, and the king kissed Absalom.

- Absalom wants answers for why he's still being banished, so he decides to call for the commander of the army, Joab
 - Remember, Joab was the one who convinced David to permit Absalom to return from Geshur in the first place
 - So Absalom logically concludes that Joab could also help Absalom move a step closer to resolving the impasse with David

15-1

- So Absalom calls for Joab, but Joab ignores Absalom's request
- The text doesn't explain why Joab didn't want to respond to Absalom
 - But in 1 Kings 2:28 we learn that Joab had aligned himself behind another of David's sons, Adonijah
 - We know the Lord selected Solomon to succeed David, and David and Bathsheba knew Solomon was the Lord's choice
 - But it's not clear if David told anyone else of Solomon's future, least of all his other sons
 - Perhaps David kept the news to himself to protect a young Solomon from his older brothers' murderous ambitions
- But as David ages, everyone in David's court is wondering who will succeed David to the throne
 - And they begin to throw their support behind one or the other of David's sons
 - Ordinarily, David's 3rd born and oldest surviving son, Absalom, would have been the logical choice to succeed his father
- But the strife between Absalom and David has placed that outcome in doubt
 - So at some point Joab decided that Israel's future king would more likely be David's 4th son, Adonijah
 - So because Joab supports Adonijah, he has no interest in furthering a reconciliation between David and Absalom
- But Absalom forces Joab's hand by directing his servants to set fire to a portion of Joab's fields, which were adjacent to Absalom's fields
 - Once Joab hears of this, he realizes he can't ignore Absalom risking further retaliation, so he visits the ostracized son
 - Absalom demands an audience with his father saying that David should either hold Absalom accountable or free him
 - Ironically, Absalom challenges David to find fault with him... right after Absalom committed arson against Joab's property
 - Nevertheless, he has a valid point...David should either hold Absalom accountable according to the law's requirements (i.e., death)...

- Or else David should extend Absalom mercy and put an end to his exile
- There is simply no basis for holding him in limbo
- So Joab conveys Absalom's demands to David, so David invites an audience with Absalom
 - When his son arrives, he bows before David and throws himself on David's mercy
 - David in turn extends forgiveness and embraces his son, and they are reconciled
- We might suppose this puts an end to their relationship troubles, but the damage was already done
 - If anything, David's capitulation to his son's demands only emboldened Absalom to pursue greater objectives
 - With Absalom out of the doghouse, he's ready to embark on a public campaign to cement his position as David's heir apparent

2Sam. 15:1 Now it came about after this that Absalom provided for himself a chariot and horses and fifty men as runners before him.

2Sam. 15:2 Absalom used to rise early and stand beside the way to the gate; and when any man had a suit to come to the king for judgment, Absalom would call to him and say, "From what city are you?" And he would say, "Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel."

2Sam. 15:3 Then Absalom would say to him, "See, your claims are good and right, but no man listens to you on the part of the king."

2Sam. 15:4 Moreover, Absalom would say, "Oh that one would appoint me judge in the land, then every man who has any suit or cause could come to me and I would give him justice."

2Sam. 15:5 And when a man came near to prostrate himself before him, he would put out his hand and take hold of him and kiss him.

2Sam. 15:6 In this manner Absalom dealt with all Israel who came to the king for judgment; so Absalom stole away the hearts of the men of Israel.

- Absalom's antics involve public displays of power and royal privilege
 - First, Absalom projects *the status* of king by securing a chariot for himself pulled by stallions and proceeded by fifty runners

- Ever since the prophet Samuel, this had become the proper way for kings to make an entrance in Israel
- When Israel demanded Samuel anoint a king over them, the prophet warned the people that kings would be a burden

1Sam. 8:10 So Samuel spoke all the words of the LORD to the people who had asked of him a king.

1Sam. 8:11 He said, "This will be the procedure of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons and place them for himself in his chariots and among his horsemen and they will run before his chariots.

1Sam. 8:12 "He will appoint for himself commanders of thousands and of fifties, and some to do his plowing and to reap his harvest and to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots.

1Sam. 8:13 "He will also take your daughters for perfumers and cooks and bakers.

1Sam. 8:14 "He will take the best of your fields and your vineyards and your olive groves and give them to his servants.

- Samuel's description of how kings behave was supposed to serve as a warning to Israel to think twice about inviting kings to rule over them
 - Ironically, Israel took Samuel's words as a *prescription*, and thereafter Israel's kings did exactly what the prophet foretold
 - They ordered men to run in front of their chariot because that's what Samuel said kings do
 - And Absalom is repeating that procedure here precisely so the people would see him as a king-in-waiting
- Next, Absalom projects the *wisdom and authority* of a king by rendering judgment for the people while undermining David's authority
 - The gates of cities were multi-chambered rooms set into the wall of the city where official business was conducted
 - Judges and magistrates "sat in the gate" to render judgment for people bringing business into the city
 - These men represented the king, so they were part of David's administration
 - But in v.2 we're told Absalom rose early to take a place on the road leading to the city where he could intercept men coming to the gate

- As he did, he would engage in a conversation, and when he discovered a Jew, Absalom would ingratiate himself
- Absalom would encourage the traveler by saying he had a valid claim
- But then just as quickly Absalom would declare that David was unlikely to give the man the justice he deserved
- And then Absalom would say if only someone appointed him judge, then everyone would certainly get proper justice
- Absalom engages in this charade to undermine the peoples' confidence in David and to build himself up in their eyes
 - In v.6 we're told that in this way he steals away the hearts of the men of Israel, which is a reference to popular opinion
 - This is an orchestrated campaign to ensure that the people will demand that Absalom follow his father on the throne
 - And should David try to appoint a different son, Absalom can still gain the throne by force with the backing of the men of Israel
- Now where is David while all this is going on? Why hasn't David put a stop to Absalom's antics?
 - First, David continues in his unwillingness to confront – much less control – his sons, which is a continuation of his poor family leadership
 - Once he reconciled with Absalom, David appears to have put the conflict and his son out of mind
 - Later in 1 Kings we hear how David refused to stop another son's efforts to take the throne by force

1Kings 1:5 Now Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, "I will be king." So he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen with fifty men to run before him.

1Kings 1:6 His father had never crossed him at any time by asking, "Why have you done so?" And he was also a very handsome man, and he was born after Absalom.

- Adonijah was the next son in line after Absalom, and as with Absalom, David was not willing to confront his son's rebellion
 - And once again, David's sin has dire consequences, particularly in the case of Absalom

- David's detachment will give Absalom opportunity to lay the groundwork for a coup
- Secondly, David became distracted by projects that left him oblivious to what was happening on his own doorstep
 - During this time, David was building his palace, building a new place for the ark, and contemplating a temple for God
 - Like many long-lasting regimes, David's government lost interest in making peoples' lives better
 - Instead, it became self-absorbed with legacy and privilege
- David's inward focus ensured that Absalom's suggestion that David's rule couldn't give justice to the people found a receptive audience
 - And it sowed the seeds for a rebellion against David who remained blissfully ignorant of the threat
 - To the point that when Absalom decides to make his move against his father, David couldn't see it coming

2Sam. 15:7 Now it came about at the end of forty years that Absalom said to the king, "Please let me go and pay my vow which I have vowed to the LORD, in Hebron.

2Sam. 15:8 "For your servant vowed a vow while I was living at Geshur in Aram, saying, 'If the LORD shall indeed bring me back to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD.'"

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

2Sam. 15:10 But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then you shall say, 'Absalom is king in Hebron.'"

2Sam. 15:11 Then two hundred men went with Absalom from Jerusalem, who were invited and went innocently, and they did not know anything.

2Sam. 15:12 And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his city Giloh, while he was offering the sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong, for the people increased continually with Absalom.

- In v.7 we're told that at the end of forty years, Absalom approaches David with a request, but that length of time doesn't make sense in this context
 - The contextual clues strongly suggest the time was four years not forty

15-2

- It's likely that the value was changed from four to forty as a result of a copyist's error at some point
- In fact, Josephus' account of this same story as well as the Dead Sea Scrolls version both say four years, not forty
- Still, four years is a long time for Absalom to engage in this behavior unchecked by David, and so now he's ready to take the next step
 - Absalom tells David he made a vow to the Lord while living in Geshur
 - The vow was that should God bring him back to Jerusalem, Absalom would serve God
 - So Absalom asks permission to go to Hebron to worship, since the tabernacle was probably located in Hebron at this time
- Knowing Absalom's plans and motives at this point, there is absolutely no reason to believe he is telling the truth here
 - More likely, this is a lie intended to give him a convenient excuse to go to Hebron
 - The real reason Absalom wanted to travel to Hebron was to announce his reign as the new king of Israel
- Why did Absalom choose Hebron as the place to announce his coup?
 - First, it was the place of David's anointing, so there was symbolism in ascending to the throne at Hebron
 - Secondly, Hebron was a safe distance from Jerusalem, which gave Absalom space and time to organize and prepare his attack
 - Finally, Absalom was born in Hebron so this was his hometown, and he probably intended to make Hebron the capital again
- Absalom arranged to have 200 military men accompany him to Hebron without the soldiers knowing what Absalom had planned
 - The idea was to force these men to side with Absalom by putting them in a no-win situation
 - Once they learned of Absalom's rebellion in Hebron, it would be impossible for them to oppose Absalom without dying

- So that ensured Absalom would start his civil war with a strong personal guard and the appearance of the army's support
- Next, he calls for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, to join him in Hebron
 - This man is the grandfather of Bathsheba according to 2 Samuel 11:3 and 23:34, and he willingly joins Absalom
 - His name means brother of folly, which isn't a compliment, so it probably reflects his decision to align with Absalom
 - This shows how high in the ranks of David's government Absalom's conspiracy has reached
- In fact, v.12 confirms the conspiracy is strong, so the question becomes how can David stop it?
 - Solomon is the true heir, but at this point he's barely 14 years old
 - Moreover, David is older now and unlikely to wage battle himself
 - Given that such a high-ranking member of David's cabinet came to Hebron suggests David is losing a grip on power
- So when news reaches David, he realizes the precarious position he's in

2Sam. 15:13 Then a messenger came to David, saying, "The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom."

2Sam. 15:14 David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, "Arise and let us flee, for otherwise none of us will escape from Absalom. Go in haste, or he will overtake us quickly and bring down calamity on us and strike the city with the edge of the sword."

2Sam. 15:15 Then the king's servants said to the king, "Behold, your servants are ready to do whatever my lord the king chooses."

2Sam. 15:16 So the king went out and all his household with him. But the king left ten concubines to keep the house.

2Sam. 15:17 The king went out and all the people with him, and they stopped at the last house.

2Sam. 15:18 Now all his servants passed on beside him, all the Cherethites, all the Pelethites and all the Gittites, six hundred men who had come with him from Gath, passed on before the king.

- David hears what his son has done and that the people are in favor of Absalom's rule, so David has no choice but to leave Jerusalem for now
 - David was a pragmatic man, and he knew that his son's popularity meant that David had few allies
 - Moreover, he is unwilling to see war destroy the city he built, so he decides the best course of action is patience
 - If he took Absalom's bait and attacked Hebron he would be unlikely to muster enough forces against Absalom
 - And if he stayed locked up in the city, he would appear weak before the people and would end up under house arrest
 - So David tells his servants they will leave the city quickly to ensure they live to fight another day
 - After all, in the same time it took a messenger to reach David, Absalom and his men could have traveled the same distance
 - So David hurries to escape the city with his loyal servants though he leaves behind ten slave wives to care for the palace
 - They wouldn't be perceived as a threat and therefore were unlikely to be harmed, David assumed
 - As David leaves the city to the east, he is followed by a troop of more than 600 men
 - The Cherethites and the Pelethites were of Philistine descent and were David's non-Jewish bodyguards
 - The 600 from Gath were likely mercenary soldiers who are loyal to David because they were employed and paid well
 - Given that David's own son is in rebellion to him, the only men he can trust now are non-Jews and men he pays well
 - The text doesn't mention Solomon, but given his young age, we can safely assume that he was with David as well
- As David reaches the last house in Jerusalem and prepares to exit, he challenges one resident of the city to stop following and stay behind

[2Sam. 15:19](#) Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, “Why will you also go with us? Return and remain with the king, for you are a foreigner and also an exile; return to your own place.

[2Sam. 15:20](#) “You came only yesterday, and shall I today make you wander with us, while I go where I will? Return and take back your brothers; mercy and truth be with you.”

[2Sam. 15:21](#) But Ittai answered the king and said, “As the LORD lives, and as my lord the king lives, surely wherever my lord the king may be, whether for death or for life, there also your servant will be.”

[2Sam. 15:22](#) Therefore David said to Ittai, “Go and pass over.” So Ittai the Gittite passed over with all his men and all the little ones who were with him.

[2Sam. 15:23](#) While all the country was weeping with a loud voice, all the people passed over. The king also passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over toward the way of the wilderness.

14-3

- David notices one man, Ittai, a Gittite from the town of Gath, following voluntarily
 - The man is not a paid member of David’s guard, so David asks why this man wants to follow him?
 - David says you are a foreigner and exile, and he came into the city just a day earlier
 - He may have been the messenger who brought the news to David of Absalom’s coup
 - And now he is committing to wander with David’s men and placing himself at significant risk by aligning himself with David
 - Since he has no reason to involve himself in this Jewish fight for control of the throne, David says go home in peace
 - But Ittai responds saying wherever the king may be, this man will follow to do the king’s will even if it means death
 - So David welcomes the man into the troop and they all pass together, it says
 - The “passing” is out through the Kidron valley and up the Mt of Olives eastward out of the city and into the wilderness

15-3

- This is a place that David knew all too well from his years fleeing from Saul
- And once again it will be the place David retreats to fight a foe for control of the throne of Israel
- Only this battle didn't have to happen...David invited it in the way he (mis-)handled his sons
- Finally, as David was leaving the city, the priest who was loyal to David came out with the ark hoping to leave with David

2Sam. 15:24 Now behold, Zadok also came, and all the Levites with him carrying the ark of the covenant of God. And they set down the ark of God, and Abiathar came up until all the people had finished passing from the city.

2Sam. 15:25 The king said to Zadok, "Return the ark of God to the city. If I find favor in the sight of the LORD, then He will bring me back again and show me both it and His habitation.

2Sam. 15:26 "But if He should say thus, 'I have no delight in you,' behold, here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him."

- Zadok was one of two leading or high priests in that time along with Abiathar
 - Abiathar was a descendant of Eli, the high priest who raised Samuel in the temple
 - Eli was a poor father and raised evil sons who angered God by their ungodly service in the temple
 - So the Lord told Eli that his family would one day be removed from holding the office of high priest
 - And in their place the Lord would raise up a new family of priests who would obey the Lord

1Sam. 2:31 'Behold, the days are coming when I will break your strength and the strength of your father's house so that there will not be an old man in your house.

1Sam. 2:32 'You will see the distress of My dwelling, in spite of all the good that I do for Israel; and an old man will not be in your house forever.

1Sam. 2:33 'Yet I will not cut off every man of yours from My altar so that your eyes will fail from weeping and your soul grieve, and all the increase of your house will die in the prime of life.

1Sam. 2:34 'This will be the sign to you which will come concerning your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas: on the same day both of them will die.

1Sam. 2:35 'But I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who will do according to what is in My heart and in My soul; and I will build him an enduring house, and he will walk before My anointed always.

- In a day to come, Abiathar will align himself with another of David's sons in rebellion against the king, and for that he loses his life
 - In that future day, David will appoint Zadok in Abiathar's place
 - And here we see the loyalty and godliness that qualified Zadok to replace Abiathar
- Notice it was Zadok's initiative that resulted in the ark being brought to David with all the priests, which was a show of support for David
 - Abiathar comes as well but only because he didn't want to be the only one left out
 - David addresses Zadok which indicates that David recognized that Zadok was the one leading this charge
- David tells Zadok that the ark and the priests must remain in the city for that is where God wants them
 - But God doesn't want David in the city right now, and so David is willing to accept that judgment of God
 - If God wants to bring David back, then He will, and if not, then God has another king in mind for Israel
 - David recognizes that this episode is the Lord bringing discipline upon David
 - And so David is accepting the discipline as medicine he deserves but it's not a sign that God is moving the ark or priesthood

2Sam. 15:27 The king said also to Zadok the priest, "Are you not a seer? Return to the city in peace and your two sons with you, your son Ahimaaz and Jonathan the son of Abiathar.

2Sam. 15:28 "See, I am going to wait at the fords of the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me."

2Sam. 15:29 Therefore Zadok and Abiathar returned the ark of God to Jerusalem and remained there.

2Sam. 15:30 And David went up the ascent of the Mount of Olives, and wept as he went, and his head was covered and he walked barefoot. Then all the people who were with him each covered his head and went up weeping as they went.

- David tells the priests to go home with the ark, and they do, and then David retreats up the Mount of Olives and weeps over it all
 - He is feeling exactly what the writer of Hebrews tells us we will experience in the face of discipline

Heb. 12:11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

- David must have known that he was reaping what he sowed in his own family
- But that didn't make it any easier to endure, and yet his faith in the goodness of the Lord gave him courage to face it
- David then receives more bad news and finally David makes the right response

2Sam. 15:31 Now someone told David, saying, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." And David said, "O LORD, I pray, make the counsel of Ahithophel foolishness."

- David hears that his wife's grandfather has joined the rebellion and is now giving Absalom counsel
- This man is dangerous since he was once David's counselor and would have known David's military forces well
- Ordinarily, this news would add to David's woes, except for David the news becomes opportunity for him to return to his better nature
 - David prays to the Lord that this man's counsel would be made foolish so that he could undermine Absalom
 - True to form, when David faced difficult odds, he learned to lean on the Lord and appeal to Him rather than relying on himself

- David's best side came out under pressure, and this moment seems to suggest that the Lord's discipline is finally achieving its purpose
 - The Lord is going to win this battle for David, and He's waiting for David to remember that
 - So David prays and worships on the mount, and then the Lord brings a moment of encouragement

2Sam. 15:32 It happened as David was coming to the summit, where God was worshiped, that behold, Hushai the Archite met him with his coat torn and dust on his head.

2Sam. 15:33 David said to him, "If you pass over with me, then you will be a burden to me.

2Sam. 15:34 "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 I will now be your servant,' then you can thwart the counsel of Ahithophel for me.

2Sam. 15:35 "Are not Zadok and Abiathar the priests with you there? So it shall be that whatever you hear from the king's house, you shall report to Zadok and Abiathar the priests.

2Sam. 15:36 "Behold their two sons are with them there, Ahimaaz, Zadok's son and Jonathan, Abiathar's son; and by them you shall send me everything that you hear."

2Sam. 15:37 So Hushai, David's friend, came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem.

- A messenger named Hushai comes to David, probably to tell David of Absalom's approach, and David sees opportunity
 - He tells the man not to join the flight but to stay in the city as David's spy
 - Go to Absalom, David tells him, and pledge yourself to him as a servant just as he had been David's servant
 - Given how many people had fled to Absalom's side, it was a believable proposal
 - And in that position, the man could help undermine the counsel of Ahithophel
 - David tells the man that he will have the help of the priests who were also aligned with David

- The priests' sons would act as couriers to bring news to David and relay instructions
- This is David's first big break and it comes immediately after David prays to the Lord, the first time we've seen David praying since his son died
 - The thing David was most known for has slipped away for a time
 - And now that times are difficult again, David is back to working with the Lord in prayer and right away he sees the Lord respond
- As David flees and plots his return to the city, he will receive more help from allies and we'll study that next time
 - But to end tonight, I want to introduce a powerful picture in these events that connects David to Jesus
 - We all know that David is used in Scripture as a picture of Christ, and this scene is one of the most powerful comparisons
 - David's flight from the city is a picture of Jesus' departure from Jerusalem and from Israel after His first coming
 - First, let's remember how Jesus' first coming to Israel ended
 - After Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem during the last week of His life, he was first received by crowds declaring Him to be king
 - Hosanna in the Highest, they declared as Jesus entered the city on a donkey
 - But before the week was over, Jesus was rejected by Israel as Messiah and they were calling for Him to be crucified
 - Ultimately Jesus was led outside the city and crucified for the sins of the world
 - Three days later Jesus resurrects and spends times with His disciples before ascending to the right hand of the Father
- This story of David's flight from Jerusalem establishes a picture of Jesus' first coming, at least in the broad strokes
 - First, we know David was welcomed into the city by Israel and declared to be their king
 - He was received in joy on one day, but now in a later day the people have turned against him

- And so he must leave the city and his throne as an enemy of the Jewish people
- He is still the rightful king, but he must leave the seat of his power because the people will not have him
- This is also Jesus' situation at the end of His first coming, rejected by Israel and prevented from ascending the throne and ruling
 - Jesus died and resurrected as part of the plan of redemption, but even still He didn't stay in the city and reign
 - He left to await a future day when all Israel will receive Him as king, and then He will reign over them
- Notice the first parallel between how David exits Jerusalem and how Jesus exited the city in His day
 - David leaves eastward going through the Kidron Valley and up the Mount of Olives
 - Similarly, this is how Jesus leaves the city for the last time

Acts 1:4 Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me;

Acts 1:9 And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

Acts 1:10 And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them.

Acts 1:11 They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."

Acts 1:12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away.

- Jesus leaves Jerusalem with His disciples and goes out eastward to the Mount of Olives and ascends to Heaven from there
- Then consider who supports David...apart from a few Jewish allies, David's following is largely Gentiles
 - Chief among them was a man of Gath who pledged, as the Lord lives, he would devote his life to following David and doing as he commanded

- And likewise, in the years after Jesus left Jerusalem, His following became largely Gentile apart from a few Jews
- And those Gentiles also declare that as our Lord lives, we devote our lives to following Him anywhere and doing as He commands
- And as David left, the priests thought they should follow and bring the ark with them as well
 - But David said his departure didn't mean that God's presence would be removed from the city of Israel
 - And in fact, the priesthood and the mercy seat of the Lord would remain behind even though God required that the king leave
- Likewise, as Jesus (our King and High Priest) departed earth, He commanded that the priesthood and the mercy of God remain behind
 - The priesthood of the believer remains on earth, as we all serve as intercessors reconciling humanity with God
 - And we possess the Gospel, the proclamation of God's mercy and forgiveness to every person who comes to Him in faith
 - Jesus has gone away for a time because God the Father required it, but the presence of God remains behind in the Church
- Lastly, David saw opportunity to direct the affairs of his city in his absence by sending a hidden messenger to the city to serve his purposes
 - That messenger would work with the priests and their "sons" to do the king's business and prepare for the king's return to power
 - And likewise, we have been given a hidden Messenger, the Holy Spirit, Who works with the priests of God to serve the King
 - We receive word and direction from the King by way of the Spirit and we send our requests back to the King praying in the Spirit
 - This picture is just beginning, and we'll see the rest of it build out in the next few lessons
 - But already we can stand back in awe of how God writes history in a way that tells a larger story
 - This reality gives added meaning to what David was facing in that day

- David may have acted foolishly at times in raising his family and attending to his sons, and now he is receiving the consequences
 - But seeing how God uses the whole scene to paint a picture of the plan of redemption shows us how powerful God is
 - You know God causes all things to work together for good for those who love God, but appreciate what that means
 - It doesn't just mean He can fix your messes or that He can use your mess to yield benefits later in your life
 - That's true, but it's not the half of it
- God is so powerful and wise that He can design your messes so that they fulfill the plan of God and even so they can glorify Christ
 - David's conflict with His sons was a giant mess, but in the midst of that pain and turmoil, God was using David to proclaim Christ
 - What story of glory is God proclaiming through your messes?
 - You may not know that answer yet, but you know He can do it, and if so, then we need to play our part well
 - We need to praise Him during trials, worship Him for our setbacks, and pray to Him in all circumstances so that we remain in His will
 - See opportunity in difficulty, learn the lessons, and trust the Lord in everything
 - Because God is using everything to His glory and for our good