

Dr. Elaine Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Lecture 21, David, Bathsheba, Absalom,

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Well, good morning. The peace of Christ be with you. And the peace of Christ be with those who aren't here.

Are you being your brothers and sisters' keepers? Where's the class? Yeah. It's nice when you sit in front, you don't know who's missing behind you. All sorts of strange faces that we haven't seen for a long time will show up next Wednesday.

But at any rate, thanks for coming. Do manifest some brotherly and sisterly concern for those that you happen to know should be here. I occasionally send little reminder emails, but a word from you works a whole lot better than a word from me.

It just does. So, at any rate, there we are. It's Friday.

That's a wonderful piece of news as well. Here are the announcements about the exam. I don't think I need to reiterate any of them, as I'm thinking.

Please take advantage of the stuff on Blackboard. There is a list of the names. And you know, once we get into history, you can't help it.

There are names that you need to know if you're going to understand any of the events that unfold. And many of those names are things that you don't run into every day. How many of your friends are named Ahithophel, for example? You know, it's not one of those memorable kinds of names.

Do you have a friend named Ahithophel? Okay. At any rate. So, you've got to spend a little time working on them.

I've said in the past that it's often good to take that list of names and put them on flashcards. The process of putting them on flashcards will be a good learning exercise for you, and then, of course, you can carry them around with you and learn them as well.

So let me encourage you to do that sort of thing. Don't lose sight of the prospect of the paper coming up, as well. I'll probably say more about that next week.

We need to sing. The reason we need to sing this particular... Well, do you know why we need to sing this particular psalm today? In Psalm 51, do you know what the psalm title says about that psalm? We're going to study Psalms on Monday, so we'll get more into that a little later on, as on Monday. But do you know what the psalm

title says about this particular psalm in terms of at least the traditional assignment to the author and the conditions or situation within which it was written? Yeah, Kate.

Right. This is David's Psalm of Repentance and Confession, or maybe Confession and Repentance, following Nathan's challenging him with his sin of Bathsheba and Uriah and all that, which we're studying today. So this is an appropriate one to be singing as we begin our class today.

So, I'll turn off the microphone as we sing this psalm as well, or at least this part of it, as we begin our time together in prayer. Gracious God, our Heavenly Father, we acknowledge that right along with David, we need to pray these very words for ourselves. And so, we do ask as we come before you this morning that you would create in us pure hearts, that you would restore us, Lord, renew us.

We confess that we have on a daily basis been displeasing to you. So, we ask for restoration. We pray you wouldn't take your Holy Spirit from us, but restore to us the joy of your salvation.

And Father, as we pray that prayer for ourselves, we would also ask it on behalf of others as well that we know are struggling with whatever the issues happen to be. Father, enfold those who are weary, are ill, are discouraged. Enfold them in your arms and carry them, we pray.

We ask that you would draw us close to you, that we might then be vibrant and warm in our hearts with love for you. Father, we're thankful for your care, your protection, your tender mercy. And so, as we ask these things, we're mindful that you are the master of the universe, and we ask them in the name of Christ our Savior.

Amen. Well, we are going to move along today and actually finish up pretty much the story of David, which is an awful lot to do in one day. But here goes.

Let's see if we can manage it. As I said last time, as Saul dies, the kingdom is really in a shambles. It could be kingdom in quotation marks because of the fact that people have fled, the Philistines have invaded, Saul and his sons, in other words, that whole ruling family is pretty much gone with the exception of that one son named Mephibosheth with whom we're going to deal in just a moment.

David is only recognized by the tribe of Judah as someone who's really significant to them, and he's still on the Philistine side. So, things are in a shambles at this point. But by the time we get to the end of 2 Samuel, we'll see a united kingdom, although interestingly enough, it will unite, and then it begins to fracture a little bit.

If you've read the stuff for today, you know that there's some fracturing, unfortunately, by the time we get to the end of David's life. Before we do that, we must talk a little bit about the stuff that you're reading in the biblical text at this point. Because as you know, what we have in the books of Chronicles, 1 and 2 Chronicles, is going to overlap considerably with 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings.

So we want to have just a little bit of perspective. The word literary is intentional. This is not dry history.

You know, there's this odd notion once we sit down to read the Bible that we sort of gird up our loins and say, I'm going to read the Bible. And this part happens to be dry history as opposed to that part which was dry Torah, right? It's not that way. This is wonderful literature.

It really is, especially the Samuel materials. Talk about narratives that just engage our hearts and make us see ourselves all over again in the faces of these people that we're looking at. So, you know, kind of take off your stained glass glasses that you have on and recognize this as a splendid piece of literature, divinely inspired.

Having said that, here are just a couple of notes. 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings are going to be those narratives that are coming with a little more, how shall we say, emotional, personal angst in them. We see, for example, the seamy sides of David's life.

And you saw it for today as you read 2 Samuel. The stuff that you read in 2 Samuel about Bathsheba and Uriah doesn't show up in the Chronicles narrative. It shows up in Samuel.

Samuel and Kings, once the kingdom splits, which we're going to be dealing with after our next exam, seems to, the materials in the Kings texts focus on this northern kingdom, those tribes that have seceded from the union, if you will. Chronicles, on the other hand, were written later, and one of the things it's doing. Actually, it's doing several really important things that we need to keep in mind. Establishing the genealogy, as I note for you, is giving the history of Israel.

You know, we get into genealogies, and we go, oh my goodness, when is this going to end? And sort of skip ahead and skim them. There's lots of fascinating stuff in them. We've seen that already when we've seen the genealogies in Genesis.

But Chronicles is concerned with establishing the long, unbroken tradition that these are God's people. Okay, that's what the genealogy does at the beginning of First Chronicles and it's very important stuff, especially since it focuses on some of the key tribes there. The other thing that it is going to do is to kind of raise the profile of the Davidic dynasty.

It's the dynasty of David that continues in the southern kingdom. Again, we're going to have a split in the kingdom in a week and a half or so. Once we have that happening, it's going to be the southern kingdom where the dynasty of David, his successors, will continue to rule.

And as I said a moment ago, the positive aspects of that dynasty are emphasized. The negative aspects are downplayed, especially when we're talking about David and Solomon's lives. So that's important.

The third thing that Chronicles really will focus on, First and Second Chronicles, in a much greater degree than you see in the King's material, is the temple, the temple personnel, and the importance of the Levites and priests as these narratives continue. So, kind of look for those. As I said, I think, on Wednesday, there's a good deal of overlap between the Samuel King stuff and Chronicles.

In some cases, you're going to actually be reading word-for-word parallels, but then there's going to be places where they go off in different directions, and that's where the stuff gets really interesting. So that's our note on literary sources—just a quick note to review where we are at this point.

Again, a very schematic, simplified chronology. We started with Abraham at approximately 2100 BC. We're about halfway through our time period now between Abraham and Christ, if we're going to think in these broad millennia, 1,000 years plus 1,000 years, right? Detail of where we are at this particular point, we've dealt now with Joshua, the conquest.

We've had the period of the judges. We worked our way through Eli and Samuel last time and got Saul established on the throne and then reached the death of Saul. So here we are at David, and next time, after the exam, I should say, Lord willing, next week, we'll be dealing with Solomon and the accession of Solomon to the kingdom.

So that's our detailed stuff. Again, 1400 was for the conquest or 1220, depending on whether you took an early date or late date to the Exodus. And I bet you're really glad that that whole unit is over with, right? A couple more things that we need to go over just by way of introduction.

Here starts, well, it doesn't start. You've already encountered a number of names that are important. But especially when we get into these narratives, lots of names show up.

And now that we've got kind of some tension between the house of Saul and the house of David, we want to nail down the ones that are the most important on Saul's

side. Saul is deceased. His sons, with the exception of the grandson of Jonathan and the son, Ish-bosheth, are gone.

There are some important folks we still need to know. Who's Ish-bosheth? I can't even say it. Who is Ish-bosheth? Interestingly enough, his name means man of shame.

But what does he do? Where do we see him showing up in these first couple of chapters of 2 Samuel? Anybody know who he is and what he does? Sarah. Yeah, he's going to be established as king of the remnants, if you will, of the empire, I shouldn't even say the empire, the kingdom of Saul. So, one of the sons takes over.

He'll get himself assassinated, unfortunately, by some people who think they're doing David a favor, although they're really not. Abner is the commanding officer or the general of Saul's forces. And, of course, we're going to see him in mighty conflict in the first couple of chapters of 2 Samuel until he meets his end.

How does he meet his end? What happens to Abner? Yes, Kristen. You're thinking of Absalom, who gets stuck in a tree, and that's true. All those A's, here's part of the problem.

It seems like half of these names start with A. And the other 48% start with J, and then you have to figure out the rest of them. Yeah, Chelsea. Yeah, Abner also gets assassinated, doesn't he, by a guy named Joab.

Yeah, is that what you were going to say, Ginger? All right, and then thirdly, I've mentioned Mephibosheth a couple of times. He is the son of Jonathan, whose nurse drops him in this tumultuous time after the demise of Saul and his sons as the kingdom is sort of falling apart. She's fleeing, and she drops him, so he's lame in his feet.

And as you know, David will provide for him because of the covenant that he had with Jonathan to indeed provide for Jonathan's family. Those are three you really want to know on the side of Saul. As the Saul family kind of goes down, we still have these important persons.

On David's side, we have a few more that we need to note, and there might be others as well, but these are the key ones. Joab, I think I mentioned him a moment ago. Joab is David's commanding officer, general in David's army.

Is he a nice guy? Would you like Joab as your best friend? Well, maybe you would, actually, because he's brutal. He is really brutal, and he's conniving, and he'll do just about anything, probably to protect himself. He's the one that assassinated Abner, and although he says to David, don't you know that Abner was probably coming here

to do some dangerous, treacherous things, probably Joab was protecting his own position as a commanding officer.

So, we're going to see him throughout all these narratives, sometimes very wise, and very shrewd, and very crafty, but also always quite brutal, unfortunately. How about Amnon and Tamar? What's this sordid narrative all about? Anybody remember? Yeah, you want to try, you want to redeem yourself? Amnon and Tamar are brother and sister, and- And I'm going to actually make you make a tiny correction at that point. Okay, so maybe I don't know.

No, you do, you do, you actually do, but let's call them half-brother and sister. They're different parents, different mothers. Okay, so they're related. Yeah, they're related.

And he rapes Tamar, and yeah, that's about it. Right, and it's Absalom, isn't it, who is full brother to Tamar because they have the same mother. And so Absalom is going to be the one who will revenge the honor of his sister Tamar, which has been completely ruined by Amnon, who has taken her and raped her.

And we'll say a little bit more about some of the implications of that narrative in a moment, as well as other activities of Absalom. Because Absalom has a rather high profile in the middle of this book, we're going to look at it a little bit. Bathsheba and Uriah, well, you all know this because Bathsheba is the one whom David takes.

Notice there's sort of an ongoing storyline in David's family life that has some seamy sides to it. David will violate Bathsheba, and he will murder Uriah in order to, well, arrange for the murder of Uriah in order to cover it up. Well, here are the two that are probably the least known, Ahithophel and Hushai.

Great guys. Who are they? Well, at least one of them is. I shouldn't say the first one is.

The first one's sort of a creep. Do you know who these characters are? Go for it, Sarah. Yeah, they're counselors, aren't they? And where do they come into the narrative? We'll do the details a little later on.

But do you know whose sides they're on if you will? It seems like David sends them to go talk to, I guess, Saul's people. OK, think later than Saul. We got Saul off the scene and Saul's people off the scene, actually.

But this is a mess with Absalom, as Absalom raises his military coup against David and tries to basically take over the kingdom. And Ahithophel and Hushai are going to show up in very interesting ways here. Think of them as spies and counter-spies, if you will.

They're part of the intelligence system. In particular, Hushai is going to pretend to be on Absalom's side but really isn't. But we'll return to them in a moment.

And then finally, Nathan and Gad, what's their title? Starts with a P. They're prophets, right? They're prophets. So we'll come back to them as well. These are the ones you need to know.

Names you need to sort of start nailing down for yourselves. Do you have any questions on those? Yeah, Ginger? Who is Uriah? Uriah is Bathsheba's husband. And that's the one whom David arranges to get killed because he has obviously done something with Bathsheba that Uriah should have been doing with Bathsheba.

More on that story later. Do you like the way I said that? Not very delicate, right? OK. Any other questions? Yes, Rebecca.

Whose side does Hushai pretend to be on? Ah. Hushai is going to pretend to be on Absalom's side, but he's actually on David's side. But we'll come back to the details of that a little later on.

Well, let's carry on a little bit. A little bit in terms of David and what David is really like. We see him over and over and over again seeking the Lord.

We had a little discussion about this last time when we were talking about the contrasts between David's character and Saul's character. And I want to build on that a little bit. Even when he is running away from Saul, still back in 1 Samuel, notably in chapter 23, where should I go? Should I go up to Caela? And God will help him with that.

Likewise, well into 2 Samuel, when he's asking how, for example, to deal with the Philistines. Where to go to establish himself as king? And the Lord says, to Hebron, or Hebron. God gives him these answers.

Yeah, Trevor. Yeah. When he's seeking the Lord's counsel, he mentions a few times that he uses the yearning and the tumult.

But sometimes, like in my text, it just says, like, the Lord spoke to David. Yeah, the question, it's a great question. He seems to be using the Urim and the Thummim.

And by the way, it doesn't specifically say, and he dragged out the Urim and Thummim and used them. But they were part of the ephod, part of the breastpiece, part of the ephod. He also has the ephod because Abiathar brought it to him.

So, the conclusion is that he's probably using these Urim and Thummim, which were the means of making decisions. We know that all the way back from Exodus 28. Now, in answer to your question, not entirely certain how they worked.

Some people think they worked in the same way that lots work, you know, you cast the lots, and they come up with this, that, or the other thing. Some people think it's not quite that simple, because oftentimes, as you've noted, these answers are not yes and no answers. They're words from the Lord.

And so, at least one theory on this whole thing is that what happens when this is consulted is that there's actually an oracle from God that gives an articulated answer to it. But again, how that works, I don't know. So you think that every time he seeks some sort of answer from the Lord, he uses those devices? I'm suggesting it's a possibility.

The question is, does David use these every time? I think he'd be a fool not to if they're there. And again, I'm making an assumption that when Abiathar brings the ephod, he's got the Urim and Thummim as well. That's the assumption I'm making.

And David, if he's concerned to seek the Lord, is certainly going to use the means that he knows to be the avenue to doing that. But again, it's more than a conjecture. It's an assumption there at that one point.

Yes, Rebecca. I was just kind of confused. Aren't these devices things that the priest used? But then David's not a priest if he uses them. Well, yeah, it's a great question.

Aren't these things that the high priest is supposed to be using? Why is David using them? I'll give you two answers to that. Probably he's going through Abiathar. I'm suggesting that's probably the traditional conservative answer to it.

There are, however, people who suggest that David himself will take upon himself the role of priest. And there are other places where we see hints along these lines. And I'll get to them in a moment today.

And that may sound really shocking to you until you stop and think for a moment. David is the father of the son of David, who is going to draw together himself, Jesus, in other words, the ultimate king and priest. And then we have that interesting Psalm 110, which talks about, I will make you a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

And so, this person in Psalm 110 is both king and priest. Some people suggest that David, as he becomes king, is actually drawing together both of those roles. And so he is functioning as priest and king, which otherwise, the roles are kept entirely separate.

Just a suggestion. Just a suggestion. And there are going to be two other incidents that we're going to talk about today that may make us go in that direction as well.

The guy that suggested this, by the way, is Eugene Merrill, if you want to ever look that up. But we need to go on. David is also a person after God's own heart.

This is said in the text itself. We saw it in 1 Samuel 13. It's occurring frequently in the Psalms.

And even in the book of Acts, we have a reference to David's being a person after a man after God's own heart. That doesn't mean he's perfect. And in fact, we often see ourselves in his many, many failings.

But he knows to repent. His humility is just right up there, front and center all the time. And the real key, I think, is this center one.

He's merciful. He's extraordinarily merciful. He's merciful to his own detriment.

You see it with Absalom. You see it over and over and over again. David is someone who knows how to extend mercy.

And if that isn't a quality after God's own heart, I don't know one. Because as we know, God is extraordinarily, unspeakably merciful to us day after day and merciful to his people, even though they're horrendous sinners. We're horrendous sinners.

So, I would suggest that mercy might be one of the big deals here in terms of being a person after God's own heart. We clearly know that he struggles with sin. We're going to see some of it.

We've already seen some of it. Interestingly enough, if you've read your assignment for today, you may have been kind of stopped in your tracks when you got to chapter eight of 2 Samuel. Let me just read a little bit of this for you.

And note that David is in the phase here of establishing his kingdom. I said at the beginning, he was sort of landed with something very small and falling apart when he first became king. As he establishes his kingdom, obviously there are some things that have to be done that are brutal.

Let's read chapter eight, verse two. David defeated the Moabites. He made them lie down on the ground, and he measured them off using the length of the cord.

Every two lengths of them were put to death. And the third length was allowed to live. So, the Moabites became subject to David and brought tribute.

It's not exactly the most savory thing in our minds. You may remember chapter 21, where there's been a famine in the land, and David inquires of the Lord and finds out that it's because Saul had violated the treaty with the Gibeonites. And the Gibeonites say, well, give us seven of Saul's household.

And David turns those seven over. And the seven people are killed in that context. Sort of a measure for measure.

Innocent lives of the Gibeonites were taken. These seven are given over as well. There are places as we read this text and he's also a man of war as he expands his kingdom.

So, we got to come to grips with the reality of where David is in this point in time and history. He's not your perfect paragon of virtue. And yet, he's a person after God's own heart.

Well, all that to say, actually, all that to say, we need to go on. Early years of Hebron. Now, seven and a half years to be precise, tribe over the King of Judah.

Is this posed as a question? No, it's not. It should be. Let's pose that as a question.

Why was the tribe of Judah so favorably disposed towards David? We went over it last time. Does anybody remember why the tribe of Judah is going to embrace him as king even though he's been "with the Philistines"? Kate, is that an answer? Try. Was he kind of setting up around the borders that were going to protect them? Yeah, he's really protecting those southern clans in the tribe of Judah from the Amalekite raiders.

Even though he tells something entirely different to the King of the Philistines, he's been a good protective fence and hedge for this tribe of the southern aspects of the tribe of Judah. They owe him. They really owe him.

Now, he's also a member of the tribe of Judah because he himself is from Bethlehem. Going to Hebron is not just a happenstance. So, let's just go to Hebron as opposed to any place else.

It's kind of a central hub in the tribe of Judah. When you look at a map, it's centered there. It was one of the cities of refuge that was established, and it has everything to do with some of the travel connecting routes internally in the land.

So, it's a good choice of a place. During these first years, and I'm just going to run through these rather quickly. You can go back and read the narratives as you do just to refresh your own memories.

But I want you to notice as you read the first three chapters of 2 Samuel this principle that I've articulated right here at the get-go. David refuses to rejoice. He refused to rejoice when he heard about the death of Saul and Jonathan, and he refused to do that consistently throughout.

He will not see himself perceived by the people of Judah or Israel as being a usurper to the throne, and that's important. But also, I would suggest that his whole sense of mercy and the way he is as a person does not allow him to gloat and to rejoice over the death of his enemies. At any rate, the first couple of chapters, two and three actually, do indeed describe the war between the people that Abner's commanding on the side of Saul, or Saul's household, and the people that Joab is commanding, and you read those back and forth.

Chapter three records the sad assassination by Abner, sorry, of Abner by Joab, and then chapter four talks about these two people from the tribe of Benjamin, Rechab and Baanah, excuse me, who think they're doing David a favor as they assassinate the king, Ish-bosheth. They haul his head down to Hebron, and David says it's not the right thing to do, and so he has them killed. And then also he does, as I note for you, later on, we're informed in chapter nine, because of the covenant he had with Jonathan, he does covenant to take care of Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son.

So that's our early years in Hebron—just a couple things to look at here. I kind of get a sense in terms of how it is that Joab could so easily wipe out Abner in the city gate.

How many of you have seen pictures of the city gate before? Is this making sense to you? Here's how it works. This is not the gate at Hebron, by the way, it's a gate at a place called Hazor. But at any rate, you'd be coming through, here's the main route.

But you may not know this, you may know it, gates were very important structures, things that were judicial activities took place there, commercial activities took place there, any kinds of governmental stuff, it was a city gate where all this stuff happened. The book of Ruth. Remember when Boaz is talking to the near kin person? They go to the city gate and take care of that kind of thing.

And we're actually going to have a little later on today, Absalom at the city gate, stealing the hearts of Israel. So, city gates were really, really significant. Now, here's the thing: you don't just have a door with bars, you have a structure like this, and you have rooms on each side, one, two, three, four, five, whoops, yeah, six here.

And these rooms are in antiquity, of course. We only have the structures left now, the walls of them, but they would have had walls up about like so and then covered over. So, this would be a covered structure as well. Therefore, it would be very easy as they're walking through this whole area for Joab to say, oh, just come on off into

the city gate, into one of those little rooms that happens to be empty, no judges sitting there at the time or whatever.

And in that context, Joab wipes out Abner. So, kind of look at the city gate that way, but again, I want you to see it as sort of the center of major activities that take place in these contexts. It's not necessarily everything is going on in the palace.

Lots of important stuff takes place in the city gates. Another picture, a fairly old one, but at least it gives us a little bit of a sense of one of those events in 2 Samuel chapter two. Do you remember where you have the forces of the house of Saul gathered on one side of the pool at Gibeon and the forces commanded by Joab on the other and they decide to have 12 people stand up and make sport together, it's what the words are in Hebrew, and they all sort of stab each other and fall down at the pool of Gibeon.

The archeologists, when they began excavating in Gibeon, early part of the 20th century, came up with this pool. Actually, they didn't come up with it, they dug down into it, and here's what is generally labeled as the pool at Gibeon. Kind of fuzzy by now, faded red slide, but you can just barely see some steps heading on down into that.

All right, let's carry on a little bit. David's first necessary thing to do is to get all of Israel back together again, more than just the tribe of Judah, and there's going to be a couple of ways to do this as he makes his headway along these lines. First of all, he's going to capture the city that will become Jerusalem.

Now, in the conquest, we're told that Jebus was taken, but apparently, it wasn't held by the Israelites, and so you've got this foreign enclave kind of right about there in the area right between the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin. That is significant. David's going to take that, and he's going to move his capital from Hebron, smack dab in the center of the tribe of Judah, to Jebus, now Jerusalem.

By the way, the narrative of his taking this city is very interesting. He happens to do it apparently through the water system, sneaking up somehow through the water system. He and Joab take the city and take the people by surprise as they're there.

Come to Israel with us. May, June, 2010, have I thrown that in there yet? Yes, I have. We'll look at this whole thing and see how it works.

At any rate, why is it strategic for David to move the capital from Hebron? Why is it politically strategic for him to move the capital from Hebron to Jerusalem? And let me give you a little bit more of a flavor of this. Picking up on what I just said, Hebron is smack dab in the middle of the tribe of Judah. Jerusalem is just over the border to the north.

Is that helping a little bit? Technically, once it becomes an Israelite city in the tribe of Benjamin, are you thinking strategically? What's the political brilliance here? Because it's brilliant. Tribe of Benjamin, Saul, right? If we move the capital into a different tribe, first of all, from David's tribe, and if it happens to be Benjamin, that's going to be a way of reaching out, if you will, to those tribes that had been rather disaffected, to that tribe particularly, the tribe of Benjamin, from which Saul, the first king, had come. It's a brilliant move.

Plus, he's just going farther north, and that helps, too. Yeah. So, is it just for unification purposes? Yeah, it is a big move, I would suggest, for unification.

Very clearly, because he's had overtures made, first when Abner came, and then the other elders of the tribe of Judah will come to him. He's had overtures made in terms of reuniting the tribes, but this is a move that he can make in return that says, all right, in some ways, let me back this up a little bit. When our country was first formed, those of you who've studied this stuff know that there was a good deal of, well, debate between Boston and Philadelphia.

Who gets to have the capital? Two very important cities. Carving out the District of Columbia was absolutely brilliant, because it was an entirely separate entity. The same kind of thing, not entirely, but the same kind of thing is what's going on.

David takes a formerly Jebusite city, captures it, and makes it a place for unification. So that's the first move that's really important politically. He manages to subdue the Philistine threat.

Twice, the Philistines are right up there in the Rephaim Valley, and you need to look at a map to know that the Rephaim Valley is just west of Jerusalem. Philistines haven't been totally subdued yet, and they still make some inroads, but as you read those chapters about this, David will win victories against them twice in the Rephaim Valley, and they back off. They go back out to the Philistine Plain, where they belong.

And then, of course, we have, finally, his move in terms of developing religious unity, and that's our story. I'm going to pick it up in 2 Samuel, chapter six, although, of course, there is a parallel rendition of this in Chronicles as well. But we want to look at it a little bit.

Chapter six, verse two. David and all his men set out to bring the ark of God. They recognize things have been really disparate.

Not only has this whole area been sort of split up politically, but religiously, it's split up as well. There's still some stuff going up at Gibeon. There's a tabernacle, one place.

The ark is somewhere else. It's been out in a place called Kyrie for 20 years, at least. David realizes that there's got to be some unification here, and therefore, he decides to do that.

But, of course, they don't do it quite right, do they? Let me start reading chapter three. They set the ark of God on a new cart. What's the problem? After all, isn't that what the Philistines did? They stuck it on the cart.

It goes back to Beit Shemesh as well. Yeah, they weren't supposed to be, and they should have known better, shouldn't they? We can't hold the Philistines responsible for knowing that you carry it on rods through the rings and the thing. But they should have known that, because it was in Torah, in terms of how to carry this.

It was not to have been on an ark, sorry, on a cart. But they do that, and unfortunately, something happens. But before we have that, let's just read verse five.

David and the whole house of Israel were celebrating with all their might before the Lord. They are really rejoicing. This is a moving of their main symbol of God's presence back to where it ought to be.

Interestingly enough, and I'm not sure how far you want to push this, you can take it or leave it. But interestingly enough, the Hebrew word that is translated delicately, or nicely, I should say, by your NIV is celebrating is also the word that simply means to play, to make sport.

It's the word that underlies Yitzchak's name: laughter. And it's the word that's describing the relationship between Isaac and Jacob, right, and Rebekah when he's caressing her. So maybe this isn't exactly what they should have been doing as part of the whole celebration as well.

And I'm going to suggest to you that the next time when they really do bring it up, David's dancing with all his might, but a different Hebrew word is there. And not only that, when they finally bring the ark up, what do they do? They go six steps, and then they offer sacrifices. And then they go six steps, and they offer a whole different tone when they actually get that ark to Jerusalem.

This first time seems to be a little bit too spontaneous, a little bit too happy-go-lucky, perhaps. And, of course, we know what happens. The oxen stumble.

The ark appears that it's going to totter off the ark, the cart, can't be getting cart and ark mixed up today. But somebody reaches out, Uzzah, to steady it, and he's stricken dead. And we have yet another lesson.

It's interesting, and here I'm going to take a tiny tangent. Interesting is a dumb word to use. It's compelling and perhaps sobering to note as we read through scriptures that every time something new is happening in terms of God's presence with his people. Unfortunately, a lesson has to be learned, and usually, it's learned the hard way.

Go back to Nadab and Abihu. Tabernacle is established. They roar on in, desecrating the holiness, and God will smite them dead.

This instance is another one because Uzzah should not have been touching the ark. Unless you think this is the wrathful God of the Old Testament and it doesn't happen in the New Testament, what happens to Ananias and Sapphira? They're lying to the Holy Spirit, aren't they? As the new church is getting started and underway, and God's people are again taught a lesson that you don't trample on the holiness of God. That's the lesson here.

Not saying there's not a place for great rejoicing and wonder and spontaneous worship, I'm not saying that at all, but God had given particular requirements in terms of how to approach him, and they hadn't taken them at all seriously. As I said, the interesting thing is when they do indeed come up bringing this ark finally to Jerusalem, in verse 13 of chapter six of 2 Samuel, when those who were carrying the ark had taken six steps, David sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf. Notice verse 14, which gets back to Rebecca's question.

David is wearing a linen ephod. If we read the parallel in Chronicles, it says he's wearing fine white linen and then emphasizes the linen ephod again. That is usually the description of whom? The priests, right? The priests were the ones who wore that.

So perhaps David here is indeed functioning as a priest, even though we don't have any specific thing that says, and David takes on the role of the priesthood. Maybe that's what's going on. And maybe then that's what Psalm 110 is alluding to in some context.

Well, interestingly enough, we then have to move on. David expresses a desire, this happens to be chapter seven, to build the temple. Obviously, he's got the ark.

You still have a tabernacle that's out on a mountain northwest of Jerusalem in a place called the High Place of Gibeon. David wants to bring it all together. It's part of the unification, the religious unification.

Another suggestion, and this is reading between the lines, and again, this is just certain scholars that are suggesting this. In the broader cultural scene, when

someone took over a kingdom under rather questionable circumstances, and there were those who perceived David as a usurper, even though he didn't want that and worked against it, there were those who perceived him that way. The way to counter that was to actually build a temple for the deity.

And so, that's the broader cultural context. Maybe that's part of David's motives here too. We don't know that, but it might be.

What we do notice is that God says no. And the Lord's response is, your son's going to build a temple, not you. Your son's going to.

David had blood on his hands too, we've already talked about that. Solomon's going to be, as his name suggests, shalom, shlomo. His name suggests he'll be a man of peace.

And it'll be Solomon who will build the temple. However, lest David be completely overwhelmed with grief and despair at God's refusal, and by the way, it's Nathan, the prophet, who will give him this message. Notice what God says to him in response through Nathan, and this is referring to God's covenant with David.

In chapter Seven, in the middle of verse 11, the Lord will establish a house for you, and that house is going to be bigger than anything he might imagine. He talks first of all about your son, your offspring. Verse 13: he's the one who will build the house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

When he does wrong, I'll punish him, and Solomon will get his share of chastisement as will his descendants. But verse 15, my love will never be taken away from him as I took it away from Saul. Verse 16, chapter seven, you and your house and your kingdom will endure forever.

Your throne will be established forever. And of course, that has all sorts of overtones in terms of the coming messianic son of David. Well, those are the good things.

Just reorienting ourselves in terms of the map here and where we've been and what we're doing. If you look at this fairly carefully, here is, if I can find it, Jerusalem, right? It's right there. So, it's a move from Hebron down here, the center of the tribe of Judah, right up there to Jerusalem.

The ark had been out here at Kiriath-Jearim. And so, it was brought from that point, and although this map makes it look pretty easy, it would not have been an easy journey. There are some hills and valleys to maneuver through as they make their way from Kiriath-Jearim all the way to Jerusalem.

So here we are now, and we've got some kind of a united kingdom. We're now going to talk a little bit about some of the other events of David's reign. So this is sort of our picture between what went before and what is after.

The oval there outlines the city of David. That's small. I may have said this before.

Here's our current temple mount, all right? And when Solomon does indeed build the temple, it's probably in that general vicinity. The little spur of mountain that comes down here, and it's actually mountain in quotation marks, is lower than all the hills around about. This is higher, down here is higher, over here is higher as well.

So, the city of David and Mount Zion are actually surrounded by higher mountains around them. We're talking about an area right up in here where David probably built his palace. In fact, those of you who came to Israel in May 2010 are going to see what the archeologists are finding now in terms of a monumental structure, probably dated from the 10th century.

And it's right up in this area right here. So, some good archeological evidence is showing up to indicate that we do indeed have a fairly significant David and Solomon kingdom established at that particular point in time. Well, take a look at that and imagine that palace being right about here.

And then we're going to look at this close up and I'm going to ask you to do something, all right? David's palace right over here. Imagine in antiquity that the housing structures on this side were probably on this side as well. This is the modern day village of Silwan, a xenophobic village if we ever met one.

Don't go walking through there these days. But look at the houses, and they're kind of stacked top to bottom. And in David's day, when this part was inhabited, you can imagine the houses on that slope would be pretty much the same.

Why am I going on and on and on about these houses? What's the story that might come to light here? With David's palace being right there. Oh, let's back up. Yeah, if David's palace is here and you've got houses stacked up down there, and one evening Bathsheba is out on the roof of her house.

And by the way, she's not being an exhibitionist. That's where she would have to be bathing. David is looking down on her, and you know the story from that particular point in time.

That brings us to the sordid parts of David's reign. Sordid on his part but also sordid on the part of some of the folks who are associated with him, notably his sons. What's a scourge? It'd be helpful to find that word.

It's a whip, okay, it's a whip. And here, it's kind of used metaphorically to see what it is that sin is doing as it will really take apart David's family and actually, ultimately, his kingdom. None of it is in Chronicles. That's quite true.

We know the terrible narrative of David's adultery with Bathsheba, his attempt to cover it up by bringing Uriah to sleep with Bathsheba, bringing Uriah back from enemy lines. He doesn't do it because he's too loyal, and David arranges for his death out on the front lines with the complicity of Joab, by the way. Joab is part of this whole process here.

As a result, Nathan tells a parable. The parable is about a rich man and a poor man, and the rich man takes something that was just a treasure, a precious treasure to the poor man, a little ewe lamb. And, of course, David is incensed, not realizing the parable is told against him.

And he says, let that man be punished. And of course, Nathan says, it's you. And then we have the following statement.

I'm in chapter 12 and you may want to review this on your own as well, because this is an extremely important declaration. Nathan isn't just talking off the top of his head. Nathan is a prophet.

And what he says here is going to be what unfolds for the house of David for the rest of David's life. Let's look at it. I'm going to start with verse nine, chapter 12.

Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what's evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with a sword. You took his wife to be his own. Two things: murder and adultery, right? Killing, sexual abuse.

You killed him with a sword of the Ammonites, verse 10. Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, okay? The sword will not depart from your house. So, there's going to be violence and killing right within the household of David.

That's the first thing, and it's measure for measure. And then verse 11, out of your own household, I'm going to bring calamity on you. Before your very eyes, I will take your wives and give them to the one who is close to you.

He will lie with your wives in broad daylight. You did it in secret. I'm going to do this thing in broad daylight.

What does Absalom do when he takes over the kingdom? He sleeps with David's concubines in broad daylight. It's a political statement. Absalom is making a political statement at that point, but it's also fulfilling in a measure-for-measure way, an ugly, odious measure-for-measure way, this prophecy that Nathan makes.

Well, David does repent. And this is where, of course, Psalm 51 comes in in its entirety, and I encourage you to go back and read that. But there are consequences.

God forgives him. This is the beauty of the mercy of God. God forgives, but there are consequences of our sins, and we need to come to grips with that.

David had to come to grips with it. There are serious consequences that had, as I said earlier, lifelong effects in his family. First of all, the first son dies.

David fasts. He mourns while the son is dying in hopes that perhaps God's mind would be changed. It isn't. The son dies, and David gets up and says, God, I got to get on with life.

Then he'll have other sons, and the second one from Bathsheba will be Solomon, as we'll see. We have the Amnon and Tamar incident. Amnon is David's firstborn son.

We need to keep that in mind. Firstborn son. He rapes Tamar.

She goes out utterly disgraced as a result of that, and she is Absalom's full sister. Yeah, Kate. David, did I say that wrongly? Yeah, who's his mother? Ah, mother.

Who's Amnon's mother? It might be somebody, I think it's Ahinoam. I'd have to go back and look at that. I'm pretty sure it's Ahinoam.

But somebody else can check that. Was he born before Solomon? Yep, long before Solomon. Solomon's somewhere down there, eighth in line, actually.

Say that again? Before Bathsheba? Probably so. Remember, he's got two wives. He's got Ahinoam, and he's got Michal, and he's got Abigail, right? And there's a bunch, not a bunch, but a few others that are in there as well.

So, there's a line of sons here. The ones that we're concerned with are Amnon and then Absalom because Absalom will be third born. When Absalom is taking his vengeance on behalf of Tamar, as you know from reading the narratives, he arranges to kill Amnon.

So, Absalom has blood on his hands as well. He's wiped out David's firstborn son in this whole thing. As a result, he flees.

Joab is going to arrange for Absalom to come back, which is, in this case, a crafty but very unfortunate move on the part of Joab because as Joab does that, he's bringing back Absalom, who will, as you know, from reading 1 Kings 14, 15, 16, and 17,

Absalom raises a military coup against his father. That's where we're going next. Any question on this? I know I went through that fast.

Zip zap, okay. Here's the conspiracy. Absalom's a clever guy.

He's also pretty handsome. This is how he wins the hearts of the people. He looks good.

14:25. Handsome in appearance. He has all the right accouterments.

A BMW. Well, here it just says a chariot and horses and 50 men to run ahead of him. But you know, he's pretty good at making the appearances.

And whenever anybody approaches him at the city gate, he pretty much says, I'll take care of your problem. Just let me do it. And the text goes on.

He stole the hearts of all the men of Israel. And then he goes to Hebron, which is, of course, a political statement in itself. His father had reigned in Hebron.

He goes to Hebron. Has himself crowned king. And he sends for, this is chapter 15, verse 12, in case you want to look at it later.

He sends for Ahithophel, David's counselor. So he recognizes the wisdom of Ahithophel. In fact, it'll say later on, the advice that Ahithophel gave was like advice from God.

And Absalom knows that. So he gets Ahithophel on his side. David realizes he's got to leave because Absalom is on his way to Jerusalem.

When Absalom gets there, after David leaves, some interesting things happen. But in the meantime, we have to catch one important thing. As David is going, and here I am at the end of chapter 15, he says to this guy named Hushai, he says, you can help me by frustrating Ahithophel's advice.

So, David sends Hushai to go after and apparently join the ranks of Absalom. But David's instructions to Hushai are, you go there, and whatever Ahithophel says, you counter it. And the text is actually going to say in chapter 17, it was God's plan to frustrate the advice of Ahithophel via Hushai.

And we'll see that happen in a moment. Here we go. Absalom shows up in chapter 16 at the end of it.

Verse 20, give us your advice, Ahithophel. Absalom says, what should we do? And Ahithophel says, verse 21, chapter 16, lie with your father's concubines, the ones

he's left to take care of the palace. All Israel will hear that you've made yourself a stench in your father's nostrils, and the hands of everyone with you will be strengthened.

They pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof, and he lay with his father's concubines in the sight of all of Israel. Totally, well, I can't even think of the right word, odious, heinous, unsavory, and yet it's a political statement. What was my father's is now mine, okay? Here's the other piece of Ahithophel's advice.

Chapter 17, verse one, I would choose 12,000 men and set out tonight in pursuit of David. In other words, go get him while he's weak and while he's fleeing. But here's where Hushai comes in because Hushai says, oh, no, no, you shouldn't do that.

You know your father. When he's trapped, he fights like a lion. Give yourself some time.

Back off, get your forces together, gather lots of people, and then go after them. Of course, Hushai's buying time for David because David can do the same thing, gather his forces, and then they'll have a battle.

So Hushai manages to frustrate that second piece of advice that Ahithophel gave. And ultimately then, it'll be David's forces that win the battle. Hushai's counterintelligence.

Once they do come to battle, Absalom will die, but he will die because he gets himself caught in a tree, gets his head caught in a tree, and Joab will come along and wipe him out. David, this is probably the ultimate in David's merciful heart, weeps over his son Absalom, almost refusing to be comforted until Joab says, you're going to lose everybody if you continue to show this kind of remorse over someone who's your enemy and against whom your guys are fighting. And so, Joab talks him out of that.

They do go back to Jerusalem, but here's the thing: we need to do this fairly quickly. As you read the next three chapters, there's increasing fracturing of the kingdom. There's rebellion from somebody from the tribe of Benjamin.

No surprise, it's the tribe of Benjamin. And there's rebellion from tribes up north. Things are edgy here.

And in that light, we look at our last incident. The text in chapter 24 of 2 Samuel says, God incited David to number the Israelites because he was angry with him. Interestingly enough, when you read the Chronicles parallel in chapter 21, it says, Satan incited David to number.

So, God is using Satan. There are a lot of reasons why it might be that Satan shows up in the Chronicles text. We don't have time to do that now.

Our big question is, why is the Lord angry with the Israelites? Let me suggest, rather than tapping your wisdom in this, that he sees, obviously, what the Israelites are doing in terms of their rebellion against David, their rebellion against David as God's chosen person, and the Davidic dynasty. And this is going to be a punishment for those kinds of things that are unfolding and that rebellion stuff that's starting to foment in those chapters that I just referred to. So, David goes ahead and numbers them and it's the wrong thing to do.

Joab even knows it's the wrong thing to do, but Joab goes ahead and does it. Gad comes and says, that's the wrong thing to do. And Gad rebukes him, confronts him, and says, you've got three choices.

And I'm trying to get to those three choices so I can read them to you. David says, I have sinned greatly. Gad says, do you want three years of famine? Do you want three months of fleeing from your enemies or three days of plague? And David, of course, says, let me suffer at the hands of God himself.

The three days of plague unfold at the hand of a destroying angel. When that angel is stopped, it happens at the threshing floor of Araunah. Two things I need to say and then we'll stop with this.

David will buy this threshing floor and the sacrifice from a guy named Araunah the Jebusite. And we learn from reading Chronicles later on that that's the place where the temple is built. And so there's going to be an important continuity there.

The second thing we need to say and then I'll let you go. David will say here because Araunah is going to give him the threshing floor. Araunah has seen the angel too and he's scared to death.

He's going to give him the threshing floor. And David says, shall I offer sacrifices to the Lord that have cost me nothing? And, of course, that's the principle. Sacrifices are sacrifices because they cost us something.

And so, David pays well, offers a sacrifice. And again, that sets the stage for the building of the temple, which will happen under Solomon. We're going to take a break and do Psalms on Monday, but we're going to take a break now.

Shabbat shalom. Have a good weekend.