

Hushai and Ahithophel (c. 974 BC)

2 Samuel 16:15–17:29

Ahithophel Gives Absalom Wise Advice

16:15 Now Absalom and all the people, the men of Israel, had come to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel *was* with him.

16 When Hushai the Arkite the friend of David came to Absalom, Hushai said to Absalom, “*Long* live the king, *long* live the king!”

17 Absalom said to Hushai, “This *is* your loyal love with your friend? Why did you not go with your friend?”

18 Then Hushai said to Absalom, “No, rather, whom Yahweh and this people and all the men of Israel have chosen, to him I will be, and with him I will remain.

19 Furthermore, for whom have I served? *Is* it not in the presence of his son that I have served before your father? So shall I serve you!”

20 Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, “Give your advice. What shall we do?”

21 And Ahithophel said to Absalom, “Go to the concubines of your father whom he left behind to watch over the house, then all of Israel will hear that you made yourself odious to your father, and all of your followers will be motivated!”

22 Then they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof, and he went *in* to the concubines of his father before the eyes of all Israel.

23 The counsel that Ahithophel gave in those days *was* regarded as when a man inquired of the word of God, so all the counsel of Ahithophel *was esteemed* both by David and by Absalom.

17:1 Then Ahithophel said to Absalom, “Please let me choose twelve thousand men, and I will set out and pursue after David tonight.

2 I will come upon him while he *is* weary and weak. I will startle him, and all of the people who *are* with him will flee. Then I will strike down the king *while* he *is* alone.

3 Then I will return all the people to you; when all have returned, the man whom you *are* seeking *will be dead*, but all the people will be safe.”

4 The word *was* right in the eyes of Absalom and in the eyes of all the elders of Israel.

God Helps Hushai Frustrate the Wise Advice of Ahithophel

5 Then Absalom said, “Please call also for Hushai the Arkite, and let us hear what he has to say also.”

6 So Hushai came to Absalom, who said to him, “Shall we do according to this word *that* Ahithophel has spoken? If not, then you tell *us*.”

7 Then Hushai said to Absalom, “The counsel that Ahithophel gave *is* not good at this time.”

8 Hushai continued, “You know your father and his men, that they *are* mighty warriors and they are enraged as a bear robbed of *her* offspring in the field. Your father *is* a man of war, so he will not spend the night with the troops.

9 Now he has hidden himself in one of the caves or in one of the places. At the moment he falls on them the first time, whoever hears the report will say, ‘There has been a defeat among the people who follow after Absalom.’

10 And he *is* also a valiant warrior, whose heart *is* like the heart of the lion. He will certainly melt with fear, for all Israel knows that your father *is* a mighty warrior and *those* who *are* with him *are* valiant warriors.

11 I give the advice that all of Israel from Dan to Beersheba should be completely gathered to you, as the sand which *is* on the seashore for abundance, with you personally going into the battle.

12 Then we will come to him in one of the places where he may be found, and we shall come upon him as the dew falls on the ground. He and all the men who are with him will not survive, *not* even one!

13 *Even* if he withdraws to a city, all Israel will bring up ropes to that city, and they will drag him away to the valley until there *is* not even a pebble to be found.”

14 Then Absalom and all the men of Israel said, “The advice of Hushai the Arkite *is* better than the advice of Ahithophel.” (Now Yahweh had ordained to frustrate the good counsel of Ahithophel in order for Yahweh to bring misery upon Absalom).

Hushai Sends Word to David

15 Hushai said to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, “Thus and so Ahithophel advised Absalom and the elders of Israel, but thus and so I have advised.

16 So then, send quickly and tell David, ‘Don’t spend the night at the fords of the wilderness! Moreover, by all means cross over lest the king and all the people who *are* with him be swallowed up.’”

17 Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz *were* staying at En Rogel, so a servant girl used to go and tell them, then they would go and tell King David, for they *were* not able to be seen coming to the city.

18 But a young man saw them and told Absalom, so both of them went quickly and came to the house of a man at Bahurim. Now he had a well in his courtyard, so they went down there.

19 Then the woman took and spread a covering over the opening of the well; then she spread out dried grain on it, so nothing was discovered.

20 When the servants of Absalom came to the woman *at* the house, they said, “Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?” And she said to them, “They crossed over the brook of water.” So they searched but could not find them, so they returned to Jerusalem.

21 After they left, they came up from the well and went and told King David. They said to David, “Set out and cross over the water

quickly, for thus Ahithophel has advised against you.”

22 So David and all the people who *were* with him set out, and they crossed over the Jordan until morning light until there was no one missing who had not crossed over the Jordan.

Ahithophel Foresees Disaster and Hangs Himself

23 When Ahithophel saw that his advice *was* not followed, he saddled the donkey, and he set out and went up to his house in his city. After he set his house in order, he hanged himself, and he died and was buried in the tomb of his ancestors.

Absalom Begins His Pursuit of David

24 Now David had come to Mahanaim, and Absalom had crossed over the Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him.

25 Absalom had appointed Amasa in place of Joab over the army. Now Amasa *was* the son of a man whose name *was* Ithra the Israelite, who had married Abigail the daughter of Nahash the sister of Zeruah, the mother of Joab.

26 Israel and Absalom camped *in* the land of Gilead.

27 Just as David had arrived in Mahanaim, Shobi the son of Nahash from Rabbah of the Ammonites and Makir the son of Ammiel from Lo Debar and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim

28 brought beds and basins and objects of pottery, as well as wheat, barley, flour, roasted grain, beans, lentils,

29 honey, curds, sheep, cheese, and cattle for David and for the people who *were* with him to eat. For they had thought, “The troops *are* hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness.”

My Soul Thirsts For You (c. 974 BC)

Psalm 63

A psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.

- 1 O God, you *are* my God;
I will seek you diligently.
My soul thirsts for you; my flesh longs for you
as in a dry and weary land without water.
- 2 Thus I have seen you in the sanctuary,
beholding your strength and glory.
- 3 Because your loyal love *is* better than life,
my lips will praise you.
- 4 So I will bless you while I live.
I will lift up my hands in your name.
- 5 My soul will be satisfied *as with the* best and richest *food*,
and *with* joyful lips my mouth will praise.
- 6 When I remember you on my bed,
I meditate on you in *the* night watches.
- 7 Because you have been my help,
therefore in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy.
- 8 My soul clings to you;
your right hand upholds me.
- 9 But as for them *who* seek my life for ruin,
they will go into the depths of the earth.
- 10 They *who* would deliver him to the sword
will become a portion for jackals.
- 11 However, the king will rejoice in God.
Everyone who swears an oath by him will boast,
because *the* mouth of *the* liars will be stopped.

Save Me, O My God (c. 974 BC)

Psalm 3

A psalm of David at his fleeing from the presence of Absalom, his son.

- 1 Yahweh, how many are my enemies;
many *are* rising against me.
- 2 Many *are* saying about my soul,
“There is no deliverance for him from God. *Selah*”
- 3 But you, Yahweh, *are* a shield around me,

- my glory and the one who lifts up my head.
- 4 *With* my voice I call to Yahweh
and he answers me from his holy hill. *Selah*
- 5 I lay down and slept;
I woke up because Yahweh sustains me.
- 6 I am not afraid of the ten thousands of people
who all around have set themselves against me.
- 7 Rise up, O Yahweh; deliver me, O my God;
for you strike all my enemies *on the* cheek.
The teeth of *the* wicked you break.
- 8 To Yahweh belongs deliverance;
may your blessing *be* over your people. *Selah*

David's Forces Quell Absalom's Revolt (c. 974 BC)

2 Samuel 18:1–19:8a

David Prepares His Army for Battle With Absalom

18:1 Then David mustered the people who *were* with him, and he appointed over them commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds.

2 David sent forth a third of the troops under the command of Joab, and a third under the command of Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, and the remaining third under the command of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said to the troops, "I, even I, will certainly go out with you."

3 Then the troops said, "You will not go out, for if we must flee, then they will not care about us; even if half of us die, they will not care about us, but now, you *are* like ten thousand of us. And so then, *it is* better for us that you be in the city to help."

4 The king said to them, "I will do what seems good in your eyes." So the king stood at the side of the gate *while* all of the troops went out by hundreds and by thousands.

5 The king ordered Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, "With respect to the young man Absalom, *deal* gently for me." And all the troops heard when the king ordered all of the commanders concerning the matter of Absalom.

David's Army Defeats Absalom's Forces

6 The army went out to the field to meet Israel, and the battle *was fought* in the forest of Ephraim.

7 The army of Israel *was* defeated there before the servants of David, and the defeat there was great on that day: twenty thousand.

8 The battle there was spreading over the surface of all the land, and the forest devoured more among the army than the sword *did* on that day.

Joab Kills Absalom

9 Absalom was found in the presence of the servants of David *as he was* riding on the mule. The mule went under the thicket of the great oak tree, and his head *was* caught in the tree. He *was* left hanging between heaven and earth, and the mule which *was* under him went on.

10 When a certain man saw *it*, he told Joab, and he said, "Look, I saw Absalom hanging in the oak tree!"

11 Then Joab said to the man who *was* telling him, "Look, *if* you saw, why did you not strike him down to the ground there? I would have gladly given you ten pieces of silver and a leather belt."

12 The man said to Joab, "Even if I felt the weight of a thousand pieces of silver in my palms, I would not have sent my hand against the son of the king, for in our ears the king commanded you and Abishai and Ittai, 'Whoever you may be, protect the young man Absalom.'

13 If I had dealt treacherously against his life, and *there is* not any matter hidden from the king, you would have presented yourself aloof."

14 Joab said, "No longer will I wait in your presence." Then he took three spears in his hand and thrust them into the heart of Absalom while he *was* still alive in the oak tree.

15 Then ten of the young men who bore the weapons of Joab surrounded *him* and struck and killed Absalom.

16 Then Joab blew on the trumpet and the troops returned from pursuing after Israel, for Joab kept back the troops.

17 They took Absalom and they threw him into the large pit in the forest and raised a very great heap of stones over him. Then all of Israel fled, each to his tent.

18 (Now Absalom had taken and set up for himself in his lifetime a stone pillar that *is* in the valley of the king, because he said, "I have no son in order to remember my name," and he called the stone pillar by his name. *It is* called the monument of Absalom until this day).

Ahimaaz and the Cushite Bring David the News of Absalom's Death

19 Now Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said, "Please let me run and bring the good news to the king that Yahweh has vindicated him from the hand of his enemies."

20 Joab said to him, "You *will not be* a man bringing good news this day! You may bring good news on another day, but today you will not be bringing good news because the king's son is dead."

21 Then Joab said to the Cushite, "Go, tell the king what you have seen"; then the Cushite bowed down to Joab and ran *off*.

22 Then Ahimaaz the son of Zadok again said to Joab, "Come what may, please let me also run after the Cushite." Joab asked, "Why *are* you wanting to run, my son, when for you there is no messenger's reward?"

23 "Come what may, I want to run." He said to him, "Run," so Ahimaaz ran on the road on the plain, and he passed the Cushite.

24 Now David *was* sitting between the two gates, and the sentinel went up to the roof of the gate by the wall and he lifted up his eyes and watched, and look, a man *was* running by himself.

25 The sentry called and told the king, and the king said, "If he *is* alone, good news is in his mouth." He kept coming closer.

26 Then the sentinel saw another man running, so the sentinel called to the gatekeeper and said, "Look, a man running alone." The king said, "This one also *is* bringing good news."

27 The sentinel said, "I *am* seeing *that* the running of the first *is* like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zakok." The king said, "He *is* a good man; he will come, for good news."

28 Then Ahimaaz called and said to the king, "Peace." He bowed down to the king with his face to the ground, and he said, "May Yahweh your God be blessed, who has delivered the men who raised their hand against my lord the king."

29 The king said, "*Is* it peace for the young man Absalom?" Ahimaaz said, "I saw the great commotion when Joab the servant of the king sent your servant, but I do not know what *it was all about*."

30 Then the king said, "Turn aside, take your place here," so he turned aside and waited.

31 Suddenly the Cushite arrived and said, "May my lord the king receive the good news, for Yahweh has vindicated you today from the power of all who stood up against you."

32 The king said to the Cushite, "*Is* it peace for the young man Absalom?" Then the Cushite answered, "May the enemies of my lord the king and all who rise up against you to harm you be like the young man!"

David Grieves Absalom's Death

33 The king was upset, and he went up to the upper room of the gate and wept. He said as he went, "My son, Absalom, my son, my son, Absalom. If only I had died instead of you, Absalom, my son, my son."

19:1 And it was told to Joab that the king *was* weeping and he mourned over Absalom,

2 so the victory turned to mourning on that day for all the army, because they had heard that day, "The king is grieving over his son."

3 The army came secretly into the city on that day because the army was disgraced when they fled in the battle,

4 and because the king had covered his face and cried with a loud voice, "My son, Absalom, Absalom, my son, my son."

Joab Angrily Confronts David

5 Then Joab came to the king's house and said, "Today you have humiliated the faces of all of your servants who have saved your life this day, and the life of your sons and your daughters, the life of your wives, and the life of your concubines,

6 by loving those who hate you and hating those who love you. Indeed, you have made clear this day that you have no *regard for your* commanders or officers, for I have realized today that *were* Absalom alive, and all of us were dead, then *that would* have been right in your eyes!

7 So then, get up and go out and speak kindly to your servants, for I swear by Yahweh, if you do not go out, no man will lodge this night with you, and this disaster *will be* greater for you than any disaster that has come upon you from your childhood until now!"

8a So the king got up and he sat in the gate, and they told all the army, "Look, the king *is* sitting in the gate." Then all the army came before the king;

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Chronological Notes

- 1) Kidner comments: "The title in the canonical text [of Psalm 63] identifies the desolate scene which set these thoughts in motion, and the mention of the king in verse 11 points to the time when Absalom rather than Saul had made him take to the Wilderness of Judah on his way to the Jordan (cf. 2 Sam. 15:23). Not only is the weariness of the way emphasized in the narrative (e.g. 2 Sam 16:14) but, as Kirkpatrick points out, the strong faith evident in the psalm has its counterpart there as well, in that David was prepared to part with the ark itself (2 Sam. 15:25) in his certainty of God and his commitment to his will."¹

¹ Derek Kidner, "Psalms 1–72," *TOTC*, 242–43.