

Lessons from Ahithophel and Judas

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Recorded September 24, 2016

We want to talk today about two men in the Bible, one in the Old Testament and one in the New Testament. The one in the New Testament is familiar to all of us. His name is Judas, and most of us have read and know about him. However, the one in the Old Testament can cause us to stumble and scratch our heads and say, "Who is this guy? I remember the name vaguely, but I don't know remember who he was or what he did." His name is Ahithophel.

With that in mind, let's turn to 1 Chronicles 27:33, and see who this man, Ahithophel, was. This was in the time of David's kingship of Israel.

1 Chronicles 27:33. *Ahithophel was the king's counselor [referring to David, of course] ... (NKJV)*

The Hebrew word for "counselor" means *one who advises or guides*. So obviously, it was a very high position that Ahithophel had because he advised or guided David. The other thing we should take note of was that he was the grandfather of Bathsheba. That might come into play down the road.

So we see here two men; one was an apostle in Christ's inner circle and the other, we will see, was David's closest advisor.

Today we will look at the lives of these two men. We will see that, despite the millennia that separates them, there are amazing similarities between these two individuals. Then we will ask what kind of lessons we can learn from the contrast of these two men, because God does nothing without a reason. Everything God does is for a purpose. The fact that these two men and their stories were included in the Bible, shows that it is there for our learning.

The title of the sermon is:

Lessons from Ahithophel and Judas

We know far more about the life of Judas than Ahithophel. Let's begin in the Old Testament and look at Ahithophel first.

Turn to 2 Samuel, chapter 15. The context is that David is king, and his third oldest son is Absalom. We are breaking into the time when Absalom is attempting to kill his father and take over the kingship from his father. We're not going to read every verse. I will summarize parts of it.

In the first six verses, Absalom begins by seeking favor with the people. He stands out in front of the gates of Jerusalem and if someone presents with a problem, he would say, "Well, if I was king, I would take care of your problem." Or, "If I was king, you would be making more money." Or, "If I was king, you would be paying less taxes, and you would be more prosperous." It kind of sounds like the presidential race today, where whatever you want, they promise it. Absalom was doing the same thing, and we're going to see that he was very successful with this approach. He was undermining his father without his father's knowledge.

Then he came to his father and he lied. He said, "I want to go to Hebron and worship God (verses 7 through 9).

David said, "Of course. You have my blessing."

So Absalom left Jerusalem and then after doing so, he announced that he was now ruling all Israel from Hebron (verses 10 and 11).

Notice what happens next.

2 Samuel 15:12. *And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, even from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. [Notice this] And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom. (KJV)*

Giloh was seventeen miles southwest of Jerusalem where Ahithophel lived. Clarke's Commentary says this about Ahithophel:

When Absalom got him (Ahithophel) he, in effect, got the prime minister of the kingdom to join him.

This was quite a coup for Absalom. The Jewish Encyclopedia says this:

Ahithophel was misled by his knowledge of astrology into believing himself destined to become king of Israel. He, therefore, induced Absalom to commit an unpardonable crime. (Meaning, going against his father).

If the Jewish Encyclopedia is correct (we don't know) then Ahithophel, down the road, would find a way to do away with Absalom, so he could become king. We don't know for sure, but some day we will find out.

The other thing we don't know is whether the incident between David and Bathsheba had an effect on what Ahithophel did as far as turning away from David and going with Absalom. Did it play a role in the decision, because he was her grandfather, and he may not have liked what happened with David and his granddaughter? We don't know.

From verse 13 on, David begins to run for his life. However, notice what comes next, because God provides David with a solution to this insurrection from this rebellion.

31) And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom ... (KJV)

Notice David's reaction. He is praying to God.

31b) ... And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness. (KJV)

The Hebrew word for "foolishness" means to, *turn him into a fool, or to be silly*. In other words, degrade him in the eyes of the Israelites.

In verse 32, God inspires a plan. Remember, David is on the run.

32) And 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: (KJV)

He was mourning the fact that David was on the run, and his son was in a conspiracy against him.

33) Unto whom David said, If you pass on with me, then you shall be a burden unto me: (KJV)

What David was saying is, "If you come with me, I'm going to have to clothe and feed you and be responsible for you, so it adds to my burden.

34) But if you return to the city [Jerusalem], and say unto Absalom, I will be your servant, O king; as I have been your father's servant hitherto, so will I now also be your servant: ... (KJV)

Notice, David is hatching a plan with God's inspiration.

*34b) ... then may you for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel.
35) And have you not there [Jerusalem] with you Zadok and Abiathar the priests? therefore it shall be, that what thing so ever you shall hear out of the king's house, you shall tell it to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. (KJV)*

Then they will report to David.

36) Behold, they have there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz Zadok's son, and Jonathan Abiathar's son; and by them you shall send unto me everything that you can hear.

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

Absalom came back to rule the Kingdom. He pronounced himself king as his father was on the run.

Now notice the following about Ahithophel.

2 Samuel 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. (KJV)*

Webster's Dictionary defines "oracle" as a person regarded as an infallible authority. Talk about credibility. He had the reputation that whatever his counsel was, it was infallible, as if it was coming right from God. Everyone gave him due credit for that, and frankly, put him on a pedestal.

Now Hushai gives Absalom some counsel.

2 Samuel 17:1. *Moreover, Ahithophel said unto Absalom ... (KJV)*

Ahithophel is first giving David some counsel and we will see that it is overturned.

The question was, "What do we do to get rid of David?" So Ahithophel's counsel was:

1b) ... Let me now choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David this night.

2) And I will come upon him while he is weary and weak handed, and will make him afraid: and all the people that are with him shall flee; and I will smite the king [David] only: (KJV)

Ahithophel is trying to aggrandize himself. "Give me twelve thousand men; I will lead them, and I'll take care of David."

3) Then I will bring back all the people to you when all return except the man whom you seek [referring to David, because he would be dead] and all the people will be at peace.

4) And the saying pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel.

5) Then said Absalom, Call now Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear likewise what he says. (KJV)

Now remember, at this point, Ahithophel's counsel was like the counsel of God. So now this is a daunting task for David's friend.

6) And when Hushai was come to Absalom, Absalom spoke unto him, saying, Ahithophel has spoken after this manner; shall we do after his saying? [shall we follow his advice?] If not; speak you. (KJV)

So now God inspires him.

7) And Hushai said unto Absalom, The counsel that Ahithophel has given is not good at this time. (KJV)

That was very wise on his part, because he's going against Ahithophel who has this incredible reputation as being infallible. What he is saying here is that his counsel is good, but it's not good right now. It's not good at this time.

8) For said Hushai, you know your father and his men, that they be mighty men, and they be chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field; ... (KJV)

He's saying, "Your dad is mad at you for what you've done. He's a man of valor, and has many skilled fighters, so you had better beware.

8b) ... and your father is a man of war, and will not lodge with the people. (KJV)

Meaning, "If you follow Ahithophel's counsel and you go after and find the camp of David, David probably isn't going to be there. He will be somewhere else.

9) Behold, he is hid now in some pit or in some other place: and it will come to pass, when some of them [Ahithophel's men] be overthrown at the first, that whosoever hears it will say, There is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom.

10) And he also that is valiant, whose heart is as the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt: for all Israel knows that your father is a mighty man, and they which be with him are valiant men.

11) Therefore, I counsel that all Israel be generally gathered unto you, from Dan even to Beersheba, as the sand that is by the sea in multitude; and that you go to battle in your own person. (KJV)

He is saying, "Absalom, you need to gather all of Israel, not just twelve thousand men, and you need to lead them personally."

12) So shall we come upon him in some place where he shall be found, and we will light upon him as the dew falls on the ground; and of him and of all the men that are with him there shall not be left so much as one.

13) Moreover, if he has gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there be not one small stone found there. (KJV)

That was his plan.

14) And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel. ... (KJV)

This last sentence is a parenthetical sentence. It should be in parentheses.

14b)... For the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom. (KJV)

That was God's plan.

So we see here that God intervened and took care of the situation.

Now after one more event, that we're going to see in a minute, this is all the Bible has to say about Ahithophel. We don't know any more than what we just read, except for this one event that we will cover in a minute. This event that we will cover will reveal much about his character.

Okay, we've seen Ahithophel now and what we know about him. Now let's briefly look at Judas and what we do know about him and his character.

We know that Christ chose all of the disciples.

Luke 6:13. *And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples ... (KJV)*

This is the greater group of disciples.

*13b) ... and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;
14) Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew,
15) Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes,
16) And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor. (KJV)*

Christ wasn't deceived. Christ chose a traitor. We can learn about Judas' birthplace from his name, Judas Iscariot. The Greek "Iscariot" means "Iskariotes," and that means *one who is an inhabitant of Keriath*, which is a small town in southern Judah. We will also see a bit later that he was the son of a man named Simon.

Judas' betrayal was prophesied a thousand years before it actually happened. We will look at one of several scriptures.

Christ knowingly chose a man who would betray Him.

Psalm 41:9. *Yes, my own familiar friend [Christ is talking through the Psalms], in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, has lifted up his heel against me. (KJV)*

Judas was probably good at business or accounting. We don't know for sure, but he wouldn't be given this job unless he was good at one of the two. He was made the treasurer of the group. As we'll see, he had the bag, meaning the bag containing the money. We'll see that in a minute.

So let's look at some verses that speak to the character of Judas. The first characteristic of Judas was that he lacked faith, and the Bible tells us that he never believed. Judas lacked faith in Jesus Christ and who He was, and he never believed Christ.

John 6:64. *But there are some of you [Christ is saying] that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. (KJV)*

The man that betrayed Christ believed not. He did not have faith, and he did not believe.

He was also a thief. In this scripture and the one to follow, we're going to see that two women did a marvelous thing to Jesus Christ to honor Him, but notice the reaction of Judas and the disciples.

John 12:1. *Then Jesus six days before the Passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.
2) There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.
3) Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.
4) Then said one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,
5) Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence [about \$50 today], and given to the poor? (KJV)*

Notice his character.

6) This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bore what was put therein. (KJV)

He carried the money bag, and he had the opportunity, in private, to take money out of the bag, which he did. He was a thief.

Now Christ is talking directly to Judas, who is criticizing what this woman did.

7) Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying has she kept this. (KJV)

So Christ personally corrected Judas in front of everyone. That's going to come into play, and it will reveal something about Judas' character.

Another characteristic that Judas had was that he was selfish and he lacked humility.

Now we come to the second incident of where a woman honored Jesus Christ, and notice the reaction.

Matthew 26:6. *Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper [a different house],*

7) There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head [Mary had previously put it on his feet], as he sat at meat.

8) But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste?

9) For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. (KJV)

Now this is the second time this has happened.

10) When Jesus understood it [He heard what they were saying amongst themselves], he said unto them, Why trouble the woman? for she has wrought a good work upon me.

11) For you have the poor always with you; but me you have not always.

12) For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.

13) Verily I say unto you, Where ever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman has done, be told for a memorial of her.

14) Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,

15) And said unto them, What will you give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

16) And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him [Jesus Christ]. (KJV)

Now why did Judas betray Christ at that very moment? It says that he went right out after this incident. This isn't just a coincidence. Why did he go out right after this incident? One reason is that the first time it happened, Christ rebuked him publicly, and now Christ did it again against all of the disciples and he was included.

He was proud and lacked humility and he couldn't take the criticism, and also he realized that Christ wasn't going to change. God and Jesus Christ are the same yesterday, today, and forever. Now Christ did it a second time, and He leveled the same criticism on the disciples, so Judas realized that this man isn't going to change, so he began to look out for himself.

Another characteristic that we would take well to note is that he did not fight Satan, but rather, he gave in to Satan. He didn't resist Satan.

John 13:2. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him;(KJV)

Now verse 2 tells us that Satan put a thought into Judas. That thought was, "Now is the time. Do it. Hey, this is a perfect opportunity. I can do it."

26) Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it.

And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

27) And after the sop [now notice what happens] Satan entered into him ... (KJV)

Before, in verse 2, it was a thought. Now because he didn't reject the thought, he didn't put the thought away, and didn't turn to God, we see here just a few minutes later, Satan entered into him.

27b) ...Then said Jesus unto him [He was really speaking to Satan], That you do, do quickly. (KJV)

What Judas did could not have happened with one isolated thought. He couldn't have had the thought for the first time and then a few minutes later, go out and betray Christ. This had been building for a long time, and he had the opportunity to reject these thoughts and ideas and provocations from Satan. He had the opportunity to do that, but he chose not to. He did not fight the provocations of Satan.

So now we've seen what we know about Ahithophel, and we've covered the life of Judas. We could have covered it in more detail, but for the sake of time, we hit the high spots.

What we're going to do next is look at the similarities between Ahithophel and Judas. We are going to find that they are very similar men.

1. Both were traitors, and both were disloyal.

This is obvious. Ahithophel to David, and Judas to Christ.

2. Both were deceitful liars.

They both planned their move to betray David and to betray Christ. They planned that while giving the impression that they were loyal. Of course, Christ knows the hearts of all men, but as far as David knew and as far as the other disciples knew, "Hey, he's a loyal guy; he's one of us." So both were deceitful liars.

Here is something to remember. It's very important. The lie is not necessarily in the words. The lie is in the attempt to deceive. We can lie without lying directly, but when we attempt to deceive, overtly or covertly, there is a lie in that. Both were deceptive, therefore, both were liars. So the second point is that both were deceitful liars.

3. They both were prideful and selfish.

Ahithophel took pride in his being called the oracle of God, the one who reveals the mind or the words of God.

Judas took pride that he was the only one of the apostles that had the bag. He was the treasurer. He was given the responsibility of the money, and none of the other apostles were given that job.

So both were proud of their position. So as a result of that pride, guess what; they could not take correction. A prideful person will not take correction. A humble person will realize that they need correction, and they will take it with an open mind. But these absolutely would not.

They both put their interests first. Ahithophel wanting to be king, and Judas wanting money from the bag, wanting power and authority. So both of these men were prideful and selfish.

4. They both followed the popular path.

What do we mean by that? You see, Ahithophel saw that the whole nation was now changing its loyalty from David to his son, Absalom. He saw this gigantic shift. I said earlier that Absalom was very successful in undermining his father. Notice what happens when Absalom is sitting at the gates. "If I was king, I would do this for you, I would solve all your problems."

2 Samuel 15:6. And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment ... (KJV)

He intercepted the people. They didn't get to David, and Absalom began to bring them over to his side.

6b) ... so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel. (KJV)

This did not go unnoticed by Ahithophel. Look at the latter part of verse 12.

12) ... And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom. (KJV)

What Ahithophel did is he followed the crowd. He saw the crowd going over here to follow Absalom, and he thought, "I don't want to lose my position as the Prime Minister of Israel, so I'd better switch loyalty to Absalom."

We've seen now that Ahithophel followed the popular path. He was projecting forward and saying, "Okay, what's best for me and my position?"

Judas did a similar thing in the sense that he saw the increasing attempt to kill Christ, and if Christ goes away, where does that leave Judas?

Turn to John 5:16. We're breaking into the context just after Christ healed the man at the pool at Bethesda, and the Jews of the day were not happy at all with Christ.

John 5:16. *And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath Day. (KJV)*

He healed a man by the pool on the Sabbath, and the Jews were not happy. They weren't seeing the big picture. They weren't rejoicing because a man was healed, but, "How dare you violate the Sabbath!"

17) But Jesus answered them, My Father works hitherto, and I work.

18) Therefore [notice this] the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God. (KJV)

This occurred early in Christ's ministry, and the threats got stronger over time. Judas was aware of these threats, and Judas then began to curry favor with the priests. We read that earlier in Matthew 26:14. He curried favor with them because he knew Christ was going to die; they were going to kill him. Judas wondered, "Where's that going to leave me?" He went to the priests and said, "What are you going to give me? I'll deliver Him to you; I'll be your man." Then he sought the opportunity to betray Christ.

Both Ahithophel and Judas kept their eyes on men and not on God.

5. In the end, they both committed suicide.

I said earlier that we're going to come to a place about Ahithophel that reveals his character, and this is it. Please turn to 2 Samuel 17 and read verse 23. This is after Hushai rebutted the counsel of Ahithophel, and Absalom rejected the counsel of Ahithophel. Notice Ahithophel's reaction at being rejected.

2 Samuel 17:23. *And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his donkey, and arose, and got him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulcher of his father. (KJV)*

Think about this. His counsel was rejected. It's the first time that ever happened. His pride was so great that he couldn't handle it. He couldn't deal with it. He was thinking, "What are they going to think of me because my counsel was rejected?" His pride was such that he just couldn't take it, and he hung himself. No more future, because his counsel was not taken.

Now notice Judas. Let's turn to Matthew 27:1. Christ has been captured. This is the morning after His capture, and now as they say, the rubber begins to meet the road in Judas' life.

Matthew 27:1. *When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death:
2) And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.*

Judas is now seeing the reality of what he had done.

*3) Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he [Christ] was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,
4) Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood ... (KJV)*

Notice their reaction.

*4b) ... And they said, What is that to us? [That's your problem] see you to that.
5) And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. (KJV)*

It's very interesting that both of these men died by hanging. I don't think that is a coincidence. There are many similarities between these two men.

Now we come to the important part. We're going to investigate what lessons we can learn from the lives of these two men. Remember, God put everything in the Bible for a reason, for our learning.

Lesson 1. People can attend God's church and not really believe, and not really be converted.

Ahithophel didn't believe that David was God's anointed king. Judas did not believe that Christ was the Messiah. No one knew about their disbelief before the crisis occurred in each of their lives. None of the other people knew that they didn't believe.

David did not know that Ahithophel was a traitor until Ahithophel made his move. The disciples didn't have a clue that Judas was the traitor. Christ said that one of them was going to betray Him, and they went around the room and they kept saying, "Is it me? Is it me?" Then Judas left the table when he was about to betray Christ, but the disciples

thought he must have business to do because he had the bag. That was in John 13:29. We read that earlier.

The same thing can happen in God's church. People can be involved with the church and not be converted, not be called. People became associated with the Church of God for all the wrong reasons. Some came to church because they had an interest in doctrine (not because they were being called by God). Some came to church because they had an interest in the fact that the man ruled the house. People came into the church for all sorts of reasons.

Let me give you a perfect example. I think I mentioned this a couple of years ago. Dorothy and I lived in Texas from '83 to '86 in Lubbock. South of us there was another church circuit. There was a deacon there that we got to know quite well. He was a bit older than the two of us, but we became good friends. The deacon was telling me one day that this minister, who had been transferred, told him, "I grew up in the church and went to Y.O.U., and my experience in the church as a young kid and a teenager was that if you looked around the church and saw who drove the nicest car and who had the nicest home and who wore the nicest clothes, by and large, it was the minister." He said, "I thought to myself that I should strive to be a minister." He told this deacon that, "Well, to be a minister, you have to go to Ambassador College," so he began to suck up to the local minister when he was a teenager and he studied hard in high school and got good grades, and the minister recommended him to go to A.C., which he did. Then when he got to A.C. and saw of the senior class who were hired into the ministry, he began to study to see what you had to do to get hired into the ministry. So for the next three years he began to lay the groundwork of what he had to do. You need to be president of the Spokesmen's Club or be an officer in your class or to excel in a particular class or be president of this or that club, etc. He said, "I did all that, and when I graduated as a senior, I became a minister and they ordained me and here I am."

The deacon thought about this for a time and then over the next year or two, he noticed that this minister drove a car and wore clothes and had a house that was a good bit above what you would expect on a minister's salary. He also had an airplane, which was kind of over the top in that regard. He wondered about this, but didn't take any action. Over the last year or so, the minister began to be absent at services, and he would give this deacon a tape and tell him to play the tape, because he said he needed to be somewhere else. This went on for about a year until he said, "One Sunday morning, I opened the paper and saw a photo of an airplane sitting on a highway, and there was a headline about the fact that this airplane came down on the highway and that the state troopers closed off the highway. When they looked inside the airplane, they found drugs. They found lots of drugs. They named the pilot, and it was this minister. He wasn't satisfied with the salary that he had as a minister. Now he wanted more, and he used his airplane to be a drug runner. It is obvious that this man was never converted. He did all the right things, but he was never converted.

If you look at the history of the church, we have had murderers, we've had child molesters in the church. Many of them were planted by Satan, and they were never called and never converted.

The lesson for us, you see, is that we need to understand that just because someone attends church does not mean that they are converted.

Another lesson we can learn is that we cannot judge the church by the conduct of some of the people in the church, because they might not be converted. We also know that some people were baptized, and as we know, when we're baptized we are given God's spirit as a grain of a mustard seed. Maybe those people just let it sit for decades, and they never exercised God's holy spirit. They never used God's holy spirit.

So the point of this first example, that people can attend God's church and not be converted, is that we can only control ourselves. We cannot control other people. Therefore, we need to make sure that we are God centered, that our motives are pure and right and righteous before God, and we are exercising God's holy spirit daily. We cannot neglect that, because too many of God's people who have been called have fallen by the wayside. They've fallen by the wayside because they have neglected to exercise the holy spirit. Also, as I said earlier, some were never called. So that is a lesson that we need to learn from these two men

Lesson 2. We can't follow the popular path. We can't follow the way of the world.

We have to remember that this is Satan's world. It is not God's world. God calls Satan the prince of this world. How could it be God's world when He says that Satan is the prince of the world? We find that in John 14:30, as a reference. We also know that in Revelation 12, Christ tells us that Satan has deceived the whole world. Anybody with God's spirit looks around and can see the gigantic deception in the world today, and the immense deception that's going on in the United States and within our government.

You see, the problem is that both Ahithophel and Judas loved the world. Ahithophel loved the worship of the people because of his wise counsel from God. Judas loved money, and look where it got him.

Let's turn to 1 John 2:15, a very familiar scripture, but let's read this in light of looking at these two men and where it got them and the lesson we can learn, that we can't go the popular way. John is so plain. He says:

1 John 2:15. *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world ... (KJV)*

The money, the houses, the cars, the jewelry, and all of that stuff. He says to not love the things that are in the world; the prestige, living in the right part of town, and all that.

15b) ... If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (KJV)

They are mutually exclusive. You can't love the world and love the Father. If you love the Father, you will not love the world. It's a very important principle going forward.

16) For all that is in the world [and these three phrases cover it all], the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life ... (KJV)

Ahithophel and Judas had all three, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. All of that is not of the Father, but it is of the world. That is what we should run away from with all the speed we can muster. I pray daily that these three things don't enter into my life, because we cannot allow that to happen or Satan has got us, and we are headed in the same direction as Judas and Ahithophel. Our job is to be pure and clean in God's eyes.

Let's turn to James 1:27. You probably know where we're going here. The subject is pure religion, and if we want to know what pure religion is, we need to pay attention to this verse.

***James 1:27.** Pure religion and undefiled [not polluted] before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction ... (KJV)*

That means to look after those who are less blessed than we are. Those that have problems and troubles. Look after them. And, this is what we do for ourselves:

27b) ... and to keep himself unspotted from the world. (KJV)

Back in the 1800's and early 1900's, in cities when men were a bit more chivalrous, the men would escort a woman down a sidewalk or boardwalk and they would always stay to the outside, the street side. Back then sometimes you had open sewers running down the streets, and there were horses and wagons and stagecoaches and early cars driving down those streets with all open sewers, and all the stuff that comes out of horses when that is the prime mode of transportation. So the man always shielded the woman by doing that. Women wore long dresses in those days, and sometimes they would hike them up, and the whole purpose was to be unspotted from the garbage that was coming from the curb. This is a good analogy, because we're supposed to be unspotted from the world. We don't want one spot from all of the garbage coming from the curb and the gutter. How can you be clean and pure if you have one spot? You can't.

So our job is to be unspotted. We can't go the way of the world. The way we do that is to not follow the popular path, not follow the way of the world.

Lesson 3. We must never ever lie or be deceitful.

You see, both of these men not only lied, but they were deceitful. They pretended to be loyal when they were not, therefore, they were liars. Ahithophel never openly said, "I'm

going to betray you.” Or, “I’m plotting behind the scenes to betray you, David.” He never said that. He pretended to be loyal and remember, there is the lie.

The lie is not necessarily in the words. The lie is in the attempt to deceive. In that regard, both of them appeared to be loyal, but they were deceitful, and therefore, they were both liars.

Let’s turn to Revelation 21:8. This is from the New King James. Notice the future of liars and hence, deceivers.

Revelation 21:8. *But the cowardly [the King James says fearful], and unbelieving ... (NKJ)*

Neither one of those men believed.

8b) ... and the abominable, and murderers ... (NKJ)

Remember, we can murder in our minds, Christ said.

8 continued) ... the sexually immoral ... (NKJ)

We can be sexually immoral in our minds.

8 continued) ... the sorcerers, and idolaters ... (NKJ)

We can be idolaters in our minds if we put anything in front of God.

8 continued) ... and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. (NKJ)

The sad thing, for me anyway, that in counseling over the years; perhaps marriage counseling where there have been disputes and problems, I have had one or both look me in the eye and directly lie to my face. That is despite the fact that God is there.

Matthew 18:20. *For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them. (KJV)*

So when I start counseling, generally I will say, “Look, the three of us are here together (if Dorothy is there, the four of us), let’s understand that God and Christ are here right in this room as we are talking. God and Christ know the truth. Nothing is hidden from either one of them. So when we talk here today, it is of no use if you’re not forthcoming or not telling the truth. Otherwise we go nowhere, but more importantly, we are lying right before God.”

So the point of this third lesson is that we cannot be deceitful. We cannot lie. God already knows. We must never be deceitful or lie. We have to be clean and pure in this matter.

Lesson 4. We must be loyal and faithful to God and Christ and the words that they have recorded in the Bible.

Christ never did anything to Judas. He did nothing to cause Judas to betray Him or to be disloyal. It's the same with David to Ahithophel; he didn't persecute Ahithophel. Yet look what they did.

In our age, I think one of the lessons we've learned, if anything, with the break-up of the Worldwide Church of God and all that came out of it, is that we must be loyal to God and Christ and not to a man or an organization. We just can't be.

Let's turn to 1 Corinthians 11:1. What Paul says here, there is a caveat about following men.

1 Corinthians 11:1. Be you followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. (KJV)

The Greek word for "followers" is Strong's 3402, and it's the Greek word "mimetes." We get the English word "mimic" from that. The Greek word means *an imitator*. Paul is saying, "Imitate me to the extent that I imitate Christ." The other side of that coin is, if I'm not imitating Christ, don't imitate me. If I'm not following God's word, if I'm not following the example of Christ, don't mimic or imitate my conduct. The New King James says, *imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ*. We follow and imitate men and women only as they follow God and Christ. And I have learned a lot from many women. So we imitate men and women to the extent that they follow God and Christ, but our loyalty is to God and Christ, not to a man or an organization.

Lesson 5. Once difficult times begin, our spiritual strength and commitment is revealed.

God allows difficult times to come our way as a test to reveal to him our commitment and our strength.

You see, Ahithophel changed his loyalty when the trouble started, and Judas began plotting once he figured out that people were trying to kill Jesus Christ. So the lesson for us is that we need to prepare ourselves now for the times when things really get bad.

Let's go to Proverbs 24:10. This is a principle that we need to think about now while times are relatively good and prepare ourselves going forward.

Proverbs 24:10. *If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small.* (KJV)

None of us want God and Christ to say to us as we stand before them, "Your strength was small. You did not overcome. You caved in, just like Ahithophel and Judas."

So this fifth lesson is that, in the future, God is going to test our spiritual strength. He's going to test our commitment and we had better be ready. Life is good now, but it's not going to stay that way. This country is on shaky ground.

Lesson 6. If we follow the examples of Ahithophel and Judas, we will be committing suicide, just as they did.

Let's go to 1 Corinthians 6:9. Paul is writing this to a church that allowed a horrible sin in their midst, and they allowed it in the spirit of accommodation and openness like we see today. Anything goes as long as we love the Lord, etc. In this verse, Paul is setting them straight.

1 Corinthians 6:9. Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived ... (KJV)

Remember, who deceives the world?

9b) ... neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind [homosexuals],

10) Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers [abusive], nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

11) And such were some of you ... (KJV)

And such were some of us. You see, too many attend God's church and they don't believe this plain scripture. They think there are exceptions, that you can get around this somehow.

Now if you put 1 Corinthians 6:9 with Revelation 21:8, which we read earlier, and you put them all together, this is what it says: In the Kingdom of God, God will not have the sexually immoral. That means the fornicators, the adulterers and the homosexuals. They're not going to be in God's kingdom. Also, if you put these two verses together, thieves, the covetous, the drunkards, the abusers, the extortioners, the cowardly, the unbelieving, the abominable, the murderers (that includes murder in the mind) the idolaters (that includes idolatry in the mind) the sorcerers, and all liars will not be in the Kingdom of God.

It reminds me of a quote of an R.O.T.C. instructor, Col. Gerald Wellman, and he's talking about the military. He says, "We don't necessarily discriminate, we simply exclude certain types of people." That applies to God and the Kingdom. Anybody that He calls can get into the kingdom. He is not discriminating, but He is going to exclude certain types of people, and those types of people are the ones that we just read about.

So the lesson here is: now is the time for us to make ourselves pure through the exercising of God's spirit, because the end is very close. It's much closer than we think.

Lesson 7. God intervenes and He takes care of us. (This is the good news.)

God brought David and Hushai together to counter the counsel of Ahithophel, and he gave Hushai favor in Absalom's eyes and Ahithophel was overthrown.

Judas' betrayal didn't interrupt God's plan. It was part of God's plan. God's will was done at the end of the day despite what Judas did.

The point is that David was taken care of, the apostles were taken care of, and we can be taken care of today if we just do God's will and we please God. God will always intervene with us no matter the difficulty.

We know in 1 Corinthians 10, where we are told that God is faithful, He won't suffer us to be tempted above what we can take, what we can endure, above what we are able, but He says, "With the trial I will make a way of escape."

Sometimes God strengthens us in a trial so we can handle the trial. He doesn't change the trial, but He gives us the strength to be able to handle it. Other times what God does is reduces the trial so that we can handle it. If the trial is too much, then He will ratchet it down so that we can handle it. Then other times, God allows us the chance to escape the trial, meaning the trial goes away. He just takes it away somehow. With Absalom, he died. He was gone, and it was over with. So sometimes God allows us to escape the trial by removing the trial. Other times God allows us to escape the trial by our own death, and that is a blessing, because God allows us to be at peace. God allows us to have no more pain and suffering in our lives and we await the resurrection. Sometimes God allows that.

So the lesson here is that God will always intervene, and He will always take care of us. Maybe not the way that we want, but it's what is best for us, always.

So let's conclude now. One thing we need to always remember is that God does everything for a reason. Therefore, everything in the Bible is there for a reason.

Today we've looked at the lives of two men, and there are amazing similarities between the two. We've seen some lessons, (there are many others, of course) and we can learn from their examples. But you see, these lessons are there for all time. They've been there since the Bible was written; they've been there for centuries. They are specifically there for us today because we are getting closer and closer to the end.

Therefore, let's all learn these lessons that God shows us from His word. They are there for a reason. Let's learn from the examples of Ahithophel and Judas.