



# Restoration and Rebellion

2 Samuel 14-15

2 Samuel 14:  
**Absalom**  
Returns to  
Jerusalem



## 2 Samuel 14: A Summary

- Joab Knows David Well (1-3)
- The Woman of Tekoa (4-17)
  - Cain and Abel Parallel
  - Justice and Mercy
- David's Discernment (18-20)
- Absalom Recalled (21-24)
- Absalom's Appearance (25-27)
  - Esau / Samson Parallels
- Absalom's Frustration (28-32)
- David and Absalom Reconciled (33)

## 2 Samuel 15:1

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



# Having Been Restored

- Absalom begins to assert his lofty ambitions.
- He acquires his own personal chariot and horses (1<sup>st</sup> Israelite to do so).
  - Samuel warned of this in 1 Samuel 8; each of David's 3 sons who claimed kingship acquired them.
  - Thus far, Scripture has only portrayed the enemies of the Lord as utilizing chariots (Egyptians, northern Canaanites, Arameans, all unsuccessfully).

## In Addition

- Absalom employed “fifty men as runners before him.”
- This contingent of men, likely soldiers, added to his impressive presence wherever he went.
- Samuel had also pessimistically indicated that Israel’s kings would someday press young men into service like this.



## 2 Samuel 15:2-4

**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.” **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.” **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.”

# Since the Time of Moses

- A major function of Israel's leaders was to administer divine justice for the Lord's people.
- Without yet declaring himself king, Absalom begins to carry out this executive responsibility as though he were king.



# Sowing Seeds of Discord

- By telling each distraught person that the king would not hear their case, he created the false impression that David was derelict in a fundamental royal duty.
- The result is political discontent.
- Notice Absalom's skilled use of words:  
“Oh that one would appoint me  
judge...”

# Absalom the Politician

**“See, your claims are good and right, but no man listens to you on the part of the king...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.”**



## 2 Samuel 15:5-6

**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. **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 People Skills

- He would not let those that approached him bow down, which in a sense is appropriate—he's not the king.
- However, it is clearly his duplicity and not his humility that motivates him here.
- And he seals every deal with a kiss!
- And so, “Absalom stole away the hearts...of Israel.”

## 2 Samuel 15:7-9

**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. **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.’” **9** The king said to him, “Go in peace.” So he arose and went to Hebron.

\*The MT has here “forty,” but this is presumably a scribal error for “four.” The Lucianic Greek recension, the Syriac Peshitta, and the Latin Vulgate have the expected reading “four years.”

# Absalom's Patience

- He has been carrying out his “justice” at the city gate for 4 years.

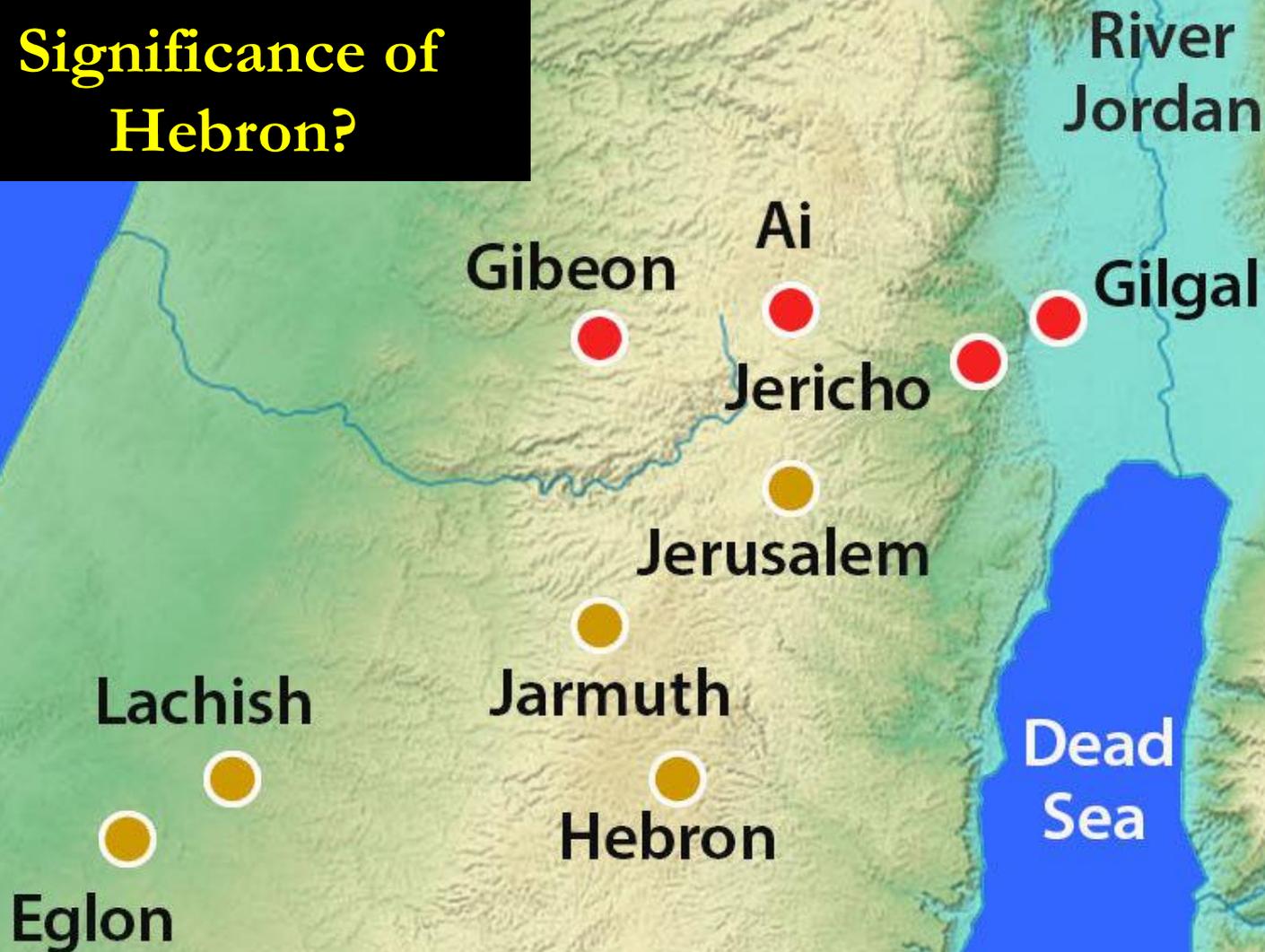
How many Israelites did he interact with over the course of that time?

- He then enters Phase 2 of his plan:

He asks David for permission to go to Hebron in order to fulfill a vow he made to the Lord.

*\*Remember, he waited two years to kill Amnon, as well.*

# What is the Significance of Hebron?



## 2 Samuel 15:10-12

**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.’” **11** Then two hundred men went with Absalom from Jerusalem, who were invited and went innocently, and they did not know anything. **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.

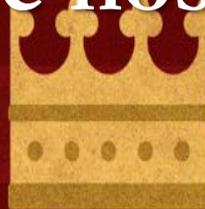
# Hebron: 20 Miles from Jerusalem

- From this walled city, Absalom moves quickly to usurp David's throne.
- He prepares for the public phase of his plot by sending “spies throughout all the tribes of Israel” to make a coordinated proclamation throughout the land.
- Once in place, they were to await the trumpets and announce that “Absalom was king in Hebron.”

This is an implicit call to arms.

## A Brilliant Plan

- In v. 11, we learn that “two hundred men went with Absalom from Jerusalem.”
- Absalom has emptied Jerusalem of some of its most valuable administrators at the very time when David will need them most.
- And now they are hostages at Hebron.



## A Powerful Ally (v. 12)

“Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David’s counselor”

Why do you think Ahithophel switches sides?

- Many more join as well—

“the conspiracy was strong, for the people increased continually with Absalom”

## 2 Samuel 15:13-15

**13** Then a messenger came to David, saying, “The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom.” **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.” **15** Then the king’s servants said to the king, “Behold, your servants are ready to do whatever my lord the king chooses.”

# The Coup is Underway

- Thanks to Absalom's popular support, as well as his success in taking most of David's administration hostage, David is unable to mount a credible response.
- For the 1<sup>st</sup> time in the Biblical narrative, David, the military hero, orders those under his command to "flee."
- If they don't leave now, they will die.



## David Still Has Supporters (v. 15)

“Behold, your servants are ready to do whatever my lord the king chooses.”

There are those that still trust the king and remain steadfast in their support for him.



## 2 Samuel 15:16-18

**16** So the king went out and all his household with him. But the king left ten concubines to keep the house. **17** The king went out and all the people with him, and they stopped at the last house. **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.



# Two Immediate Objectives

1. Preserve the life of the king and key members of the royal family and administration.
2. Make provisions for the maintenance of the City of David in the king's absence.



# David Accomplishes Objective #1

- David and his entire household make a hasty eastward departure from Jerusalem.
- He isn't sure where he is going, but he creates distance, and then stops to organize the group more effectively for military action and defense.



## Objective #2 Accomplished

- A small group of non-military personnel are left behind to manage the royal residence in Jerusalem.
- This is not a defense force—if it were, David would not have left “ten concubines to keep the house.”
- Jerusalem was to be a city of peace.



## In Psalm 122:6-9, David Wrote:

**6** Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:

“May they prosper who love you. **7**

“May peace be within your walls, And prosperity within your palaces.” **8** For the sake of my brothers and my friends, I will now say, “May peace be within you.” **9** For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek your good.”



## 2 Samuel 15:19-22

**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. **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.” **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.” **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.

# David Is Suspicious

- Specifically the troops led by “Ittai the Gittite.”
- After all, he’s a Philistine, and there is a history there.
- Foreign forces switch loyalties all the time (sometimes in the heat of battle!), and most of Ittai’s people would celebrate him for betraying David.



# David's Words are Interesting

“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. 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.”

Is this a test?

## Ittai Surprises David

“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.”

Ittai binds himself to David with a loyalty oath sworn on the lives of both Yahweh and King David.

\*The oath is reminiscent of Ruth's vow to Naomi.

## 2 Samuel 15:23

**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.





## 2 Samuel 15:24-26

**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. **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. **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.”

# Important Religious Support

“Zadok also came, and all the Levites...and Abiathar came up”

- And the Levites are carrying “the ark of the covenant of God.”
- David was responsible for bringing the ark to Jerusalem, which he believed fulfilled Torah prophecy, and confirmed God’s choice of Jerusalem.
- He would not allow that to be undone.

# David Orders the Ark's Return

- Zadok and the Levites certainly had good intentions, but David would not use the ark as a sort of talisman.
- He says, “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.”
- If not, “let Him do to me as seems good to Him.”



## 2 Samuel 15:27-29

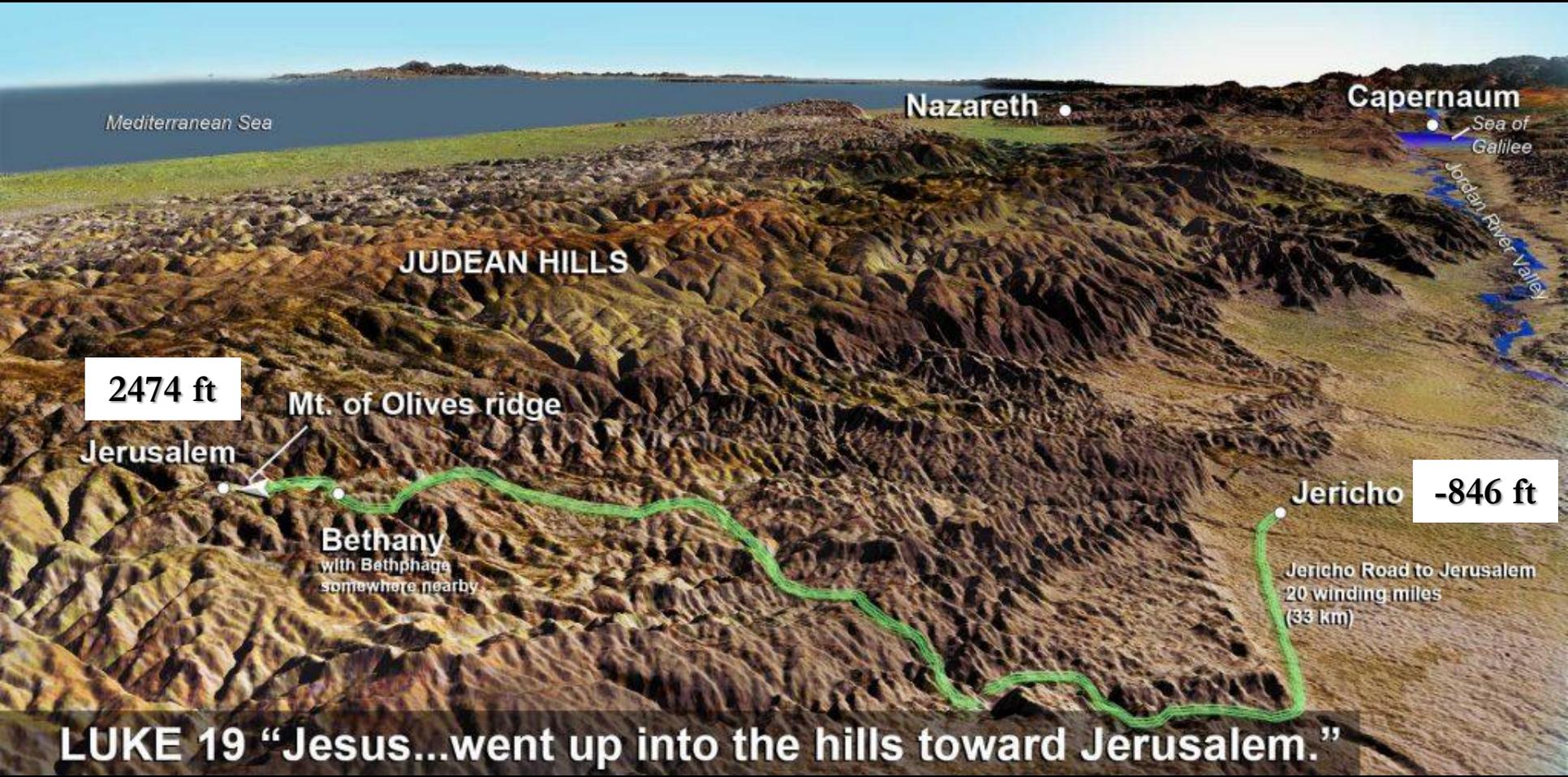
**27** The king said also to Zadok the priest, “Are you not a seer? Return to the city in peace and your two sons with you, your son Ahimaaz and Jonathan the son of Abiathar.

**28** See, I am going to wait at the fords of the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me.” **29** Therefore Zadok and Abiathar returned the ark of God to Jerusalem and remained there.



# David Orders Zadok to Return

- Along with his son, Ahimaaz, and Abiathar's son, Jonathan.
- They are to take care of the ark, but they are also to serve as spies in Jerusalem.
- David and his men will “wait at the fords of the wilderness” near Jericho and await word concerning Absalom's plans.



Mediterranean Sea

Nazareth

Capernaum

Sea of Galilee

Jordan River Valley

JUDEAN HILLS

2474 ft

Mt. of Olives ridge

Jerusalem

Bethany  
with Bethphage  
somewhere nearby

Jericho -846 ft

Jericho Road to Jerusalem  
20 winding miles  
(33 km)

LUKE 19 "Jesus...went up into the hills toward Jerusalem."



## 2 Samuel 15:30

**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 Ascends Out of the Kidron

- Jesus will take this same path the night of His betrayal in John 18:1 –

“When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, in which He entered with His disciples.”



## And The Mood Is Clear

- David makes no attempt to hide his distress from his subjects –  
“his head was covered and he walked barefoot”
- Out of sympathy for their king, the entourage does the same.



## 2 Samuel 15:31-32

**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.” **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.



# More Bad News

- Ahithophel is among the conspirators.
- David makes a desperate plea to the Lord to make the counsel of his most trusted advisor “foolishness.”
- And the Lord provides in the form of “Hushai the Archite” who meets David in mourning and ready to serve the king.



## 2 Samuel 15:33-36

**33** David said to him, “If you pass over with me, then you will be a burden to me. **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. **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. **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.”

# Hushai is Sent Back to Jerusalem

- His age may have been a factor here as well, but Hushai is much more useful back in the city.
- Since he was an important member of David's administration, his "support" of Absalom would be considered a valuable asset.
- And his goal is to thwart the counsel of Ahithophel.



# And He Would Not Be Alone

- Zadok
- Abiathar
- Ahimaaz
- Jonathan
- And now Hushai
  - The important distinction being that only Hushai would have a presence in “the king’s house.”



# The Plan

- Hushai would learn, and hopefully influence, Absalom's plans.
- He would then relay that information to Zadok and Abiathar.
- Then the priests would give that information to their sons who would serve as couriers to David.



## 2 Samuel 15:37

**37** So Hushai, David's friend, came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem.

David escapes from the forces of Absalom by the narrowest of margins.

As David disappears over the Mount of Olives, Absalom's army arrives in Jerusalem.



**The Author Wants Us To See**

**That like He was  
early in David's  
reign, the Lord is  
still with David.**



