

## Psalms 41,55 - Betrayal

We have looked at Psalms 113 to 118 as the collection of Psalms that were recited leading up to Passover. Psalm 118 is the culmination of these Passover Psalms and perfectly coincides with Palm Sunday and the Triumphal Entry. So, we know that the Jews were recognizing that Christ was coming as their King in the restoration of the throne of David when they shouted, "Hosanna, blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord." On Palm Sunday the Jews finished reciting Psalm 118 and had no other Psalm to add on because Jesus rode in as King to fulfill that Psalm. They should have taken this Psalm and entered into the next dispensation of the Millennium, but there was a pause here.

The Millennium was put on hold to accommodate another issue: the crucifixion of Christ. It is not as though the Jews had a choice that they were predetermined to get wrong. Neither was it that God had Jesus present Himself to see whether the people were going to get it right or not. God knew all along that the people were going to kill Jesus because He knew their hearts. At the time of the massacre of the innocents when Jesus was born and then all through His three years of public ministry there were efforts to kill Jesus. It's just that they were held back because the timing was not right.

There is nothing more in the set of Psalms for the Passover celebration because Psalm 118 does not anticipate anything more. To get more of what actually *did* happen we have to look to other Psalms. Psalms 41 and 55 prophesied the next event – *the betrayal of Christ*. Next week we will see how Psalm 22 dealt with prophecies regarding *the crucifixion*.

### 1. Ahithophel, the traitor.<sup>1</sup>

Some Messianic psalms involve the entire psalm like Psalms 2 and 22, for example, and some contain a selected portion or set of verses that are Messianic. We have been looking at whole psalms lately, but as we shift gears approaching Easter, we are only going to look at the Messianic parts of Psalms 41 and 55.

Psalms 41:7-9 All that hate me  
whisper together against me:  
against me do they devise my  
hurt.

8An evil disease, *say they*,  
cleaveth fast unto him: and *now*  
that he lieth he shall rise up no  
more.

9Yea, mine own familiar friend,  
in whom I trusted, which did eat  
of my bread, hath lifted up *his*  
heel against me.

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<sup>1</sup> Many parts of this point have been adapted from the post <https://jesusplusnothing.com/series/post/psalm41>

In the context of the entire Psalm, David is unwell and he is discouraged. His enemies are licking their lips thinking that this is the end of him. Yet it isn't the thoughts of his enemies that most trouble his heart. It is the actions of the one who was his friend. This is brought out in verse 9. David has been betrayed. Now I'm not sure if you have ever been betrayed, but betrayed is a very strong word. We could all think of times that we have been let down, disappointed or hurt by friends, family or associates. But betrayed is on a different level. In trying to understand the betrayal of Jesus later on, it is beneficial to study the betrayal that David was initially speaking of in the Psalm: the betrayal of a close friend and counselor named Ahithophel.

Psalm 41 was written about the time that David's son Absalom tried to steal the kingdom away from him. Absalom had been exiled because of killing his brother and had been able to come back home. Instead of living in peace, he worked at stealing the hearts of Israel away from his father. Finally, he made his move:

2Sam 15:10-14 But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron.

11And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, *that were* called; and they went in their simplicity, and they knew not any thing.

12And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, *even* from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom.

13And there came a messenger to David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom.

14And David said unto all his servants that *were* with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee; for we shall not *else* escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword.

Then comes the first mention of Ahithophel. In vs. 12, we see that when Absalom started his rebellion he specifically wanted to get Ahithophel onboard. Ahithophel had been a close friend and confidant to David. He was David's 'go-to' guy. When David needed advice, when he needed a sounding board, Ahithophel was his man. His advice for David and then later for Absalom is described in ch. 16:

2Sam 16:23 And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counselled

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

However, there had been a problem brewing with Ahithophel. He was the grandfather of Bathsheba, which made him the grand-father in law to David. He would have been well aware of how David had humbled Bathsheba and had her husband betrayed and killed in battle. We can imagine that it was not a hard decision for him to turn to Absalom's aid when he had the chance to get even with David. In ch. 15 we see how the story developed. When David heard about how Ahithophel had turned out for Absalom, he prayed for his counsel to be confounded and accepted the help of Hushai to go and defeat the counsel of Ahithophel.

2Sam 15:30-34 And David went up by the ascent of *mount* Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that *was* with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up.

31And *one* told David, saying, Ahithophel *is* among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.

32And it came to pass, that *when* David was come to the top *of the mount*, where he worshipped God, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head:

33Unto whom David said, If thou passest on with me, then thou shalt be a burden unto me:

34But if thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; *as I have been* thy father's servant hitherto, so *will* I now also *be* thy servant: then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel.

When Hushai went to Absalom to offer his full allegiance and service to him as his king, Absalom believed him. In the same way that Absalom had accepted Ahithophel, he trusted that Hushai had also turned against David.

Next, we see how Ahithophel's anger for what David had done to his granddaughter became manifest.

2Sam 16:20-22 Then said Absalom to Ahithophel, Give counsel among you what we shall do.

21And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred

of thy father: then shall the hands of all that *are* with thee be strong.

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

Ahithophel's counsel to commit fornication with David's concubines would look like a power play over David. But it was more than that. It was as though Ahithophel visited David's sin on Absalom. David's fornication had been done in secret, but to David's shame, his son would commit fornication openly for all Israel to see. Ahithophel could have given all kind of counsel, but his first counsel was thrown up in David's face.

Now the story comes to an important stage where Absalom, Ahithophel and Hushai are discussing how they can kill David. Ahithophel gives his advice of taking 12,000 men and pursuing David while he is weak and tired. Hushai says this is a bad plan as David and his men can fight with the heart of a lion and an early defeat would cause all his supporters and subjects to lose heart. He advises Absalom to unite all his followers and lead them, himself, to fight against David. But, Absalom does not take his advice.

2 Sam 17:14,23 And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite *is* better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom.

23 And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled *his* ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father.

Evidently, Ahithophel could see that it was God's intention to confuse his counsel because he went home and committed suicide. By doing so, he avoided having to face David later.

## 2. Judas, the traitor.

We know that these psalm verses are Messianic, prophesying of Judas, because Jesus said so.

John 13:18-22 I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.

The verses from Psalm 55 are similar and are closely related because that

psalm is also based on the rebellion of Abasalom and the confounding of Ahithophel.

We see that Ahithophel is the Old Testament equivalent of Judas. Let's note some parallels:

- We've seen that Ahithophel was one of David's most trusted and closest men, just as Judas was one of only 12 disciples who went everywhere with Jesus.
- David loved Ahithophel - he was like a brother with whom he would share bread in close fellowship together.

Psalms 55:12-14 For *it was* not an enemy *that* reproached me; then I could have borne *it*: neither *was it* he that hated me *that* did magnify *himself* against me; then I would have hid myself from him:

13 But *it was* thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance.

14 We took sweet counsel together, *and* walked unto the house of God in company.

When you read the entire Psalm you see emotions expressed that go hand in hand with being betrayed: pain, anguish, despondency, fear, shock, but what hurts most is that it was a friend. It was someone close, someone trusted. In like manner, we shouldn't think that Jesus was unaffected by the betrayal just because He knew it would take place. We read earlier:

John 13:21 When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

Contemplating the betrayal, Jesus was deeply troubled in spirit. Yet not one of His disciples knew who among them would be the betrayer. Several wondered if it was going to be them. No one thought, "I bet that is going to be Judas." This shows that Jesus treated them all equally and showed love and kindness to Judas right to the very end. Even at the very hour of his betrayal, in the very act when Judas betrayed Him, Jesus called him "friend."

Matt 26:50 And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.

We shouldn't think that just because there was a prophecy of the betrayal that that made Judas some kind of robot. He still had free will. In fact he was given the ultimate privilege of being with Jesus, hearing Him, experiencing the miracles, the changed lives. If ever there was the opportunity for a thief to be

repentant and turn his life around, this was the case of Judas. But, he did not.

- Despite David's friendship, Ahithophel was willing to betray David when the pressure came on.

He was a gun, or in this case, a counsel, for hire. Loyalty meant nothing if swapping sides meant there was something in it for him. Judas likewise looked for opportunities to betray Jesus. He saw that he could gain from it and went through with it. Loyalty didn't come into it. You might hear someone use the phrase "the unkindest cut of all" or "*Et tu Brute?*" or "And you, too, Brutus?" from Shakespeare's play, *Julius Caesar*. It refers to Caesar's death blow at the hand of his dear friend, Brutus.

- Ahithophel spoke to Absalom and advised him to go after David with 12,000 men to do away with him.

This plan was thwarted by God's counsel through Hushai, but Judas *did* actually do this, going out with what is believed to be 500-600 Roman soldiers to arrest Jesus (John 18:3).

- And what of the end for our betrayers?

Ahithophel's plan wasn't followed so he departed, went home, and hung himself. (2 Sam 17:23). In like manner, Judas left the priests, went away and hung himself. (Matt 27:5)

- Even the location where it all played out is the same: the Kidron valley and the Mount of Olives.

The first mention of the Kidron in the Bible is in 2 Sam 15:23 which David had to cross at the time of his betrayal. The last mention is in John 18:1 which Jesus crossed leading up to the time of His betrayal.

- There was a larger context.

This betrayal is a part of a larger betrayal going on by Absalom.

2Sam 14:25-27 But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him.

26And when he polled his head, (for it was at every year's end that he polled *it*: because *the hair* was heavy on him, therefore he polled it:) he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels after the king's weight.

27And unto Absalom there were born three sons, and one

daughter, whose name *was* Tamar: she was a woman of a fair countenance.

Absalom was perfect from head to toe. There was no one like Absalom who was perfect, according to the Bible, with no blemish from the top of his head to the sole of his foot. His beauty stands as a type of Lucifer, the 'light bearer', before his fall.

Eze 28:12-15 Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.

13Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone *was* thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.

14Thou *art* the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee *so*: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

15Thou *wast* perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.

Absalom wanted David's throne.

2Sam 15:1-6 And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him.

2And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was *so*, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city *art* thou? And he said, Thy servant *is* of one of the tribes of Israel.

3And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters *are* good and right; but *there is* no man *deputed* of the king to hear thee.

4Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!

5And it was *so*, that when any man came nigh *to him* to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him.

6And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

Satan wanted God's throne.

Isa 14:12-15 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

13For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

14I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

15Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

Next we read about the method implored by Absalom to usurp the kingdom from David's hands. He started spreading disharmony concerning the king among the hearts of the Israelites. He sowed seeds of discontent in their minds. What about Satan?

Eze 28:16 By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

The Messianic Jew Arnold Fructenbaum explained:

Satan sinned 'by the abundance of your traffic'. This Hebrew expression means 'to go about from person to person or from place to place.' The picture is that when unrighteousness was found in Satan, he went from angel to angel trying to secure their allegiance by slandering God. One third of the innumerable number of angels was convinced by Satan and joined him, but two thirds did not. The specific sin here was the act of slandering God from angel to angel. This act of sin originated from the sin of pride; then the sin of slandering God led to violence. Satan caused violence in Heaven by leading a revolt.'

So just as Absalom started to go from person to person spreading disharmony against the king in his plot to take the kingdom, so this is a picture of the betrayal of Satan who went from angel to angel slandering God to win their allegiance in overthrowing the Most High God.

Absalom's end was to be hang by his hair and slain. Satan's end will be to be cast into the abyss, the bottomless pit.

### 3. Standing by Christ.

As terrible as Ahithophel's and Judas'



betrayal was, it is possible to be worse in a way. Judas wasn't the only one who betrayed Christ, although his betrayal was dastardly. All the apostles denied Jesus. Peter had sworn that he would not deny Jesus, but there he was in the palace of the high priest. At the final cock crow, Peter began to curse and swear:

Matt 26:74-75 ...I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.

75And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

We are familiar with Peter's denial, but I think a lot of people overlook that *all* the apostles had fled earlier in the garden.

Matt 26:55-56 In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.

56But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

Which is worse? The cruel betrayal of Judas who was called the son of perdition and yet had been a familiar friend, or the denial by one who actually *did* belong to Jesus. Before anyone should call someone a Judas, we need to ask ourselves, "Am I a Peter?"

As bad as Peter's denial was, he did not end up like Judas, the son of perdition. Peter ended up in a redemptive moment later when Jesus asked him three times if he loved Him, just as Peter had denied Jesus three times.

How many times do we deny Christ? Three times? Till seventy times seven times? Praise God that Jesus is faithful to forgive us *every* time.

1John 1:8-9 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

When we have the Holy Spirit convicting us about handing someone a tract, when we laugh at that inappropriate joke, when we are rude, when we adamantly refuse to join in worship, when we ignore our brother in need of fellowship...we can go on and on thinking of ways we might deny Jesus. We might not directly deny Christ before men, but Jesus pointed out that it is done all the time when our lives do not reflect His love and holiness.

Matt 25:42-45...I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

43I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

44Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

45Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me.

It has been said that it is easier to get forgiveness than to get permission, so we just go ahead and sin, thinking, flippantly, I'll just get forgiven later on. This is a great presumption that will not end well. With every temptation we need to say, I will stand with Jesus instead of denying Him by my action.

1. Ahithophel, the traitor. Psalms 41:7-9, 2Sam 15:10-14, 16:23, 15:30-34, 16:20-22, 17:14,23
2. Judas, the traitor. John 13:18-22, Psalm 55:12-14, John 13:21, Matt 26:50, 2Sam 14:25-27, Eze 28:12-15, 2Sam 15:1-6, Isa 14:12-15 , Eze 28:16,
3. Standing by Christ. Matt 26:74-75,55-56, 1John 1:8-9, Matt 25:42-45