

2 Samuel Chapter 17 Commentary

2Sa 17:1 ¶ "Moreover Ahithophel said unto Absalom, 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 only: 3 And I will bring back all the people unto thee: the man whom thou seekest is as if all returned: so all the people shall be in peace. 4 And the saying pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel."

Ahithophel gives council of how to kill King David only, and thus bring all Israel together under Absalom's rule. This council was truly the best way to quickly usurp the throne, for there had not been a gathering to King David yet of his faithful followers.

However, we remember that King David prayed to God to overthrow the council of Ahithophel. Neither Absalom nor Ahithophel are men of God, and God will hear, and answer, the prayer of King David, who is a man after his own heart.

Ahithophel wanting to lead the attack seems to be politically motivated, giving him the opportunity to usurp the kingdom for himself. He seems to want to be more than a counselor, or else he is a glory seeker.

5 "Then said Absalom, Call now Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear likewise what he saith. **6** And when Hushai was come to Absalom, Absalom spake unto him, saying, Ahithophel hath spoken after this manner: shall we do after his saying? if not; speak thou. **7** And Hushai said unto Absalom, The counsel that Ahithophel hath given is not good at this time. **8** For, said Hushai, thou knowest thy 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: and thy father is a man of war, and will not lodge with the people. **9** Behold, he is hid now in some pit, or in some other place: and it will come to pass, when some of them be overthrown at the first, that whosoever heareth 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 knoweth that thy 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 thee, from Dan even to Beersheba, as the sand that is by the sea for multitude; and that thou go to battle in thine own person. **12** So shall we come upon him in some place where he shall be found, and we will light upon him as the dew falleth 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 be 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."

Absalom calls for Hushai to give council. God uses Hushai's council to overthrow the council of Ahithophel in answer to King David's prayer. This also puts Absalom in charge of the army, and he will get the glory if they win, not Ahithophel. This cuts out any rivalry that may have been brewing. It also puts Absalom in the right place for the providence of God to squelch this insurrection. It will lead to Absalom's death of which we will speak more later.

Hushai reminds Israel that King David is a mighty man of war, and he will already be prepared to defend his position. He points out the weakness of men's hearts and how they will flee before King David and his valiant men. He points out that King David and his men will be filled with raging fury when they meet in battle, as a bear robbed of her whelps.

14 "And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom."

We are told here that God has evil intentions against Absalom. Why? Because in his insurrection against God's anointed and appointed king, Absalom has risen in insurrection against God himself. We know that Absalom has not at any time called upon the Lord in all his mischief, wherefore, we can deduce that Absalom has no faith in God, and he is trusting in his own strength.

What a sad thought. Knowing all the things that God has done for his father, Absalom regards them as nothing, which indicates that Absalom is an imbecile.

15 ¶ Then said Hushai unto Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, Thus and thus did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel; and thus and thus have I counselled. 16 Now therefore send quickly, and tell David, saying, Lodge not this night in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily pass over; lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that are with him. 17 Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by Enrogel; for they might not be seen to come into the city: and a wench went and told them; and they went and told king David. 18 Nevertheless a lad saw them, and told Absalom: but they went both of them away quickly, and came to a man's house in Bahurim, which had a well in his court; whither they went down. 19 And the woman took and spread a covering over the well's mouth, and spread ground corn thereon; and the thing was not known. 20 And when Absalom's servants came to the woman to the house, they said, Where is Ahimaaz and Jonathan? And the woman said unto them, They be gone over the brook of water. And when they had sought and could not find them, they returned to Jerusalem."

As we see in this text, Ahithophel's council was good and would have worked, however, it is appointed of God to overthrow Ahithophel's council by God. This is another reason for us to be reminded: God has not taken the kingdom from King David, for he has answered King David's prayer to overthrow the council of Ahithophel. God has not given the throne to Absalom, and God will not allow him to overthrow King David. God is using Absalom to fulfill his judicial judgment against David.

Hushai sends word to King David of what is going on. A lad sees the informers leaving and lets Absalom know. They search for them, but God keeps them safe, to preserve King David, and to bring to fruition his designs of evil against Absalom.

What wisdom God gives to the woman who hid the messengers. Apparently, they completely cover the well so that it does not appear to be a well, but rather a drying rack for the corn the woman spread upon it to make the disguise complete. Wherefore, those who were seeking to capture the messengers were completely fooled about the hiding place, and believed the lie the woman told them, saying they had already gone over the brook.

21 "And it came to pass, after they were departed, that they came up out of the well, and went and told king David, and said unto David, Arise, and pass quickly over the water: for thus hath Ahithophel counselled against you. 22 ¶ Then David arose, and all the people that were with him, and they passed over Jordan: by the morning light there lacked not one of them that was not gone over Jordan."

The informers get the word of what is happening to King David, who immediately takes offensive actions. This demonstrates that God is still answering King David's prayer, by providentially working out receiving the message and giving them time to cross Jordan, and time for King David's loyal followers to gather to him.

23 "And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat 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."

We see here what scripture teaches in: *Pr 16:18 ¶ "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."* Now we see the proud and ungodly heart of Ahithophel. His council being ignored, he goes to his house, sets his affairs in order, and hangs himself. Why would Ahithophel do this? This is deliberated suicide.

We believe that Ahithophel understands that God has overthrown his council, which was the way to make a quick end of King David. Ahithophel understands that Absalom's attempt to usurp the kingdom will fail, and Absalom will come to his end quickly. Ahithophel does not want to witness this failure, nor suffer any retributions that may come to him because of it. God has made Ahithophel to look like the fool that he is, because he does not believe in God, and therefore he kills himself.

Ahithophel understands that as King David penned in: *Ps 41:9 "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me."* He is a traitor to King David and expects to be killed for his actions. Ahithophel is what we call a Judas traitor, as seen in: *Joh 13:18 ¶ "I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me."* Here Jesus predicted that Judas would betray him, and we know that Judas, when he understood what an awful thing he had done, hanged himself.

24 "Then David came to Mahanaim. And Absalom passed over Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him. 25 And Absalom made Amasa captain of the host instead of Joab: which Amasa was a man's son, whose name was Ithra an Israelite, that went in to Abigail the daughter of Nahash, sister to Zeruiah Joab's mother. 26 So Israel and Absalom pitched in the land of Gilead. 27 And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lodebar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim, 28 Brought beds, and basons, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched corn, and beans, and lentiles, and parched pulse, 29 And honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for the people that were with him, to eat: for they said, The people is hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness."

King David comes to Mahanaim, which is an encampment that he can defend. Absalom makes Amasa captain of the hosts of the insurrectionist.

When King David reaches Mahanaim, many friends bring him resources, to feed, clothe, and shelter the people. There is a lesson in this chapter for the faithful child of God, who is in distress. God will always make provisions to protect and keep us from falling into the hand of the enemy, as long as we are following "***thus saith the Lord.***" God will send us friends to comfort and provide for us in our times of need. After all: God knows our every need and has promised in his word to supply our every need. We thank you, King Jesus, that we have the promise that if we fear God and serve him faithfully, we need not fear what man can do to us.

In closing we would point out: God did issue judicial judgments against King David, but God never told King David that he would lose his kingship nor be forsaken of the throne of Israel.

There is a prophetic picture here of Jesus and his death on the cross. What do you mean? Jesus is under the attack of one of his own created beings, Satan, and his own people Israel, who has been given power to rise in insurrection against Jesus and will be used to bring about the death of Christ on the cross. Satan thought sure that he had won the war and overthrown Jesus, when Jesus died upon the cross: just as Absalom thinks he has won the war and overthrown King David, when King David flees from Jerusalem. However, God did not give Satan the authority to unseat Jesus from the throne of God. God did allow Satan's insurrection to bring to pass the crucifixion of Jesus.

At the crucifixion of Jesus, Jesus was taken out of Jerusalem and carried to the place of the skull for his death. King David was driven from Jerusalem to what was supposed to be his death. Jesus gave his life on the cross, however, he arose on the third day triumphant over death hell, and the grave. Jesus ascended back to heaven to his rightful place on the throne of God. King David will return to his rightful place on the throne over all Israel because it was given to him by God. Thank you, King Jesus, for your finished work of eternal redemption of the sins of all of God's people, and for going to prepare a place, to receive us to yourself, and allow us to see you on the eternal throne of God, forever. Hallelujah! Amen!