

2nd Samuel Chapter 17

V: 1-4 Ahithophel, David's former friend and closest counselor gives instruction for the next phase:

- Having already counseled Absalom to take David's concubines – a deplorable act of defiance and disrespect now counsels Absalom on how to kill David.
- Get him while he's weary and weak handed. The enemy always seems to attack when we are tired, weary, and hungry.
- Ahithophel suggests that he will personally lead the men that will kill king David.
- This shows the depth of bitterness and hatred on Ahithophel's part, and it reveals the author of it. Why was Ahithophel so bitter?

2 Samuel 23:34 Ahithophel had a son by the name of Eliam.

2 Samuel 11:3 Eliam had a daughter by the name of Bathsheba.

- David committed adultery with Ahithophel's granddaughter Bathsheba and it was never dealt with in a Biblical way.

Ephesians 4:27 “Neither give place to the devil.”

Hebrews 12:15 “Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.”

“I will” 4 X's: Just like what Satan declared:

Isaiah 14:13-14 ¹³“For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the North: ¹⁴I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.”

- We have to be careful what we do with the bitterness that we are exposed to, not to take it in or embrace it – it just leads to death.

Ephesians 4:31-32 ³¹“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: ³²And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.”

V: 5-13 Absalom wants to hear the counsel of Hushai – David's friend who has feigned loyalty to Absalom.

1. Hushai first states that Ahithophel's counsel is not wise at this time.
2. Hushai reminds the people of what they already know, that David is a fearsome fighter and leader – not to be underestimated or taken lightly.

3. Don't take a small group of only 12,000 men, if they are defeated it will melt the heart of the nation.
4. Take the whole army, gather everyone – from Absalom's perspective this will be an overwhelming military force that will outweigh David's mighty men of valor.
5. Gathering the whole nation will take time which will buy David time to escape or plan a counter attack.
6. Hushai appeals to Absalom's vanity stating that he / Absalom should lead this mighty army. Never mind the fact that Absalom has never been in a battle or led a military campaign large or small, he is at best a novice with no experience: an army led by a fool.
7. Absalom leading this army draws him away from the protection of Jerusalem into the open field where he will be vulnerable.

V: 14 Ahithophel's counsel is rejected:

David declared:

Psalm 31:13-14 “¹³For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life. ¹⁴But I trusted in thee, O Lord: I said, thou art my God.”

- Absalom and all Israel receive the counsel of Hushai over Ahithophel – because the Lord over rode Ahithophel's counsel, that He might bring evil upon Absalom.

Psalm 33:10 “The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: He maketh the devices of the people of none effect.”

V: 15-22 David had already laid the groundwork for Hushai, Zadok, and Abiathar to work together as the 5th column in Absalom's court.

- Hushai relates to the priests what is transpiring, they in turn send their sons Jonathan and Ahimaz out to warn David.
- After brief stops in En-Rogel, which is just on the outskirts of Jerusalem where the Kidron and Hinnom valleys meet, then to Bahurim which is a small village just over the Mount of Olives on the way to Jericho, Jonathan and Ahimaz avoid Absalom's men and warn David to get moving, which he does.

V: 23 Ahithophel realizes that his counsel has been rejected by Absalom and by God, he understands at this point that defeat is certain and hangs himself.

- Sadly, Ahithophel's fate parallels the fate of Judas Iscariot:
- Judas was one of the 12, part of that inner circle of trusted friends who ate at Jesus' table, they went in and out of the Temple together – then he betrayed Jesus with a kiss.

David expressed his broken heart:

Psalm 55:12-14 “¹²For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have born it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: ¹³But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. ¹⁴We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company.”

Matthew 27:5 “And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

V: 24 David reaches Mahanaim, which is near Peniel by the River Jabbok, and Absalom is crossing the Jordan near Jericho.

V: 25-26 Absalom makes Amasa his general over the army, those left behind when David fled Jerusalem.

- Amasa = “Burden”, he was actually one of David’s nephews.
- Abigail is David’s sister, Nabash is another name for Jesse, David’s father – so Amasa is her son, David’s nephew.
- Absalom and the army of Israel camp out in the area of Gilead.

V: 27-29 News travel’s fast! This is like the 3 wise men that come to the king with gifts... one is an Ammonite / former enemy, the other two are elders in their tribe who help the king, knowing that David will be victorious.

1. Shobi the son of Nahash, his brother was Hanun who shaved the beards and cut the garment of David’s servants (2 Samuel 10). David waged war against the Moabites and personally took the crown off of his brother’s head.
 - When he saw David in trouble he could have said, “me, help David – get real” – but he didn’t.
2. Machir was the man who hid and cared for Mephibosheth for many years. He could have said “it’s someone else’s turn to help” – but he didn’t.
3. Barzillai as we’ll see in a chapter or two was 80 years old – he could have said “I’m too old, I’ll let the younger ones do it.” – but he didn’t, they each saw a need and they jumped in.
 - Beds to rest in, basins to wash in, earthen vessels to drink out of, and lots of food – God’s generous provision.

Psalm 23:4-5 “⁴Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. ⁵Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.”

- David is going through hard things, but God is still there taking care of him.

2 Samuel Chapter 18

V: 1-5 David starts to get organized, he appoints Joab, Abishai, and Ittai the Gittite; each designated to lead a 1/3 of David's army / supporters.

Shobi the Ammonite and Ittai the Gittite:

Proverbs 16:7 "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

- Several thousand people followed David into exile, it would be no small operation to support and direct them.
- David is urged not to go directly into the battle himself.
- These same leaders in the sight of their troops are given specific direction to "deal gently" with Absalom – it's almost a forgone conclusion that David will be victorious.

Romans 8:31 "What shall we say then to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"

V: 6-8 We see David's experience as a warrior, he takes the initiative and takes the battle to Absalom, engaging them in the Forest of Ephraim.

- 20,000 men of Israel, of Absalom's forces are killed – and more by the forest / by God than by the sword of David's men.

Psalms 24:8 "Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle."

V: 9-13 Absalom in his attempt to get away on a mule ends up caught up in a tree, hanging by his beautiful hair, again God's miraculous intervention. Absalom's hair was a source of pride to him.

Proverbs 16:18 "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."

- One of Joab's soldiers reports seeing Absalom hanging helplessly in a tree, and Joab rebukes him for not killing Absalom.
- The un-named soldier tells Joab that no amount of reward would be enough to touch one of the king's sons, especially after his public command not to harm him.
- This soldier astutely notes that Joab would just as easily put him to death for disobeying the king – was probably quite true.

V: 14-15 Joab indicates that there is no time to lose, he grabs three spears or arrows and runs quickly to kill Absalom, having thrust him through, Joab's personal guard strike Absalom as well, killing him.

- Joab is a sly character; Absalom's death went from "I did it" to "we did it" to "they did it".

V: 16-17 They threw his body in a deep pit and put a great heap of stones on him.

Deuteronomy 21:18, 21 ¹⁸"If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them:" – ²¹"And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear."

- With Absalom dead the rebellion dies with him and there is no sense in further blood shed so Joab sounds the trumpet allowing the rest of Israel that had been with Absalom to escape, and the fighting stops.
- Both Ahithophel and Absalom share the same fate, hanging from a tree;

An OT truth repeated in the NT: (Deut. 21:22-23)

Galatians 3:13 "... for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

V: 18 Prior to all of this Absalom had erected a pillar or monument to himself so that people would remember him after he was dead, due to the fact that all of his sons had died before him without children to pass on a legacy to.

- (Pictures) Absalom's tower can still be seen in the Kidron Valley to this day.

V: 19-23 Ahimaaz is eager to get news to the king of their victory, but that also means telling David that his son is dead.

- Joab wisely doesn't allow Ahimaaz and his enthusiasm to be the one to tell the king this bittersweet news, he seems to be trying to protect David, or perhaps Ahimaaz. David was known for killing the messengers who brought news of Saul & Mephibosheth's deaths.
- Joab assigns Cushie the task of telling the king of what he has seen, with no attempt being made to soften or cover up what he's done in dealing with Absalom.
- Ahimaaz still wants to be involved and asks to be able to run also, which after receiving Joab's permission he overtakes Cushie and gets to David first.

V: 24-32 David is waiting at the gate, eager to hear how the battle has gone. The watchmen are watching and waiting for the same thing.

- The watchman recognizes Ahimaaz, then Cushie as they approach; the king expects good news.
- Ahimaaz wants to deliver the good news; but lies when asked about Absalom.
- Cushie is more honest and when asked about Absalom indicates that he wishes all of the king's enemies were as dead as Absalom.

V: 33 David grieves over Absalom; no matter what the circumstances, the death of one's child is certainly a grievous thing.

- When David's first son with Bathsheba died, David washed himself and put on clean clothes; he didn't mourn for the child noting that he and this child would one day be re-united in heaven.
- Yet for Absalom David grieved bitterly; Absalom was a rebellious, un-repentant, un-regenerate son. David probably sensed that he had lost his son for all eternity – which was the real source of his grief.

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- David has now lost 3 sons since his adultery with Bathsheba, he had pronounced a four fold price for his sin, he won't live to see the 4th son that will die in an attempt to take the throne, but he is paying a grievous painful price for his sin.
 - In this midst of all of this we have the father, the king – who had every reason to hate his rebellious child; yet his love was never diminished, he was willing to forgive, and because of his love he was willing to die in his rebellious child's place:

Romans 5:8 “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

- What David could not do for his son, God would do for each of us – He would die in our place so that we might live for eternity.

John 3:16-17 “¹⁶For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. ¹⁷For God sent not His Son into the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.”