

Recognizing Usurper 1of2

The King and the People Series

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What We Will Learn

- Sub series on recognizing a usurper
- God chooses ruler for the people
- Through two-step process
 - God selects a person to be ruler
 - The people elect the ruler chosen by God not knowing he/she is God's anointed
- A person that becomes ruler without one of the steps is a usurper

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What We Will Learn cont'd

- Absalom as usurper example
- Declared himself ruler without authority
 - Did not receive authority of God
 - Proclaimed authority from the people without receiving the authority
- Things will not go well for a usurper
- 2 Samuel 7:1-16
- 2 Samuel 15 and 18

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Rulership Conferred by God

- God's message to David through Nathan
- He chooses ruler for his people
- Chose judges that ruled Israel before Saul
- Chose Saul but rejected him later
- Chose David
- Will choose David's offspring to succeed him
- And establish his kingdom forever
- 2 Samuel 7:4-16

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2 Samuel 7 (NKJV)

4 But it happened that night that the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying,

5 "Go and tell My servant David, 'Thus says the Lord: "Would you build a house for Me to dwell in?"

6 For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought the children of Israel up from Egypt, even to this day, but have moved about in a tent and in a tabernacle.

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2 Samuel 7 (NKJV)

7 Wherever I have moved about with all the children of Israel, have I ever spoken a word to anyone from the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?' "

- God declares through this message that he gave rulership authority to those that ruled over his people

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2 Samuel 7 (NKJV)

8 Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: "I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel.

9 And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who are on the earth.

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2 Samuel 7 (NKJV)

10 Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously,

11 since the time that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies. Also the Lord tells you that He will make you a house.

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2 Samuel 7 (NKJV)

12 "When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.

13 He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

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2 Samuel 7 (NKJV)

14 I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men.

15 But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you.

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2 Samuel 7 (NKJV)

16 And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever." ' ' "

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Implications of God's Message

- God chooses ruler for his people
- A ruler not chosen by God
- Is illegitimate before God

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Absalom Example

- Sought to succeed father as king
- Without father's approval
- Sought recognition and support of the people
- Promised them whatever they wanted
- Consistently for four years
- Declared himself king
- Drove his father David out of Jerusalem
- 2 Samuel 15–16 [Selections read in session]

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Absalom Cultivates Support

- Absalom made himself look like a king
- With a chariot and horses
- And fifty men to run ahead of him
- He would stand by the road to the city gate
- Greet people and discuss their cases
- Promised to help them if he were judge
- Consistently for four years
- 2 Samuel 15:1–6

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2 Samuel 15 (NIV)

1 In the course of time, Absalom provided himself with a chariot and horses and with fifty men to run ahead of him.

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2 Samuel 15 (NIV)

2 He would get up early and stand by the side of the road leading to the city gate. Whenever anyone came with a complaint to be placed before the king for a decision, Absalom would call out to him, "What town are you from?" He would answer, "Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel."

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2 Samuel 15 (NIV)

3 Then Absalom would say to him, "Look, your claims are valid and proper, but there is no representative of the king to hear you."

4 And Absalom would add, "If only I were appointed judge in the land! Then everyone who has a complaint or case could come to me and I would see that they receive justice."

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2 Samuel 15 (NIV)

5 Also, whenever anyone approached him to bow down before him, Absalom would reach out his hand, take hold of him and kiss him.

6 Absalom behaved in this way toward all the Israelites who came to the king asking for justice, and so he stole the hearts of the people of Israel.

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Absalom Moves to Hebron

- Convinced David to let him move to Hebron
- 2 Samuel 15:7–9

2 Samuel 15 (NIV)

7 At the end of four years, Absalom said to the king, “Let me go to Hebron and fulfill a vow I made to the Lord.

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2 Samuel 15 (NKJV)

8 While your servant was living at Geshur in Aram, I made this vow: ‘If the Lord takes me back to Jerusalem, I will worship the Lord in Hebron.’”

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

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Absalom Declares Rebellion

- Declared himself king in Hebron
- Joined by a force of 200 men
- That did not know why they joined him
- And Ahithophel, David’s adviser
- 2 Samuel 15:10–12

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2 Samuel 15 (NIV)

10 Then Absalom sent secret messengers throughout the tribes of Israel to say, “As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpets, then say, ‘Absalom is king in Hebron.’”

11 Two hundred men from Jerusalem had accompanied Absalom. They had been invited as guests and went quite innocently, knowing nothing about the matter.

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2 Samuel 15 (NIV)

12 While Absalom was offering sacrifices, he also sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David’s counselor, to come from Giloh, his hometown. And so the conspiracy gained strength, and Absalom’s following kept on increasing.

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Insights from Absalom

- A usurper could capture rulership
...Absalom declared himself king and won widespread support in Israel
- Builds support by emphasizing and riding on society negatives
 - Declares lack of justice in the society
 - Declares himself best at recognizing and solving the problem
- 2 Samuel 15:1–4

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2 Samuel 15 (NIV)

1 In the course of time, Absalom provided himself with a chariot and horses and with fifty men to run ahead of him.

- Used advantage of being a prince to present himself to look like a king

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2 Samuel 15 (NIV)

2 He would get up early and stand by the side of the road leading to the city gate. Whenever anyone came with a complaint to be placed before the king for a decision, Absalom would call out to him, "What town are you from?" He would answer, "Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel."

- Introduced himself as a concerned citizen

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2 Samuel 15 (NIV)

3 Then Absalom would say to him, "Look, your claims are valid and proper, but there is no representative of the king to hear you."

- Declares there is lack of justice because the king does not care and has not provided any mechanism for delivering justice
- Presents himself as recognizing and understanding the problem

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2 Samuel 15 (NIV)

4 And Absalom would add, "If only I were appointed judge in the land! Then everyone who has a complaint or case could come to me and I would see that they receive justice."

- Declares existence of a problem
- Declares himself best suited to solve the problem
- Set off wave of dissatisfaction for him to ride

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Insights from Absalom cont'd

- Usurper will cheat and trick to capture power
 - Absalom lied to father David about why he wanted to move to Hebron
 - Tricked 200 men into joining him to start a force of fighting men for his rebellion
- 2 Samuel 15:7–11

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2 Samuel 15 (NIV)

11 Two hundred men from Jerusalem had accompanied Absalom. They had been invited as guests and went quite innocently, knowing nothing about the matter.

- Usurper will trick people into working for his/her purpose without understanding they are doing so

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Insights from Absalom cont'd

- Usurper has no respect for due process
 - Absalom desired to succeed father as king
 - Did not respect father's say in the matter
 - Was 3rd of father's several sons
 - Respect for due process would mean serving close and loyal to his father and ready to accept father's decision
 - Instead he opted for violent overthrow

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Insights from Absalom cont'd

- Recovering power from a usurper will be difficult and expensive
 - David planted spies in Absalom's government
 - Organized army against Absalom-led Israel
 - David's army defeated Israel
 - Killed several in the battle
 - Absalom also was killed
 - 2 Samuel 18 [Not read in session]

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What We Learned

- A person needs authority of God and authority of people to become legitimate ruler
- One that becomes ruler without authority of God is a usurper: illegitimate ruler
- Usurper's methods include
 - Instigating dissatisfaction to ride to power
 - Cheating and tricking others
 - Disrespect for due process
- Retaking power from usurper is expensive

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