

# REDACTED

Dear Friends:

Daniel found himself in a perilous moment where spiritual intimacy determined life or death. Daniel 2:18 says, "...that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon." Verse 47 documents the answer, "The king answered Daniel, and said, 'Truly your God is the God of gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret.'"

God loves to challenge our unbelief and provoke us to growth. You are probably like me in that we have never considered ourselves capable of approaching Daniel's depth of relational anointing. Great intimacy describes Daniel's divine relationship resulting in a national impact.

What Daniel did under the Old Covenant should be common under the New. Paul explains a normative church experience in First Corinthians 14:24-25, "But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is judged by all. And thus the **secrets** of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you."

Revealing secrets through relational intimacy is supposed to be a continual flowing stream. Perhaps our problem is tradition, which draws a dramatic distinction between clergy and laity. This religious unbiblical distinction must bow before Matthew 11:11, "'Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one grater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.'" The least of us under the New Covenant have deeper relational access to God than the greatest prophet under the Old. God wants to release this stream from intimacy. Are we asking?

Yours in Him,

Al Houghton

# W O R D A T W O R K

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Spiritual Intimacy

## THURSDAY, May 1

Scripture: Amos 3:1-8

Amos 3:7 says, “Surely the Lord God does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.” It sounds exciting to have God show you secret things; whether they be future happenings, moves of the Spirit, or motivations of those making current events. The Hebrew word for secret is **sobe**; it means “A couch or cushion intimating sitting together. **Sobe** portrays friends in conversation or men of My intimate circle.” The Lord does nothing unless He speaks first to men and women of His intimate circle. Verse 8 says, “A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord God has spoken! Who can but prophesy?” We can postulate and dream about all the glory involved in having the Lord reveal His secret things, which is often the case in Charismatic circles, but it is a real trap to get caught up in what is being revealed, while bypassing the appropriate parallel character development. God has an intimate circle of individuals with whom He converses and shows things to come. Qualifying to walk in that place is perhaps one of the most interesting things we can ever study. The intimate circle of the Lord is not just determined by prophetic calling, but by individual hunger of the heart. The different prophecies about the war in Iraq have provided some clues to the degree of intimacy attained by the prophets. It appears there is room to grow!

## FRIDAY, May 2

Scripture: Amos 3:1-8

The context of verses 7 and 8 needs consideration, because it reveals divine purpose in the sharing of secret things. Verses 1-6 are obviously a rebuke; “Can two walk together unless they are agreed?” The answer, of course, is “No.” The progression begins by God saying, “I have known you in covenant, but the days of our walking together are rapidly coming to an end.” “Will a lion roar...when he has no prey? Will he cry out...if he has caught nothing? Will a bird fall except there is a snare? If a trumpet is blown...will not the people take notice?” The sobering part of verses 1-6 is the realization that part of God’s intimate counsel deals with warning, judgment, and sometimes a demanded response. God showed the prophets what He was going to do in order that they might warn Israel, hopefully bringing repentance and averting the prophesied judgment. In most cases, the people did not listen. Is that scenario being repeated on a larger scale in our nation today? As God’s prophetic voice, we cannot be silent in the face of a Supreme Court imposing a parade of national “Ahab” policies. The Church must develop intimacy in order to confront in God’s wisdom, as demonstrated by Samuel, Elijah, Elisha and Isaiah. Our day is fast approaching.

## SATURDAY, May 3

Scripture: Deuteronomy 29:1-9

In this chapter, we see Moses functioning prophetically by calling Israel to account and reminding them of the covenant in which they walk. The covenant was based on God’s power. They saw the power of God in manifestation bringing freedom and deliverance, but leaving them utterly without excuse in following God’s

directions. He gave them a measure of victory in conquering Canaan, but much of what the Lord wanted to do was not accomplished. Once again Moses reminded them, “The time has come to walk in the covenant.” If they did, they would prosper in everything. God, in great measure, renewed His covenant with multitudes during the Charismatic renewal, called us to be doers of His Word during the Faith Movement, set us free in laughter and impressed us with the necessity to repent in Brownsville. There is an interesting parallel, easily recognizable, between where we are in our generation, and where they were when Moses spoke these words. God is coming to touch a nation, will we qualify to participate?

#### SUNDAY, May 4

Scripture: Numbers 24

There is a pattern beginning in Numbers 24 that we would do well to observe because it forms the foundation for a spiritual pattern which may well dominate the latter days. God had covenantally blessed Israel and Balaam was a prophet who was hired by an enemy to curse Israel. Three times he attempted and three times he ended up blessing Israel by the word of the Lord. He did earn the blood money by what he taught. Balaam taught the enemy to allure Israel into breaking their covenant with God through sin. This failure would neutralize the covenant resulting in judgment. Judgment would enable Israel’s enemies to win victories. The adversity and set-backs Israel encountered should have been a sign to them of the necessity for repentance, but Israel often did not see God’s hand in their circumstances. Every situation should be discerned through intimacy. When Ahab was given victory it was not because of his righteousness; he, in fact, deserved judgment. He was given victory because of what the *enemy was saying* about God. Remember what the 9-11 hijackers *said* as they slammed into the World Trade Center, “God is great and His one true prophet is Mohammed.” Since God has shown a willingness to give an undeserving covenant nation who was primarily identified with Him, victory, even though they did not deserve it *because of the deception proclaimed by the enemy* what should we now expect? Prophetic intimacy allows us to speak God’s word often in contradiction to apparent circumstances thereby correcting premature pharisaical judgment. Until we develop in that dimension we probably won’t have the impact on the national conscience that is so desired.

#### MONDAY, May 5

Scripture: Numbers 25

Numbers 25 teaches God’s path to peace is often through war. This is something that needs to be taught and must be understood by Christian leadership since so many seem to oppose war in any dimension, at any time and place. Contrary to popular spiritual opinion, God is not opposed to war. He has actually initiated it numerous times in Scripture. He is the author of war for the purpose of judgment and restoration of purity. When Israel joins themselves to heathen nations through their moral lapses, they deserve judgment. God’s judgment through a plague begins to fall on the people. Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, who is zealous for the Lord, follows Zimri and the Midianite woman, Cozbi, into the tent and there the priest executes an act of war and runs both of them through with a spear. What is interesting is God’s response. Verses 11 through 13 state, “Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned back My wrath from the children of Israel, because he was zealous with My zeal among them, so that I did not consume the children of Israel in My zeal. Therefore say, ‘Behold, I give to him My covenant of peace; and it shall be to him and his descendants after him a covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel.’” What can we say about a God who gives a ***covenant of peace*** to a man who kills two people with a spear at one time and then proclaims it an awesome act! This is a picture of who God is, how He thinks and how He operates! For those Christians who oppose all war – wake up and smell the Bible. There is no reason to cling to poor teaching or walk as biblically ignorant, diminishing intimacy so few consider listening to you. When God rewards Phinehas with a ***covenant of peace*** and gives the Levites the priesthood because of an act of war – that shows you who God is, how He thinks, and how He operates! The God of the Bible is a God of war! And how will we ever understand the prophecies of Revelation if we don’t understand **WHO GOD IS?!** The GOD of war, not the *suffering Servant* – is returning!

## TUESDAY, May 6

Scripture: First Timothy 2:1-4 Romans 13:1-4

In First Timothy 2:1-2 we are told, “Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.” We are to pray for our kings and leaders that we may lead a peaceable life. How do we lead a peaceable life when there is rampant evil? What do those leaders have to do to restore peace? Romans 13:4 tells us, “For he (that is our leader) is God’s minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.” As Christians we have a calling that biblically mandates the prayer and intercession for our government that they will have the wisdom to know when to go to war and to go in such a way as to bring peace so that people may know the LORD. No other nation has been used in the last hundred years on the international scene like America in fulfilling these verses. A Christian needs to be praying, supporting and understanding that God is a God of war, He ordains war and now we have an obligation for a harvest. If we had understood this in the aftermath of WWII, we would have sent the thousand missionaries that General McArthur requested and Japan today would probably be a Christian nation! Let’s not miss our opportunity in the Middle East. It may not last long but it’s certainly open at this stage and we all are praying God will give us the full measure of harvest. Psalm 2:8 says, “Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations....” For years we’ve been led to pray for the 10-40 Window and now there is a beachhead right in the middle of it. It came through war! It’s time for the missionaries to do their work.

## WEDNESDAY, May 7th

Scripture: Deuteronomy 29:10-18

The true spirit of the Levitical priesthood emerges in war whether physical or spiritual. The mercy and grace of God extends for a season to those who have walked away inviting them to re-establish relationship. Repentance and restoration have always been God’s preference for His people. He is, indeed, a reluctant judge. Nevertheless, after many years and numerous opportunities when repentance and restoration have been refused, judgment inevitably comes. Moses cried out, “...that you may enter into covenant with the LORD your God, and into His oath, which the LORD your God makes with you today, that He may establish you today as a people for Himself, and that He may be God to you, just as He has spoken to you, and just as He has sworn to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” The Lord once again extended a covenant of life, peace, and blessing. Verses 14 and 15 say, “I make this covenant and this oath, not with you alone, but also with him who stands here with us today...as well as with him who is not here with us today....” The covenant promises and truths of God extend beyond the initial generation dealt with in any given passage of Scripture. The Bible clearly portrays God as One who continually extends to us the opportunity to return and establish a covenant of peace.

## THURSDAY, May 8

Scripture: Deuteronomy 29:19-28

God makes one principle very clear: judgment flows whenever people turn from His covenant. He leaves a witness and a testimony so nobody can walk in the imagination of his own heart, as verse 19 says, and may bless himself saying, “I shall have peace, even though I walk in the imagination of my heart – as though the drunkard could be included with the sober.” Is the Church full of this? How can ministers be against a war of liberation? What would Jesus do? Verse 20 illustrates God will not spare those who walk in such stubbornness of heart. He guarantees judgment and a separation between those who walk in obedience, and those who walk in stubbornness, in order that there might be a witness in the earth of the magnitude of difference between those who serve God and those who do not. The war made the differences clear. *Issues*

*reveal hearts.* God says the judgment on sin can be so severe that people are removed from the land, or conquered as they begin to lose wars because God's blessing has departed!

#### FRIDAY, May 9

Scripture: Deuteronomy 29:1-29

This whole passage becomes a very great warning to Israel, and ends with the statement of verse 29, which is a teaching in itself. "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." What a dividing line we are given in this verse. "The secret things belong to the Lord our God..." meaning He holds revelation (in all its manifestations) in reserve for future generations, but when He reveals things to us, it is for a specific reason. The reason is that we might do what He shows or reveals. It is one thing to get excited about moving into a place where God is sharing with you His secrets, but it is quite another to realize what it is going to cost! Whatever the Lord shows you, you are going to have to do it, or come under the penalty described for disobedience. Revelation knowledge has a price tag few seem to consider. You are obligated to do what you have understood or seen, and it would have been much better to have never heard it, than once revealed, not to do it.

#### SATURDAY, May 10

Scripture: Matthew 12:22-45

Jesus was casting out a devil, which became a sign unto the people, and a dividing line for the scribes and Pharisees. Many of the people recognized Jesus as Messiah through this deliverance, but the scribes and Pharisees attributed the miracle to the work of the devil. In verse 38 they demanded a sign, but Jesus told them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and you will have only one, the sign of Jonah." Then He began to use Jonah, and Jonah's generation as an example. "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise in the judgment against this generation...along with the queen of Sheba," for one reason; they heard the word that was preached in their generation and did it. But the Pharisees heard the word preached from One who was greater than Jonah and Solomon, but still were not doing it. Jesus said, "Therefore you will be seven times worse off, and your last state will be worse than your first." Very clearly it would have been much better for that generation to have never heard the word of God, than once they had heard it not to do it. This is the spiritual law which governs revelation in the kingdom. When a person rejects a word God gives in season, they always end up much worse off by not doing it than if they had never heard it in the first place. With this principle in mind, do you still want to participate in the intimate circle of God's secrets – knowing the potential price? You are not accountable for what you don't know.

#### SUNDAY, May 11

Scripture: First Corinthians 14:18-25

The early Church walked in the Spirit and lived in a realm where God's secrets were continually revealed within the local assembly, according to First Corinthians 14. Concerning the issue of praying in other tongues, versus prophecy, it was quite obvious Paul felt the Holy Spirit should be in such manifestation through the Church that when unbelievers entered, the saints would prophesy and "...reveal the secrets of hearts." The evangelistic outcome would cause a visitor to "...fall on his face, worship God, and report that God is truly among you." How many unbelievers are falling down and reporting "God is among you" when your church meets? Is First Corinthians 14:25 a reality in the church-life where we attend? Is such a personal relationship with Jesus being developed, as a result of attending our churches? If prophecy is not coming forth revealing the very secrets of men's hearts and unbelievers are not reporting with assurance, "God is among you," then are we just playing church?

## MONDAY, May 12

Scripture: Revelation 19:10

“The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” We know that statement goes well beyond just claiming Jesus as the Lord of our life, and testifying to a personal relationship with Him. Very few people who are saved and testify Jesus has been made Lord of their lives move in the degree of the prophetic that First Corinthians 14 declares. Many have the ability of praying in other tongues, but very few have the experience of First Corinthians 14. Many can say they walk in faith, but still do not have the personal manifestation of verses 24 and 25. The testimony of Jesus is more than being a kingdom builder, or a person of great faith, or speaking in other tongues. The testimony of Jesus has to be woven into our lives as we walk in obedience and develop a track record of spiritual integrity. We should never forget there is an open invitation to be people of His intimate circle, and yet remember all the while the price tag of taking such a seat. The price tag involves absolute obedience and death to the flesh to the uttermost. Jesus lived a life of absolute obedience, and as we commit and begin to walk in that dimension, ever greater revelation of the secrets of the Lord will begin to pour forth upon our lives.

## TUESDAY, May 13

Scripture: Matthew 13:34,35

As we consider the personal ramifications of the testimony of Jesus releasing the spirit of prophecy, one verse in Matthew 13 speaks volumes. It is Matthew 13:34 which is the fulfillment of a promise in Psalm 78, “I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.” God held secrets in His own intimate circle of the Godhead which were only revealed in the fullness of time when Immanuel was manifested in the earth. Is it possible that He has held other secrets in reserve for the generation that winds up the age; secrets of His power, which when released will produce the greatest harvest the earth has ever seen? I hear God calling many to qualify and be a part of receiving the secrets of the Lord in the end times. It is obvious from Scripture that many are called but few qualify. The testimony of Jesus has to be birthed in us releasing the prophetic reality described in First Corinthians 14:24 and 25. We may have a short distance in days to cover miles in the Spirit to stand in the place where the early Church stood. God promised the end times Church would do an even greater work!

## WEDNESDAY, May 14

Scripture: Proverbs 11:13

How do you qualify to walk in God’s secrets? Proverbs gives us abundant insight into the necessary preparation: “A talebearer reveals secrets, But he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter.” One of the first things we have to demonstrate in order for God to feel comfortable sharing secrets with us, is that we don’t share them indiscriminately with everyone we see. In order to qualify for God’s inner circle where He shares His secrets, we have to be a people who learn to control our tongue. We have to have a heart for concealing the sins of others, rather than broadcasting them from one end of the country to the other. We must discipline our flesh and learn how to conceal those things which come across our path that might create divisions or strife within the Body. A sure sign of maturity is when we learn to conceal the things that are whispered in our ears, rather than immediately broadcasting them to everyone we know. Where do we stand when maturity is measured by such a yardstick?

## THURSDAY, May 15

Scripture: Proverbs 19:11

Proverbs 19:11 takes us one step further than Proverbs 11:13. Proverbs 19:11 in the Living Bible states, “A wise man restrains his anger and overlooks insults. This is to his credit.” Not only must we learn to use divine discretion, as led by the Holy Spirit in guarding what God reveals, but with equal care be slow to anger

and overlook insults. This is true forgiveness as we learn to extend the same grace to others that Jesus extended to us. By living accordingly, we qualify for participation in future outpourings. When we learn to extend the same grace we want extended to us, in a measure we begin to qualify for the secrets of the Lord. Such qualification should become a very high priority during this season.

#### FRIDAY, May 16

Scripture: Proverbs 20:19

“He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets; Therefore do not associate with one who flatters with his lips.” There is a very definite progression in the Proverbs we have read. Proverbs 11:13 says, “...he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter,” while Proverbs 19:11 shows us we must be “...slow to anger, And it is to our glory to overlook a transgression.” Moving then to Proverbs 20:19 we are told, “...not to associate with one who goes about as a talebearer revealing secrets;...and flattering with his lips.” In order to qualify for God’s secrets we are not to even associate with those who speak gossip *in* the Church. That spirit seems to jump on people and we find supernatural help in telling everything we know and ultimately sowing more strife, division, and disunity, when God demanded the opposite. How easy it is to move across the line and become part of the enemy’s team when we are dealing with these issues. God is calling us to grow up and be a people of maturity.

#### SATURDAY, May 17

Scripture: Proverbs 3:31,32

In many things, we are being forced to choose! The Hebrew word for *choose* here is *backer*. It expresses choices with eternal consequences. A good example is Lot who shrewdly chose the better land, and then discovered the glitter of economic gold cost him his family. The secret of the Lord is with the upright who chooses to walk with God and refuses all the ways of the evil one. Significant eternal choices are going to be made in this very crucial and pivotal year! I believe before the year is over we are going to see some of the fruit of making godly choices.

#### SUNDAY, May 18

Scripture: Genesis 13:9

Abraham said in verse 9, “Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left.” The day of final obedience to what God had spoken in the beginning for Abraham had come, and now it was time for separation. Lot made his choice based strictly on what appeared to be the best circumstances financially for a herdsman. Verse 11 says, “Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other.” Anytime we make a choice or a judgment based strictly on financial gain, we set ourselves up for real catastrophe. Lot is a key example in Scripture. The potential to make great sums of money and raise a significant number of good livestock was definitely there. The only problem was the presence of a parallel corrupt seed that would destroy his family. Jesus spoke to this issue often, “You cannot serve God and money.” Lot certainly proved what the price tag was when he set financial goals ahead of everything else. Jesus even said of the end times, “Remember Lot’s wife.” Lot lost his wife because he chose the wrong place to live! Walking with God in these days demands we seek only what God desires and stay away from what our flesh desires – it could be a matter of life and death!

#### MONDAY, May 19

Scripture: Luke 17:20-23

The Pharisees asked Jesus a question, “When will the kingdom of God appear?” In this passage Jesus said, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation, or great displays in the natural, nor will they say,

‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.” “Then He said to the disciples, ‘The day will come when you will desire to have Me accessible again. Many will come and say, ‘you can find Him here, or you can find Him there,’ but don’t go off with them.’” This is a great introduction to a spiritual truth Lot learned the hard way. The kingdom of God within us is the territory over which the king rules. The disciples were dependent on Jesus doing everything for them, spiritually speaking. They had to grow out of dependence on Jesus in the flesh and into reliance on the leadership of God that would dwell within them. Almost everyone experiences this transition. When we are young we tend to look to our own pastors, or those with a great anointing, or national visibility, for direction and guidance, as the disciples did Jesus. A major transition must develop until we become totally dependent upon the One who dwells within. This is the primary source of divine safety for the Church in the end times. Are we growing and moving in that direction and is the place where we go to church preparing us properly to walk before the Lord in such a manner? The answer to these questions has eternal repercussions for each one of us.

#### TUESDAY, May 20

Scripture: Luke 17:20-37

Jesus told them that just “...as it was in the days of Noah (and Lot) so also will it be in the days of the coming of the Son of Man!” The very same climate spiritually, physically, and financially, will be operational in the last days, and the choices we make will have the same repercussions as those Lot made. If we make our choices based on the same criteria as Lot, we are setting ourselves up to miss God’s blessing and to be adversely impacted by the spirit of the age in which we live. “Remember Lot’s wife.” The irresistible pull of **things** caused her to turn back toward the world, and in the process violate the very covenant God extended; ultimately experiencing the appropriate judgment. Are we growing in our ability to choose God’s path? Disregarding the divine preparational season could result in a salty experience.

#### WEDNESDAY, May 21

Scripture: Luke 17:20-37

Right after Jesus said, “Remember Lot’s wife,” He reiterated the principle which He preached continuously in the three and a half years He was on the earth. “Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.” Violating this principle became the basis for which Lot chose all the land that was before him. He chose it based on economic gain, personal blessing, and self-promotion. But because his choice was based on satisfying self, the choice resulted in the destruction and loss of his family. There is a terrible price that is paid whenever we are not willing to fully advance into the principles God outlines in His Word. If we continually seek our own blessing and advancement and never learn the service motivation as outlined in verse 33, we too will wake up one day and find our life in total disarray because we made the wrong choices. He who seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever is willing to lose it for God’s will, purpose and plan – will, in fact, preserve it!

#### THURSDAY, May 22

Scripture: Psalm 55:12-14

Perhaps one of the best ways to become motivated to walk in God’s intimate circle and protect our heart, keeping the access gained, is to study one who had it and lost it. Such is the case of a man named Ahithophel, who David refers to in Psalm 55. This Psalm was most likely written while David was running for his life and during the season he was deposed of his throne in Jerusalem at the hands of his own son, Absalom. Speaking of his best friend and counselor (Ahithophel), David said, “For it is not an enemy who reproaches me; Then I could bear it. Nor is it one who hates me who has magnified himself against me; Then I could hide from him. But it was you, a man my *equal*, My *companion* and my *acquaintance*. We took sweet *counsel* together, And walked to the house of God in the throng.” The word for “sweet counsel” in the Hebrew is the same word for “secrets” meaning “We were companions in the intimate circle of God’s secrets, equal in anointing and brothers



in the Lord.” David speaks of a man he considers his own equal, who has the same anointing he has to discern and receive revelation and direction from God. Over and over again we are told that by wise counsel one makes war and so prospers, attaining victory. Ahithophel was one of the wise counselors of David and helped him on numerous occasions discern the perfect will of the Lord and act accordingly, consequently David received victory after victory as everything he set his hand to prospered.

#### FRIDAY, May 23

Scripture: Psalm 55:15-23

What was it that caused Ahithophel, the leader in intimacy, to turn his back on David, and become part of the conspiracy? Verse 21 gives us some insight into the impact this had on David. “The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, But war was in his heart; His words were softer than oil, Yet they were drawn swords.” In verse 23 David prays a declaration, “But You, O God, shall bring them down to the pit of destruction; Bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; But I will trust in You.” The sting of betrayal rings all through this Psalm, as David cries out to God and does his best to roll his care over on the Lord. The root of Ahithophel’s action gives us great insight as to what God looks for in order to qualify us for membership in His secret counsel. To continue receiving in the last days, we must forgive betrayal at every level.

#### SATURDAY, May 24

Scripture: Second Samuel 15:1-16

Absalom starts his conspiracy by stealing the hearts of the men of Israel and organizing a rebellion. With a great plan for self-advancement, he takes over the kingship of all Israel. Amazingly enough, in verse 12, we are introduced to one of the chief conspirators, “...Ahithophel the Gilonite...” who has also been deceived by Absalom. How could the leader of intimacy be deceived? What was it that turned Ahithophel against his best friend – David? Ahithophel died as a result. Self-promotion, manipulation, and rebellion are going to have a distinct and equally severe judgment in the end times. Ministries full of self-promotion are under the hand of God right now, and are progressively beginning to lose their anointing. Absalom characterizes a shooting-star ministry who moves out in the flesh, and by so doing climbs to the very pinnacle, but the success they apparently enjoy is empty, short-lived, and always contributes to the destruction of those deceived by their evil ways! What failure forfeited great wisdom?

#### SUNDAY, May 25

Scripture: Second Samuel 15:16-37

If there was ever a man who gives us an example of being willing to lose his life – it’s David. Verses 25 and 26 point that out graphically. The priests who love David have brought the ark, which signifies the presence of God. But David says, “Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me back and show me both it and His habitation. But if He says, ‘I have no delight in you,’ here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him.” David totally commits himself into the hands of God during this rebellion, betrayal, and uprising. If he loses the kingdom, so be it! As far as he is concerned, he is willing to put himself into God’s hands. Immediately, in verse 31, when David finds out that “Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom,” he says, “O Lord, I pray, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness!” That shows us the high respect David has for the intimacy of Ahithophel. The Lord says when we are willing to lose our life we will find it, and He deals accordingly with David. David embraces God’s standard when he says, “if the Lord delight in me” which is not always easy, for the flesh tries to rise up and do things in the natural.

## MONDAY, May 26

Scripture: Second Samuel 16

One of the first things Absalom does, after he takes Jerusalem, is to enquire of Ahithophel, “Give counsel as to what we should do.” Ahithophel tells him, “Go in to your father’s concubines, whom he has left to keep the house; and all Israel will hear that you are abhorred by your father. Then the hands of all who are with you will be strong.” By doing this Absalom signifies to every living person in Israel he fully intends to occupy and keep his father’s position. There is no turning back after such an activity. In addition, Absalom’s action fulfills a prophecy which God had given to David immediately after his sin with Bathsheba. What he did in secret God said, “I will do openly before the sun and all of Israel.” Verse 23 is a key verse for it tells us of the magnitude of the secrets of the Lord that Ahithophel walked in: “And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he gave in those days, was as if one had inquired at the oracle of God. So was all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom.” How can you improve on that intimacy? There was no one who moved in a greater magnitude of the secrets of God, in those days, than Ahithophel. His counsel was sought near and far and he was held in great esteem by the king. He was the first one Absalom turned to, showing that he also had a great appreciation for the word of the Lord in the mouth of Ahithophel.

## TUESDAY, May 27

Scripture: Second Samuel 17:1-14

Once again Absalom asks Ahithophel first for his counsel. After Ahithophel gives it, Absalom turns to another counselor of David’s, Hushai. David had asked Hushai to go and try to defeat the counsel of Ahithophel. Hushai did just exactly that, and his counsel appealed to Absalom because God had determined to destroy those involved in the rebellion. This passage very clearly shows that, if a king wanted victory in those days, he listened to the counsel of Ahithophel. Ahithophel had the word of the Lord and stood in the secrets of God. How is it that a man of such anointing, perception, and insight would be found among the conspirators against David? How can we protect intimacy?

## WEDNESDAY, May 28

Scripture: Second Samuel 17:15-29

Verse 23 records what happened when Absalom chose the counsel of Hushai over that of Ahithophel. “When Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his donkey, and arose and went home to his house, to his city. Then he put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died; and he was buried in his father’s tomb.” Why did Ahithophel hang himself? Surely one who moves in such divine revelation would also know the end of the matter, unless there was an open door blinding Ahithophel’s eyes. How could he have missed the surety of Absalom’s defeat? This is a very sad end to the great life of one who walked before God with such anointing that everyone knew when they got his counsel it was as if God Himself was speaking. How is it a man with such anointing not only can be found with the conspirators, but also wind up dying as a result of making the wrong choices. What was it that blinded his eyes and opened the door to sure destruction?

## THURSDAY, May 29

Scripture: Second Samuel 23:34; 11:3

Second Samuel 23:34 tells us the family tree of Ahithophel, “Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maacathite, Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite.” Ahithophel had a son named Eliam. Second Samuel 11:3 says, “So David sent and inquired about the woman. And someone said, ‘Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?’” Some scholars believe this is the same Eliam who was the son of Ahithophel, and it certainly would make sense and show us why Ahithophel felt the way he did. David’s personal failure in adultery brought reproach upon Ahithophel’s own family. David took Ahithophel’s granddaughter in adultery and murdered her husband. The little girl which Ahithophel blessed, watched grow

up, and probably had a helping hand in her marriage was suddenly violated and totally reproached throughout all Israel by the actions of the very one he was serving. This brings us to an issue of critical importance in the Church today. How do you deal with the sin of leadership when you are in their congregation, or involved in their ministry? Prevailing wisdom teaches: pack your bags and leave. Unfortunately for Ahithophel that path produced death and destruction. We need to realize God's heart is for restoration. Ahithophel was apparently so hurt, embittered and wounded that he worked at bringing a judgment upon David; which would have much better been left to God. How many times do we cut our own throats, spiritually speaking, when we enter in and begin to operate in these same principles? We would be wise to become a people who seek restoration and repentance and let God do the judging. Can you ever look at the sins and shortcomings of leadership and forgive as God does? Your future anointing and life may depend on it.

#### FRIDAY, May 30

Scripture: Psalm 25:12-14

In this passage we begin to see the fear of the Lord taught as a strong foundation for all we do. "Who is the man that fears the Lord? Him shall He teach in the way He chooses. He himself shall dwell in prosperity, And his descendants shall inherit the earth. The *secret* of the Lord is with those who fear Him, And He will show them His covenant." When the fear of the Lord governs our actions, God guarantees we will walk in the secret of the Lord and that He will reveal His covenant to us. Walking in the fear of the Lord means we have to lose our life concerning emotional upset and criticism over the failure of others, becoming a force for repentance and restoration. It is only when we are willing to lose our life that we really find it!

#### SATURDAY, May 31

Scripture: Daniel 2:28-29

Daniel 2:28-29 state, "But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these: As for you, O king, thoughts came to your mind while on your bed, about what would come to pass after this; and He who reveals secrets has made known to you what will be." Daniel saw the last days and spoke about the increase in knowledge and rapid travel. He said, "Those who know their God shall be strong and do exploits." If there is an issue of "having not because we ask not" perhaps it's time to ask for revealed secrets to save lives from terrorism. God has answers for what we face in realms we have yet to access. It is time to ask the "revealer of secrets" for access into the inner counsel room where innovative solutions await those who refuse to be hindered. The quest is on!

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