

Absalom's Propaganda Campaign; the Revolution; David Leaves Jerusalem; Hushai's Subterfuge Trumps Ahithophel's Wisdom; Aftermath of Arrogance

60. But no revolution can be successful without the support of the people, so Absalom began a political campaign to propagandize the masses:

2 Samuel 15:2 - Now Absalom used to get up early and stand beside the road that led to the city gate. Whenever anyone came by who had a complaint to bring to the king for arbitration, Absalom would call out to him, "What city are you from?" He would answer, "I am from one of the tribes of Israel."

v. 3 - Absalom would then say to him, "Look, your claims are legitimate and appropriate. But there is no representative of the king who will listen to you."

v. 4 - Absalom would then say, "If only they would make me a judge in the land! Then everyone who had a judicial complaint could come to me and I would make sure he receives a just settlement."

v. 5 - When someone approached to bow before him, Absalom would extend his hand and embrace him and kiss him.

v. 6 - Absalom acted this way toward everyone in Israel who would come to the king for justice. In this way Absalom won the loyalty of the citizens of Israel.

61. This kind of thing went on for four years during which time Absalom systematically won over a large percentage of the people.

62. In order to organize his rebellion, Absalom convinced his father that he needed to go down to Hebron to fulfill a vow he made to the Lord during his self-exile in Geshur. David complied and Absalom left Jerusalem with 200 soldiers.

63. These men were unaware of Absalom's plot to overthrow David. For him to put his plan into action he needed someone of great wisdom to advise him on how to carry it out.

64. There was no better man in Israel to perform this intrigue than a man with the same bitterness toward David that motivated Absalom.

2 Samuel 15:12 - While he was offering sacrifices, Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's advisor, to come from his city, Giloh. The conspiracy was gaining momentum, and the people were starting to side with Absalom.

65. When David heard of Absalom's plot to seize the throne of Israel he elected to evacuate his retinue from Jerusalem which included about 2000 people.

66. After crossing the Kidron \kid'-ron\ Valley with the Levites and the Arc of the Covenant, David was informed that Absalom was being advised by none other than David's Secretary of State, Ahithophel the Gilonite:

2 Samuel 15:31 - Now David had been told, "Ahithophel has sided with the conspirators who are with Absalom. So David prayed, "Make the advice of Ahithophel foolish, O Lord."

67. After David and his loyalist forces had evacuated Jerusalem, Absalom's revolutionary forces moved in. In 2 Samuel 15:32-37, David solicited the help of Hushai \hū'-sha-ī\ the Arkite to become a mole for the crown. His duty was to infiltrate Absalom's headquarters, collect information, and spirit it back to David.
68. The information gathered was to be given to the two Levitical priests, Zadok [zā'-dok\ and Abiathar \a-bī'-a-thār\ and the couriers who would be David's contacts would be their sons Ahimaaz \a-him'-a-az\ and Jonathan.

2 Samuel 15:31 - Now David had been told, "Ahithophel has sided with the conspirators who are with Absalom. So David prayed, "Make the advice of Ahithophel foolish, O Lord!"

v. 32 - When David came to the summit, where he used to worship God, Hushai the Arkite met him with his clothes torn and dirt on his head.

v. 33 - David said to him, "If you leave with me you will be a burden to me.

v. 34 - "But you will be able to counter the advice of Ahithophel if you go back to the city and say to Absalom, 'I will be your servant, O king! Previously I was your father's servant, and now I will be your servant.'

v. 35 - "Zadok and Abiathar the priests will be there with you. Everything you hear in the king's palace you must tell Zadok and Abiathar the priests.

v. 36 - "Furthermore, their two sons are there with them, Zadok's son Ahimaaz and Abiathar's son Jonathan. You must send them to me with the information you hear."

v. 37 - So David's friend Hushai arrived in the city, just as Absalom was entering Jerusalem.

69. Second Samuel 16:15-17:22 documents Hushai's espionage as David's secret agent. This passage reveals how counterintelligence activities are considered by God to be justifiable when a just government is attempting to protect itself against conspirators and revolutionaries. The details of Ahithophel's strategy and Hushai's subterfuge are reported in:

2 Samuel 17:1 - Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Let me pick out twelve thousand men. Then I will go and pursue David this very night.

v. 2 - "When I catch up to him he will be exhausted and worn out. I will rout him, and the entire army that is with him will flee. I will kill only the king,

v. 3 - and will bring the entire army back to you. In exchange for the life of the man you are seeking, you will get back everyone. The entire army will return unharmed."

v. 4 - This seemed like a good idea to Absalom and to all the leaders of Israel.

v. 5 - But Absalom said, "Call for Hushai the Arkite, and let's hear what he has to say."

v. 6 - So Hushai came to Absalom. Absalom said to him, "Here is what Ahithophel has advised. Should we follow his advice? If not, what would you recommend?"

v. 7 - Hushai replied to Absalom, "Ahithophel's advice is not sound at this time.

v. 8 - Hushai went on to say, “You know your father and his men—they are soldiers and are as dangerous as a bear out in the wild that has been robbed of her cubs. Your father is an experienced soldier; he will not stay overnight with the army.”

v. 9 - “At this very moment he is hiding out in one of the caves or in some other similar place. If it should turn out that he attacks our troops first, whoever hears about it will say, ‘Absalom’s army has been slaughtered!’”

v. 11 - “My advice therefore is this: Let all Israel from Dan to Beersheba—in number like the sand by the sea!—be gathered to you, and you lead them personally into battle.

v. 12 - “We will come against him wherever he happens to be found. We will descend on him like the dew falls on the ground. Neither he nor any of the men who are with him will be spared alive—not one of them!”

70. The Lord’s endorsement of David’s strategy to deceive Absalom is documented in:

2 Samuel 17:14 - Then Absalom and all the men of Israel said, “The advice of Hushai the Arkite sounds better than the advice of Ahithophel.” Now the Lord had decided to frustrate the sound advice of Ahithophel, so that the Lord could bring disaster to Absalom.

v. 15 - Then Hushai reported to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, “Here is what Ahithophel has advised Absalom and the leaders of Israel, and here is what I have advised.

v. 16 - “Now send word quickly to David and advise him, ‘Don’t spend the night at the fords of the desert tonight. Instead, be sure you cross over, or else the king and everyone who is with him may be overwhelmed.’”

71. Absalom’s decision to override Ahithophel’s plan sent him into psychopathic arrogance. He knew he had given the best council therefore his chance to gain vengeance against David had been trumped.

72. Iconoclastic arrogance is extremely intense and is itself a form of psychosis. Ahithophel was obsessed with destroying David but realized that Hushai’s strategy will fail.

73. Ahithophel was indeed a wise man and had given wise council. The counterinsurgency of Hushai had accomplished its mission. David would win the day and would return to Jerusalem victorious.

74. Knowing that David would execute him as a traitor Ahithophel chose suicide instead:

2 Samuel 17:23 - When Ahithophel realized that his advice had not been followed, he saddled his donkey and returned to his house in his hometown. After setting his household in order, he hanged himself. So he was buried in the grave of his father.

75. All of these events were directly related to Ahithophel reacting to David’s horrible crime against his granddaughter rather than responding with a grace mental attitude.

76. The tragic sequence of events had its start when David, his idol, revealed his feet of clay. His anger and bitterness ignited iconoclastic arrogance; bitterness and revenge motivation followed.

77. These areas of cosmic thought led Ahithophel to make tragic decisions ending in the sin unto death.
78. When Ahithophel's wiser plan was defeated by Hushai's inferior plan, Ahithophel's self-pity, which is self-righteousness under pressure, moved him into antiauthority arrogance.
79. Realizing that David was destined to defeat Absalom and return to Jerusalem victoriously he entered into emotional arrogance prompted by certain realization that he would be executed.
80. When emotional arrogance is combined with psychopathic arrogance, quite often the result is suicide.
81. Emotional and psychopathic arrogance remove the believer from reality while scar tissue of the soul removes doctrine as a source of rational thought.
82. Note that Bathsheba's rape by David prompted all of these consequences in the life of Ahithophel while Bathsheba, the victim, experienced none of them.
83. David, Ahithophel, and Absalom each made poor decisions from a position of weakness. Bathsheba, the innocent wife of Uriah, was unknowingly the spark that set off a decade of turmoil filled with murder (David of Uriah), rape (David of Bathsheba), fratricide (Absalom of Amnon), conspiracies (Absalom and Ahithophel), revolution (Absalom against David), subterfuge (Hushai against Absalom and Ahithophel), war casualties (Absalom at the hand of Joab), and suicide (Ahithophel).
84. Thus confidence in man is misdirected virtue. Confidence is to be placed in God. Courage is to be directed toward man.