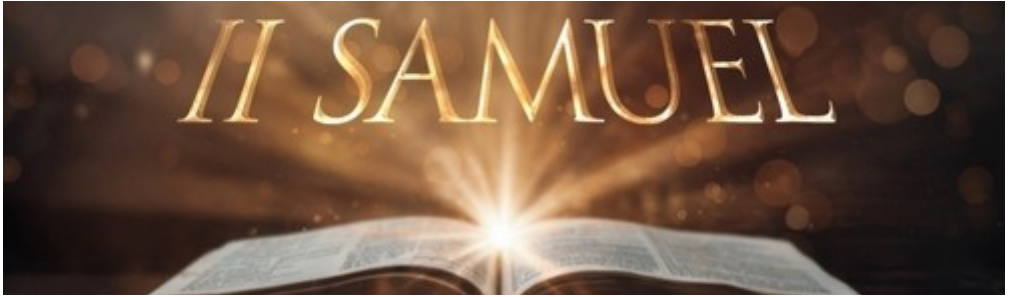


Let's Worship God

20th-25th July 2026

2 Samuel





Monday - 2 Samuel 16:15-23 - A Bleak Picture

Last week we saw the call to be committed to God's king when his cause seems weak. God's king in 2nd Samuel is David - who points us forward to Jesus. The cause of God's king - and his kingdom - really does seem weak. David has been driven from Jerusalem. His son Absalom has claimed the throne. Most people, it seems, have just transferred their loyalty to Absalom. And Ahithophel - David's trusted counsellor - has gone over to the enemy. We've already heard about Ahithophel's betrayal back in chapter 15, when David is told about it. Then we're told here at the very end of chapter 16 that 'in those days the counsel that Ahithophel gave was as if one consulted the word of God; so was all the counsel of Ahithophel esteemed, both by David and by Absalom'. This is a major, major blow. It wasn't simply a case of Ahithophel changing employer. David is not simply one of many possible employers. He's God's chosen king. For Ahithophel to swap David for Absalom was to rebel against God. Ahithophel is moving to where he thinks the wind is blowing. But as we'll see by the end of the week, it was a massive miscalculation. As it is for anyone today who walks away from Jesus out of a desire to be on the right side of history. So Ahithophel's betrayal, his defection, is a massive moment. It's a huge step for him to take. And it's potentially disastrous for David. In the verses that we read, Ahithophel gives Absalom two pieces of counsel. Absalom follows one of them. But if he'd followed both, it would have been the end for David.

Question

1. What mistake has Ahithophel made?

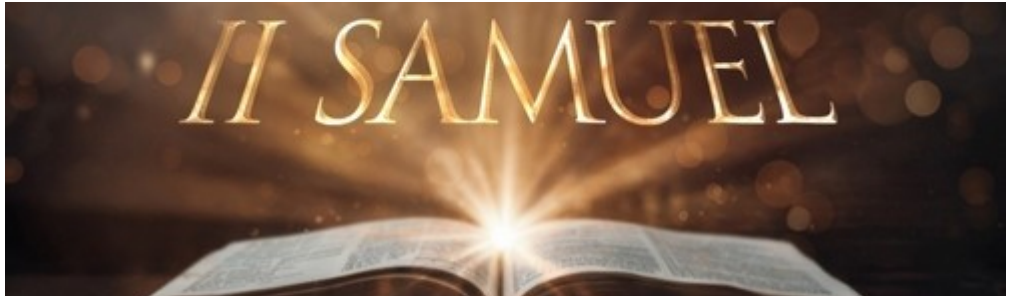
Prayer Points

1. Pray that the nations would acknowledge Christ as king.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved. Psalm 55:22

Praise: Psalm 134B - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Tuesday - 2 Samuel 16:20-17:3 - Ahithophel's Advice

The first piece of advice Ahithophel gives is at the end of chapter 16. Absalom asks him what he should do and Ahithophel replies: 'Go in to your father's concubines'. These are the secondary wives that David had left behind. Chapter 15 tells us that he'd left 10 of them.

When a new king came to power one of the symbolic things they did was take the harem, the wives, of the previous king. Normally, it may just have been a symbolic thing. But for Absalom to actually go in and have relations with these women - and in a way that everyone knew what was happening - was a way of burning his bridges with David. There's no going back now. No prospect of reconciliation.

Yet as readers, the fact that Absalom follows Ahithophel's shocking counsel is actually quietly reassuring. Why? Because what had God told David through Nathan the prophet back in chapter 12? He'd told him: 'I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbour, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun'. Even in the midst of all this sin, God is still at work. Even in the midst of our sinful world, God is still at work. All people can do with all their scheming against God is fulfil his plans.

Don't we see that above all at the cross? Those who put Jesus there are still guilty. But all their sin manages to do is fulfil God's word and advance his plan. In fact, in the second half of verse 3 Ahithophel urges that one man be killed in order to bring peace to the people, or to bring about the return of the people. 'You seek the life of only one man, and all the people will be at peace'. Kill one man and all the people will be at peace. That's what happens on the cross. Just as the Jewish high priest Caiaphas counselled better than he knew when he said about Jesus: 'it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish'. Caiaphas meant it was better than one man should die if it got the Romans off their backs. But Jesus' death actually brought about not simply physical deliverance but spiritual salvation.

Question

1. How do we see evil fulfilling God's plan at the cross?

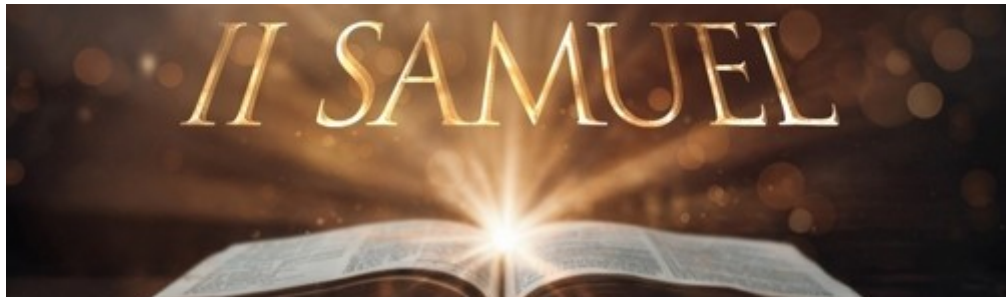
Prayer Points

1. Give thanks that God is sovereign over every situation.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved. Psalm 55:22

Praise: Psalm 55:1-4 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Wednesday - 2 Samuel 16:16-19 - Hushai

Ahithophel's gives his second piece of advice at the beginning of chapter 17. He urges Absalom to let him gather 12,000 men and pursue David that very night when David is weary and discouraged. All he will need to do is attack David, and everyone else will panic. Once David is killed, the resistance to Absalom's rule will be over. The advice seemed right in the eyes of Absalom and all the elders of Israel. That's because it was good advice humanly speaking! If the objective is to defeat David - which it is - then that would have been the best way to do it. Yet there is a double agent in the camp.

Hushai was one of those we looked at last week - at the end of chapter 15. He thought commitment to David looked like leaving Jerusalem. But David told him no - you'll be more useful to me where you are. So Hushai had gone back to the city. Absalom had rightly been suspicious. He asks him in verse 17: 'Is this your loyalty to your friend?' In verse 16 Hushai greets Absalom with the words: 'Long live the king!' Absalom takes it that Hushai is referring to him. But actually, for Hushai, David is still king. So when he says, 'Long live the king', he's probably referring to David - even if Absalom doesn't take it that way. It's the same when Hushai says in verse 18 - 'for whom the LORD and this people and all the men of Israel have chosen, his I will be, and with him I will remain'. Who had God and all the people chosen? David! Even at the end of verse 19 when Hushai says: 'I will serve you'. It's literally: 'I will serve in your presence'. So Hushai never tells Absalom he will be loyal to him, or that he's switched loyalty from David. But without telling a lie he manages to convince Absalom that he's on his side. Because it is always wrong to tell a lie. Unlike Hushai, it seems that the woman in chapter 17 who hides the men in the well does lie. But as Matthew Henry says, although the woman did well in concealing them, 'we know not how to justify her further concealing them with a lie'. 'We must not do evil that good may come of it.'

Question

1. Why is Ahithophel's advice good?

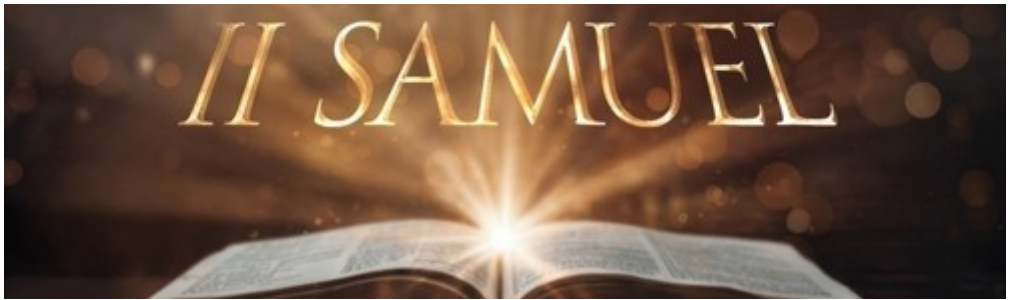
Prayer Points

1. Pray that we would be faithful to do what's right even when it's difficult.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved. Psalm 55:22

Praise: Psalm 55:5-8 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Thursday - 2 Samuel 17:1-14 - The Promises of God

Hushai's advice is bad advice - for someone hoping to kill David. It's deliberately designed to give David a chance to get a breather, and regroup. So why does Absalom ask him for advice in the first place? And why does he take it? It's because of what we're told at the end of verse 14: 'For the LORD had ordained to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, so that the LORD might bring harm upon Absalom.' Hushai uses just enough cunning that Absalom goes with his plan, despite its apparently obvious flaws. For a start, Hushai simply says: 'This time the counsel that Ahithophel has given is not good'. If he tried to deny that Ahithophel was a good counsellor, no-one would have believed him. But the real genius of Hushai's counsel is that he appeals to Absalom's vanity. Absalom is a man who we were introduced to by being told that in all Israel there was no one so much to be praised for his handsome appearance. We're told that he cut his hair at the end of every year - and weighed it. He is a vain man. The weakness of Ahithophel's plan from Absalom's perspective is that it's about Ahithophel, not Absalom. Hushai knows how to stroke egos. And so his counsel, in verse 11, is that Absalom goes to battle in person. How spectacular would that be?! The image of Absalom leading out all Israel, like sand on the sea, is just too attractive for him to turn down. But it will be his downfall. He manages to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. All he had to do was listen to Ahithophel's advice and say 'Yes'. But the LORD had ordained to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel. Because God had made promises about David and his kingdom, and he was going to keep those promises.

God has made even greater promises about Jesus and his kingdom. And he is going to keep those promises too. He has promised, as he did in the days of Daniel, 'that the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed... and it shall stand forever'. So as we look out at our world, with its seething sinfulness, with its rampant rejection of God, we don't need to fear. Because the LORD has ordained that there is one King who will be victorious, and one kingdom which will be supreme.

Often it doesn't look like God is doing very much. Is that not the same in this chapter? God doesn't intervene in a big, spectacular way. All we see is a king asking two different counsellors for advice. There are no lightning strikes. But the Lord had ordained which advice that Absalom would listen to.

Question

1. Why is Absalom's vanity his downfall?

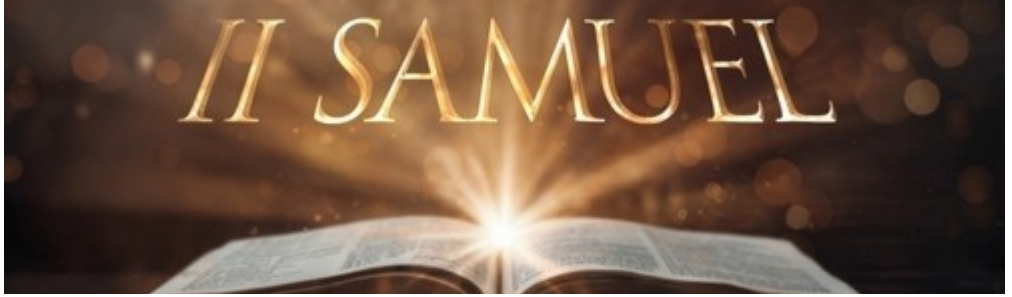
Prayer Points

1. Give thanks that we can trust God's promises.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved. Psalm 55:22

Praise: Psalm 55:9-12 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Friday - 2 Samuel 17:14-23 - David's Judas

It might not seem a big decision for Absalom to take the advice of one of his counselors over another. But as soon as he does, the writing is on the wall for his rebel kingdom. He can't see it. But Ahithophel can. Just as the devil himself knows he is doomed, so Ahithophel knows that the cause he has staked everything on is doomed. That's why he goes home and takes his own life.

Now Hushai doesn't know whether his advice has been followed or not. That's why he urgently has to send a message to David to tell him not to hang around. David needs to get somewhere safe just in case Absalom goes with Ahithophel's plan. But it soon becomes clear that Ahithophel's counsel is not being followed. Absalom's advantage is gone, and it will only be a matter of time before the rebellion is crushed. Ahithophel knows that the game is up. But what he doesn't know is why. As far as Ahithophel is concerned, it's just a human miscalculation on Absalom's part. But as verse 14 spells out for us, the real reason is the sovereignty of God. As a direct result of David's sin, God had warned him that he would raise evil against him out of his own house. That had happened. God had told him that his wives would be given to a neighbour. That had happened too. But God had also made an earlier promise to establish David's kingdom forever. And the time has now come to crush this rebellion. Absalom had put out his hand against the Lord's anointed, and so he will face the consequences. It's impossible not to also think forward to the New Testament Ahithophel - Judas Iscariot. Both were in the trusted inner circle of God's chosen king. Both betrayed him. Both realised that they'd made a massive miscalculation. And both went away and hanged themselves. We'd rather not think about Ahithophel or Judas. But imagine if we didn't have examples like that in the Bible, and then we saw people who looked for all the world like they were on Jesus' side turning from him, and using their God-given gifts and abilities to work against him. We're devastated when we see it, and increasingly we are seeing it. But it would be even worse if we weren't prepared for it by being shown that it's nothing new. What a warning here for anyone toying with going down that track. Because it will only end in disaster.

Question

1. What does Ahithophel realise?

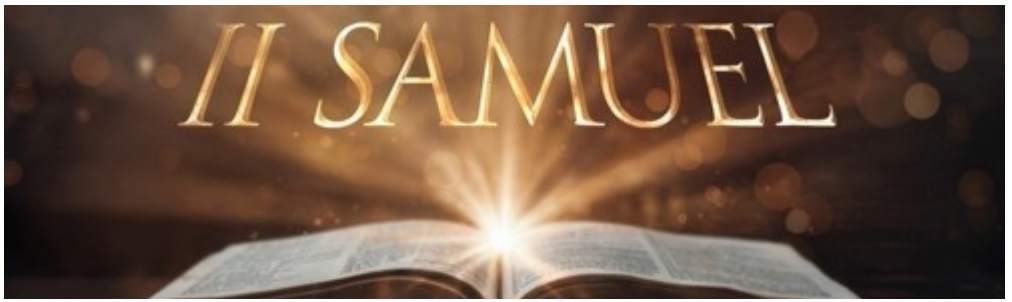
Prayer Points

1. Pray for those who have walked away from Christ, that they would repent and return.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved. Psalm 55:22

Praise: Psalm 55:13-16 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Saturday - 2 Samuel 17:24-29 - Three Encouragers

Praise God that the chapter ends with three people who committed themselves to God's chosen king when his cause looked weak. In verse 27, Shobi is a former pagan, Machir was once loyal to Saul, and Barzillai is senior citizen. But when it matters, we find them here, standing beside God's chosen king. If Jesus were to ask us, as he asked the 12 disciples: 'Do you want to go away as well?' Surely our answer would be that of Simon Peter: 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life'. Notice just as the chapter ends how they don't do anything amazingly spectacular. But what they do is refresh those who are weary in the service of God.

Many professing Christians could be divided into two categories in the church - some are energy suckers - others are energy givers. Some are energy suckers: they're easily offended; you have to walk on eggshells around them. They will only serve or get involved if it's on their terms, or something they're interested in. Their default setting is criticism. Whereas energy givers are the encouragers. Those who realise that their fellow Christians may well be weary, coming from a hard situation, and just in need of a bit of encouragement to keep them going. That might not seem like a big deal. Or perhaps someone might think: Real spiritual Christians don't need encouragement. But it's interesting how often the Apostle Paul highlights those who had refreshed him and other believers. There are things that are mentioned once in the Bible and whole books are written on them. That's right and good - if the Bible says something even once, it's important. But how much do we hear about the ministry of refreshment? When it's so easy. A kind word. An encouraging smile. A small, practical expression of love. People want to do big, spectacular things for God. But little quiet acts of kindness can do immeasurable good in a church. Do you refresh other Christians?

Things may look bleak now - they certainly looked bleak then - but God has a plan. If you want to be on the right side of history, get behind God's true king. And be an encourager, not a discourager, to your fellow believers.

Question

1. How can you be an encourager?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved. Psalm 55:22

Praise: Psalm 55:17-18- See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

**The goal of Let's Worship God is to
encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.**

**God tells us that
Ezra read from
the book of the Law
day after day
and that
the people of God
were filled with joy!**

**Let's Worship God is produced
by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland.**

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