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Hushai's counsel and advice to David is really a preventative measure just in case Absalom changes his mind and does mobilize and move out immediately.

v. 17 Jonathan and Ahimaaz were staying at En Rogel. A servant girl was to go and inform them, and they were to go and tell King David, for they could not risk being seen entering the city.

You can't help but see a fantastic chain of people and events that got the message to David as to what they planned; and he safely passed to the other side of the river Jordan to Mahanaim.

En Rogel is a couple of miles from Jerusalem.

v. 18 But a young man saw them and told Absalom. So the two of them left quickly and went to the house of a man in Bahurim. He had a well in his courtyard, and they climbed down into it.

Do you remember Bahurim? Bahurim is where that snake called Shimei came out throwing rocks and kicking dirt last week. It is the same place.

v. 19 His wife took a covering and spread it out over the opening of the well and scattered grain over it. No one knew anything about it.

v. 20 When Absalom's men came to the woman at the house, they asked, "Where are Ahimaaz and

Jonathan?” The woman answered them, “They crossed over the brook.” The men searched but found no one, so they returned to Jerusalem.

The woman answered them, “They crossed over the brook” — they did, coming into Bahurim.

She looks at the brook like it is going the other way and they assume they went the other way, back toward Jerusalem. So the men searched but found no one, so they returned to Jerusalem.

v. 21 After the men had gone, the two climbed out of the well and went to inform King David. They said to him, “Set out and cross the river at once; Ahithophel has advised such and such against you.”

How refreshing it must have been to David to see Jonathan and Ahimaaz and to hear them come with this message of what was going on in the palace.

v. 22 So David and all the people with him set out and crossed the Jordan. By daybreak, no one was left who had not crossed the Jordan.

Now they are on the eastern side of the Jordan river. They at least have a river between them so they are fairly safe for right now. They are going to start heading north.

They have about another 30-40 miles to go to where the staging operation is going to take place.

v. 23 When Ahithophel saw that his advice had not been followed, he saddled his donkey and set out for his house in his home town. He put his house in order and then hanged himself. So he died and was buried in his father's tomb.

Why did he do that?

“If you are not going to listen to my advice, I am just going to get ticked and go take my life and make you all feel sorry for me.”

That's not it.

Ahithophel is no dummy. He knows that what just happened is the end of Absalom.

He knows that because Absalom is doing what he is doing David has time and you are not going to whip David.

He has been his advisor for thirty years and he knows how David operates.

And he also knows that when David comes back to the kingdom that there is no place for Ahithophel and he is going to have to answer for his betrayal and that is going to be execution!

So really he is not going to give David the privilege. He is just going to go home and take his life because Absalom has failed to follow the advice that would have secured him the kingdom.

v. 24 David went to Mahanaim, and Absalom crossed the Jordan with all the men of Israel.

In there is quite a bit of time. Sometimes a verse in scripture will confuse you.

You read one thing and then you read another and you think nothing happened.

In order for Absalom to get all these people mobilized and travel 16-18 miles down to the river and then cross over the river, it took quite some time.

For David to make this other trip about 30 miles north to Mahanaim from where they crossed the river up to Mahanaim, on the eastern side, took him quite a while to.

Mahanaim is a fortress city. Mahanaim is the city that Ish-Bosheth used along with Abner to have the

northern kingdom when David was king at the age of thirty in Hebron, over the tribe of Judah.

This was the staging operation for the civil war that took place for those 7 ½ years before David became king over the whole land. He goes to Mahanaim to get things ready. When they cross over the river, they are about 20-30 miles apart right now. As you have the picture in your mind, both of them are on the east side.

v. 25 Absalom had appointed Amasa over the army in place of Joab. Amasa was the son of a man named Jether, an Israelite who had married Abigail, the daughter of Nabash and sister of Zeruah the mother of Joab.

Did you catch that? Abigail and Zeruah are David's sisters. So these are two nephews of David. Joab has been his loyal nephew. Joab, Abishai, and Asahel are "My Three Sons" born to Zeruah they have been in David's life

from the very beginning.

Now Amasa, who I call "a mess a" is in the life of Absalom. He becomes a military general, but he has never led the military. You are going to see what happens in his life later in the story.

Absalom, I think, tried to get Joab to go with him. And Joab would not do it. Joab kept loyal to David even

though David was being driven out of the kingdom. So he gets Amasa to be his leader.

v. 26 The Israelites and Absalom camped in the land of Gilhead.

This is probably now about 10 miles south of David on the east side of the river. We are getting ready for war.

The next three verses are the best verses in the study today!

v. 27 When David came to Mahanaim, Shobi son of Nahash from Rabbah of the Ammonites, and Makir son of Ammiel from Lo Debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim

v. 28 brought bedding and bowls and articles of pottery. They also brought wheat and barley, flour and roasted grain, beans and lentils,

v. 29 honey and curds, sheep, and cheese from cows' milk for David and his people to eat. For they said, "The people have become hungry and tired and thirsty in the desert."

Let's say you woke up this morning and the first verse you read in your devotions was:

"When David came to Mahanaim, Shobi son of Nahash from Rabbah of the Ammonites, and Makir

son of Ammiel from Lo Debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim.”

Would you think: “It’s going to be a wonderful day! What a blessing I got out of that!”

Is that what you would say? The problem is sometimes when you read the Bible, you read it like that. There is an incredible blessing in this.

This is one of the richest things in all the world. Right here are three men who meet David to offset the three creeps that he met last week.

Ziba cheated him.

When old Shimei comes out cursing him David is about to scrape the bottom.

And Absalom chases him.

But God always brings special people into your life at a time of your great need.

Let me introduce these three fellows to you. If you have been with us for many weeks you are going to remember some of these stories.

The first fellow has traveled 30 miles with a whole bunch of supplies for David.

He has traveled the furthest. His name is Shobi the son of Nahash from Rabbah of the Ammonites.

Shobi is the brother of Hanun. Hanun and Shobi were sons of Nahash, king of the Ammonites.

Nahash the king of the Ammonites was favorably disposed toward David. David was so impressed with Nahash that when Nahash died he sent a governmental delegation to the family to express his grief and his love and his appreciation for Nahash.

Hanun was the king in his daddy's place. He listened to some counselors who said: "David did not travel over here to be nice to you. He came over here to spy out the land and eventually invade it."

Remember what those guys did? They took David's delegates, pulled a fraternity trick on them, shaved their beard right in half. Cleaned their face off one side and left the rest of it hanging down. To a Jew that is a horrible reproach.

On top of that, they cut off their long flowing robes "bun high" and made them walk 14 miles publicly back to the river as a reproach.

David got so mad that they invaded the Ammonites and there was a horrible slaughter.

Why did I tell you that? Shobi was watching all that. He knew David really had a good heart and he was right. Sometimes the majority will speak and you get badly hurt and the feelings that you had were really right but they were misinterpreted.

David is hurting now and old Shobi is right in the front saying, “David, I believed you even though my brother did not and threw us into a horrible war.

I am here to say thanks, David, for what you did when you came over to express your sorrow over the death of my daddy. I want to be here to help.”

You will never make a mistake when you just keep on hanging in there. Even though people misunderstand your intentions and they criticize you and they beat you down, at the time of your great need, there is going to be a Shobi that is going to come out of the woodwork and say, “Hey, I believe in you. I love you. I appreciate what you did.”

Now look at the next one. “Makir the son of Ammiel from Lo-debar.” Who came from Lodebar?

Mephibosheth the handicapped son of Jonathan was adopted by this family, Makir and his wife, and kept him all of these years of David’s kingdom.

When David sends an edict to find Mephibosheth and bring him to the palace to eat at the king's table and to be adopted as literally

the king's son, Makir and his wife never forgot that kindness to a handicapped boy. He is the second one that is there with a whole bunch of things to say "Thanks David for what you did for Mephitbosheth."

The last guy is "Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim." He has only had five or six miles to travel, he is eighty years old. This old gentlemen is going to come back in the story.

He is the wealthiest of the three. He has become very successful and wealthy because of David's economic policies through the thirty years of his rule and reign in the land of Israel.

This is a grateful citizen saying, "Thanks David for the good job that made my life wonderful by providing economic policies that let me enjoy a really good life. I really appreciate it!"

We see three fellows right at David's lowest point saying, "We believe in you. We love you and we appreciate you."

Now we are ready to get ready for war!

18:v. 1 David mustered the men who were with him and appointed over them commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds.

The word “mustered” lets you know that he is getting the troops together. He is dividing them into groups. He is getting them organized. You can already tell that he is drawing up plays and game plans. This is training camp. They are getting set for something big.

All Amasa is doing is just bringing a big hoard of people that are going to out number them by a whole bunch. But watch what happens.

v. 2 David sent the troops out —a third under the command of Joab, a third under Joab’s brother Abishai son of Zeruah, and a third under Ittai the Gittite. The king told the troops, “I myself will surely march out with you.”

Do you feel the old adrenalin pumping? The butterflies! The clashing of swords!

David is probably in his early sixties.

v. 3 But the men said, “You must not go out; if we are forced to flee, they won’t care about us. Even if half of us die, they won’t care; but you are worth ten thousand of us. It would be better now for you to give us support from the city.”

They are exactly right. After all, that was Ahithophel's advice. "You kill the king and we put down the conspiracy. Now these men are saying, "They kill you and it is all over. We would rather have you be support personnel in the city."

How does David respond to that? You can always tell where a man is in his walk with the Lord by how teachable he is.

If a man is willing to listen to counsel and be instructed and seek advice, you know he is walking with the Lord.

If he is grinding his teeth and fighting it and being stubborn and bullheaded, he is walking in the flesh and he is out of fellowship with the Lord.

Look at David.

v. 4 The king answered, "I will do whatever seems best to you." So the king stood beside the gate while all the men marched out in units of hundreds and of thousands.

What a colorful and graphic picture it must have been for the king to stand beside the gate and watch the units of hundreds and thousands walk out under the triple command of Joab, Abishai, and Ittai.

v. 5 The king commanded Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, “Be gentle with the young man Absalom for my sake.” And all the troops heard the king giving orders concerning Absalom to each of the commanders.

David is so concerned about Absalom that he asks his three captains to be sure and deal gently with the boy

When they run into the forest, they fall in the pits. When they get in the pits, they are not any good for anything.

v. 7 There the army of Israel was defeated by David's men, and the casualties that day were great—twenty thousand men.

20,000 needless deaths.

v. 8 The battle spread out over the whole countryside, and the forest claimed more lives that day than the sword.

It was a real slaughter. David's men won.

v. 9 Now Absalom happened to meet David's men. He was riding his mule, and as the mule went under the thick branches of a large oak, Absalom's head got caught in the tree. He was left hanging in midair, while the mule he was riding kept on going.

v. 10 When one of the men saw this, he told Joab, "I just saw Absalom hanging in an oak tree."

v. 11 Joab said to the man who had told him this, "What! You saw him? Why didn't you strike him to the ground right there? Then I would have had to give you ten shekels of silver and a warriors belt."

Joab is totally oblivious to David's instructions.

v. 12 But the man replied, "Even if a thousand shekels were weighed into my hands, I would not lift my hand against the king's son. In our hearing the king commanded you and Abishai and Ittai, 'Protect the young man Absalom for my sake.'

v. 13 And if I had put my life in jeopardy—and nothing is hidden from the king—you would have kept your distance from me."

You would have put all the blame on me. You would not have stuck up for me if I would have put it to him hanging in the tree.

v. 14 Joab said, "I'm not going to wait like this for you." So he took three javelins in his hand and plunged them into Absalom's heart while Absalom was still alive in the oak tree.

Here he is killing a cousin. Slaughtering him with three of these javelins. I think he threw one and said, "That's for Amnon, murdering him!"

Threw another one and he said, "That's for David and what you have done to him!"

Then he threw another one and he said, "That's for burning my barley fields." And he let him hang there in agony of a protracted death.

v. 15 And ten of Joab's armor bearers surround Absalom, struck him and killed him.

v. 16 Then Joab sounded the trumpet, and the troops stopped pursuing Israel, for Joab halted them.

That is the only good thing that came out of it, they quit shedding blood at that point because the leader had been finished.

v. 17 They took Absalom, threw him into a big pit in the forest and piled up a large heap o rocks over him. Meanwhile, all the Israelites fled to their homes.

Why didn't they take him back? They knew they had violated the obvious command of the king.

v. 18 During his lifetime Absalom had taken a pillar and erected it in the King's Valley as a monument to himself, for he thought, "I have no son to carry on the memory of my name." He named the pillar after himself, and it is called Absalom's Monument to this day.

The only real monument for Absalom is a pile of rocks in a forest that marks his final resting place.

Why was this kid's life totally wasted? Why did it all happen so bad?"

I came to five contributing factors here, as I see Absalom now gone.

- 1. Absalom was the product of a mixed marriage. His mother was a pagan woman, Maacah of Geshur.**
- 2. His father was preoccupied with the responsibilities of state and his extensive warfare. There is no indication in scripture he had any time for Absalom.**
- 3. He grew up in the unsatisfactory environment of the harem with its quarrels and sometimes cutthroat competition between maternal groupings.**
- 4. There is no hint that Absalom had any personal relationship with God.**
- 5. The incomplete forgiveness of his father, which forced him to live in Jerusalem for two years without seeing the king did irreparable harm to Absalom.**

David left the relationship unreconciled. He never gave forgiveness. He never gave forgiveness to Absalom. So David is a lot responsible for what has happened to this young man.

v. 19 Now Ahimaaz son of Zadok said, “Let me run and take the news to the king that the Lord has delivered him from the hand of his enemies.”

v. 20 “You are not the one to take the news today,” Joab told him. “You may take the news another time, but you must not do so today, because the king’s son is dead.”

Joab knew David better than Ahimaaz did, and he was afraid that David might not receive the news well and might even be driven to kill Ahimaaz.

v. 21 Then Joab said to a Cushite, “Go, tell the king what you have seen.” The Cushite bowed down before Joab and ran off.

Joab sends a Cushite, or a black slave, to tell David the news of what has happened.

v. 22 Ahimaaz son of Zadok again said to Joab, “Come what may, please let me run behind the Cushite.” But Joab replied, “My son, why do you want to go? You don’t have any news that will bring you a reward.”

He is just dying to get in his Nikes and get going!

Ahimaaz begs still to go.

v. 23 He said, “Come what may, I want to run.” So Joab said, “Run!” Then Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain and outran the Cushite.

So Joab said, “Run!”

v. 24 While David was sitting between the inner and outer gates, the watchman went up to the roof of the gateway by the wall. As he looked out, he saw a man running alone.

The picture here is the image of David waiting eagerly for some message to come from the field of battle. One of the watchmen noticed a man running alone, and of course, this is Ahimaaz.

v. 25 The watchman called out to the king and reported it. The king said, “If he is alone, he must have good news.” And the man came closer and closer.

You can really understand David’s anxiety and concern. He wants to hear good news that the victory has been secured by his armies and that Absalom is safe.

David is going to hear some good news and some bad news. The good news is the battle has been won by his forces.

But the bad news is that Absalom is dead.

v. 26 Then the watchman saw another man running, and he called down to the gatekeeper, and called down to the gatekeeper. “Look another man running alone!” The king said, “He must be bringing good news too.”

v. 27 The watchman said, “It seems to me that the first one runs like Ahimaaz son of Zadok.” “He’s a good man,” the king said. “He comes with good news.”

This is the third time that David tries to assure himself and the people waiting that the messenger certainly comes with good news.

v. 28 Then Ahimaaz called out to the king, “All is well!” He bowed down before the king with his face to the ground and said, “Praise be to the Lord you God! He has delivered up the men who lifted their hands against my lord the king.”

Now watch a father’s heart.

v. 29 The king asked, “Is the young man Absalom safe?” Ahimaaz answered, “I saw great confusion just as Joab was about to send the king’s servant and me, your servant, but I don’t know what it was.”

“I don’t care what happened in the war, where is my son?”

He does not have the nerve to spill it.

v. 30 The king said, “Stand aside and wait here.” So he stepped aside and stood there.

v. 31 Then the Cushite arrived and said, “My lord the king, hear the good news! The Lord has delivered you today from all who rose up against you.”

v. 32 The king asked the Cushite, “Is the young man Absalom safe?” The Cushite replied, “May the enemies of my lord the king and all who rise up to harm you be like that young man.”

The Cushite is gentle as he can be with the news, and David goes to pieces.

He has won a war and regained a throne, but he’s lost his son. And he just gives himself up to his grief and hurt.

v. 33 The king was shaken. He went up to the room over the gateway and wept. As he went, he said, “O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you—O Absalom, my son, my son!”

This is the confession of a broken-hearted man who knew that he had killed his son by his own sins.

Of course, Absalom and others were responsible too but David must have felt tremendous guilt over his failures with Absalom, and his sin that led to all of this in the first place.

We can certainly appreciate his suffering at this point because these are probably the saddest words recorded in the Bible. It's too late now to resolve the breach between father and son.

Don't ever let a conflict between you and your children go on.

Get some counseling, forgive each other, do whatever it takes to restore the relationship.

Psalm 77:2

“In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord. In the night my hand was stretched out without weariness. My soul refused to be comforted.”

Psalm 121

**“I will lift up my eyes to the mountains;
From whence shall my help come?
My help comes from the Lord,**

**Who made heaven and earth.
He will not allow your foot to slip;
He who keeps you will not slumber.
Behold, He who keeps Israel
Will neither slumber nor sleep.**

**The Lord is your keeper;
The Lord is your shade on your right hand.
The sun will not smite you by day,
Nor the moon by night.
The Lord will protect you from all evil;
He will keep your soul.
The Lord will guard your going out and your
coming in
From this time forth forever.”**

**What are some of the lessons that we can learn from
this particular study?**

Lesson #1: In a crisis, real friends are invaluable.

Shobi, Makir and Barzillai are there.

**Lesson #2: God can frustrate the plans of man and
bring disaster into their lives.**

**Lesson #3: The Lord can PROTECT and PROVIDE so
that the message gets through.**

**He took care of those two young men and the message
got to David and the staging operation went on.**

Lesson #4: People just never do forget loving acts of kindness.

When you do those very special things for people, they will just never forget it.

Lesson #5: David has learned to listen to counsel.

“Whatever seems good to you, I will do it,” he tells his men as he waits at the gate.

Lesson #6: The consequences of sin live long after the act of forgiveness.

Don Anderson tells the story, “ Little over a year ago we had a sheriff walk into the office and serve a summons on my secretary. She had been with me for 7-8 years, raised two children as a single parent and he was serving a summons because he liked her and wanted to go on a date. Walter Terry came into our lives.

While writing the series on the life of David last fall, Jan said, “Samuel anointed David and I am getting ready to anoint Walt. Will you marry us in December?”

I had the wonderful privilege on December 1st of marrying Jan and Walt. I have seen Jan just become so fulfilled and so excited and so much loved. Flowers and

candy and all the special things that lovers do for lovers. It has been fun at our staff parties and everything else to have Walt so much a part of it.

Our board voted in December to sell all of our horses because we needed to cut back on overhead so it is not quite so hard on me to generate the income necessary to keep our operation going. Walt and Jan wanted a couple of our horses. And they got a couple of them. Saturday Walt was going to ride in the Bullard parade. The horse that he was going to ride was a polo pony that had been given to us from Willow Bend Polo Club. It had lost an eye but it was one of the finest polo ponies in the world. When they got the football field Shangri thought she was playing polo. She was going to take her rider to the goal as fast as her little heart would take her. She burst toward the goal 205 yards away and suddenly stopped and Walt went home to be with the Lord.

It has been a very difficult time to understand how God weaves all those things together in our tears, in our hurt, in our pain. One of the things, because Jan is typed all these manuscripts and has studied the Word because she has to in order to type them. At least we agreed together when Walt died that we would never lose our confidence in God, in His ability to order the affairs of our life aright. So in our tears and in our hurt, God is triumphant and He is going to give the victory. It is just going to take a little time.

David is there today. He is crying a lot. It hurts real, real bad. The pain is incredible. He does not have a kingdom. He has lost his son.

All he can say is, “It is going to be running uphill into the wind for a while.”

David probably just does not fully understand what God is doing in his life.

Maybe you are there today. Maybe you feel like that. You are just so hurt, so devastated.

Don't lose your confidence in God. Just wait a while.

He is going to work it all together for good if you will just trust Him and let Him keep on working.

Lessons Learned In The Life of David

PART III

STUDY NUMBER NINETEEN - 2 Samuel 17:1-18:33

17:v. 1 Ahithophel said to Absalom, "I would choose twelve thousand men and set out tonight in pursuit of David.

v. 2 I would attack him while he is weary and weak. I would strike him with terror, and then all the people with him will flee. I would strike down only the king

v. 3 and bring all the people back to you. The death of the man you seek will mean the return of all; all the people will be unharmed."

v. 4 This plan seemed good to Absalom and to all the elders of Israel.

v. 5 But Absalom said, "Summon also Hushai the Arkite, so we can hear what he has to say."

v. 6 When Hushai came to him, Absalom said, "Ahithophel has given this advice. Should we do what he says? If not, give us your opinion."

v. 7 Hushai replied to Absalom, "The advice Ahithophel has given is not

good this time.

v. 8 You know your father and his men; they are fighters, and as fierce as a wild bear robbed of her cubs. Besides, your father is an experienced fighter; he will not spend the night with the troops.

v. 9 Even now, he is hidden in a cave or some other place. If he should attack your troops first, whoever hears about it will say, 'There has been a slaughter among the troops who follow Absalom.'

v.10 Then even the bravest soldier, whose heart is like the heart of a lion, will melt with fear, for all Israel knows that your father is a fighter and that those with him are brave.

v.11 So I advise you: Let all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba--as numerous as the sand on the seashore--be gathered to you, with you yourself leading them into battle.

v.12 Then we will attack him wherever he may be found, and we will fall on him as dew settles on the ground. Neither he nor any of his men will be left alive.

v.13 If he withdraws into a city, then all Israel will bring ropes to that

city, and we will drag it down to the valley until not even a piece of it can be found."

v.14 Absalom and all the men of Israel said, "The advice of Hushai the Arkite is better than that of Ahithophel." For the Lord had determined to frustrate the good advice of Ahithophel in order to bring disaster on Absalom.

v.15 Hushai told Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, "Ahithophel has advised Absalom and the elders of Israel to do such and such, but I have advised them to do so and so.

v.16 Now send a message immediately and tell David, 'Do not spend the night at the fords in the desert; cross over without fail, or the king and all the people with him will be swallowed up.'

v.17 Jonathan and Ahimaaz were staying at En Rogel. A servant girl was to go and inform them, and they were to go and tell King David, for they could not risk being seen entering the city.

v.18 But a young man saw them and told Absalom. So the two of them left quickly and went to the house of a man in Bahurim. He had a well in

his courtyard, and they climbed down into it.

v.19 His wife took a covering and spread it out over the opening of the well and scattered grain over it. No one knew anything about it.

v.20 When Absalom's men came to the woman at the house, they asked, "Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?" The woman answered them, "They crossed over the brook." The men searched but found no one, so they returned to Jerusalem.

v.21 After the men had gone, the two climbed out of the well and went to inform King David. They said to him, "Set out and cross the river at once; Ahithophel has advised such and such against you."

v.22 So David and all the people with him set out and crossed the Jordan. By daybreak, no one was left who had not crossed the Jordan.

v.23 When Ahithophel saw that his advice had not been followed, he saddled his donkey and set out for his house in his hometown. He put his house in order and then hanged himself. So he died and was buried in his father's tomb.

v.24 David went to Mahanaim, and

Absalom crossed the Jordan with all the men of Israel.

v.25 Absalom had appointed Amasa over the army in place of Joab.

Amasa was the son of a man named Jether, an Israelite who had married Abigail, the daughter of Nahash and sister of Zeruah the mother of Joab.

v.26 The Israelites and Absalom camped in the land of Gilead.

v.27 When David came to Mahanaim, Shobi son of Nahash from Rabbah of the Ammonites, and Makir son of Ammiel from Lo Debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim

v.28 brought bedding and bowls and articles of pottery. They also brought wheat and barley, flour and roasted grain, beans and lentils,

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v. 3 But the men said, "You must not go out; if we are forced to flee, they won't care about us. Even if half of us die, they won't care; but you are worth ten thousand of us. It would be better now for you to give us support from the city."

v. 4 The king answered, "I will do whatever seems best to you." So the king stood beside the gate while all the men marched out in units of hundreds and of thousands.

v. 5 The king commanded Joab, Abishai and Ittai, "Be gentle with the young man Absalom for my sake." And all the troops heard the king giving orders concerning Absalom to each of the commanders.

v. 6 The army marched into the field to fight Israel, and the battle took place in the forest of Ephraim.

v. 7 There the army of Israel was defeated by David's men, and the casualties that day were great--twenty thousand men.

v. 8 The battle spread out over the whole countryside, and the forest

claimed more lives that day than the sword.

v. 9 Now Absalom happened to meet David's men. He was riding his mule, and as the mule went under the thick branches of a large oak, Absalom's head got caught in the tree. He was left hanging in midair, while the mule he was riding kept on going.

v.10 When one of the men saw this, he told Joab, "I just saw Absalom hanging in an oak tree."

v.11 Joab said to the man who had told him this, "What! You saw him? Why didn't you strike him to the ground right there? Then I would have had to give you ten shekels of silver and a warrior's belt."

v.12 But the man replied, "Even if a thousand shekels were weighed out into my hands, I would not lift my hand against the king's son. In our hearing the king commanded you and Abishai and Ittai, 'Protect the young man Absalom for my sake.'

v.13 And if I had put my life in jeopardy--and nothing is hidden from the king--you would have kept your distance from me."

v.14 Joab said, "I'm not going to wait

like this for you." So he took three javelins in his hand and plunged them into Absalom's heart while Absalom was still alive in the oak tree.

v.15 And ten of Joab's armor-bearers surrounded Absalom, struck him and killed him.

v.16 Then Joab sounded the trumpet, and the troops stopped pursuing Israel, for Joab halted them.

v.17 They took Absalom, threw him into a big pit in the forest and piled up a large heap of rocks over him. Meanwhile, all the Israelites fled to their homes.

v.18 During his lifetime Absalom had taken a pillar and erected it in the King's Valley as a monument to himself, for he thought, "I have no son to carry on the memory of my name." He named the pillar after himself, and it is called Absalom's Monument to this day.

v.19 Now Ahimaaz son of Zadok said, "Let me run and take the news to the king that the Lord has delivered him from the hand of his enemies."

v.20 "You are not the one to take the news today," Joab told him. "You

may take the news another time, but you must not do so today, because the king's son is dead."

v.21 Then Joab said to a Cushite, "Go, tell the king what you have seen." The Cushite bowed down before Joab and ran off.

v.22 Ahimaaz son of Zadok again said to Joab, "Come what may, please let me run behind the Cushite." But Joab replied, "My son, why do you want to go? You don't have any news that will bring you a reward."

v.23 He said, "Come what may, I want to run." So Joab said, "Run!" Then Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain and outran the Cushite.

v.24 While David was sitting between the inner and outer gates, the watchman went up to the roof of the gateway by the wall. As he looked out, he saw a man running alone.

v.25 The watchman called out to the king and reported it. The king said, "If he is alone, he must have good news." And the man came closer and closer.

v.26 Then the watchman saw another man running, and he called

down to the gatekeeper, "Look, another man running alone!" The king said, "He must be bringing good news, too."

v.27 The watchman said, "It seems to me that the first one runs like Ahimaaz son of Zadok." "He's a good man," the king said. "He comes with good news."

v.28 Then Ahimaaz called out to the king, "All is well!" He bowed down before the king with his face to the ground and said, "Praise be to the Lord your God! He has delivered up the men who lifted their hands against my lord the king."

v.29 The king asked, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" Ahimaaz answered, "I saw great confusion just as Joab was about to send the king's servant and me, your servant, but I don't know what it was."

v.30 The king said, "Stand aside and wait here." So he stepped aside and stood there.

v.31 Then the Cushite arrived and said, "My lord the king, hear the good news! The Lord has delivered you today from all who rose up against you."

v.32 The king asked the Cushite, "Is

the young man Absalom safe?" The Cushite replied, "May the enemies of my lord the king and all who rise up to harm you be like that young man." v.33 The king was shaken. He went up to the room over the gateway and wept. As he went, he said: "O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you--O Absalom, my son, my son!"

QUESTIONS:

1. Read 2 Samuel 17:1-18:33 several times and in your own words outline what is happening in the life of David.
2. Who are the two counselors that Absalom turns to in chapter 17 and whose advice does he follow?
3. Why did Absalom and all the men of Israel prefer the advice of Hushai over Ahithophel, according to verse 14?
4. What message does Hushai send to David, according to verse 16?
5. How does Ahithophel respond to the fact that his advice is not being followed, according to verse 23?
6. What happened to Absalom in the battle, according to verses 9-17?
7. What is David's first question to the messengers, according to verse 29?
8. How does the king respond to the death of Absalom, according to verse 33?
9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?
10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

STUDY NUMBER NINETEEN - 2 Samuel 17:1-18:33

LESSON #1: In a crisis, real friends are invaluable.

LESSON #2: God can frustrate the plans of man and bring disaster into their lives.

LESSON #3: The Lord can protect and provide so that the message gets through.

LESSON #4: People just never do forget loving acts of kindness.

LESSON #5: David has learned to listen to counsel.

LESSON #6: The consequences of sin live long after the act of forgiveness.