

A Study of 2 Samuel 17

I. Outline.

1. Ahithophel advises David to send him out with 12,000 men that very night and he would strike David while he was weary (1-4).
2. Hushai urged Absalom to take time to round up a full army, then Absalom should lead that great army in battle and kill David and all of his men (5-14).
3. The sons of the priests relay word to David about Ahithophel's advice and Hushai's advice given to Absalom (15-16).
4. Jonathan and Ahimaaz were seen by a supporter of Absalom and they had to hide themselves briefly, but they were successful in warning David (17-22).
5. Ahithophel hanged himself because his advice was not followed and he knew David would survive and most likely have him killed when he returned to Jerusalem (23).
6. David goes to Mahanaim, and Absalom is leading the army of Israel to find him (24).
7. Absalom selects Amasa to be Captain of his army (25-26).
6. David has some wealthy friends who bring supplies to him (27-29).

II. Summary.

In this chapter we find first the completion of the advice of Ahithophel (2 Sam 17.1-4). We learn from the previous chapter that Ahithophel was a highly respected counsellor and that his advice is usually best. It is even compared to "*the oracle of God*" (2 Sam 16.23). If David's friend Hushai is to convince Absalom to make the wrong move; a move that would be beneficial to David, he will have to be exceedingly wise and wily. When one compares the two approaches to defeating David, they are not unlike advice given many times in similar situations. Bill Arnold compares the two as: (1) **Strike while the iron is hot** (Ahithophel); and (2) **Look before you leap** (Hushai) [NIV App Comm]. Beginning at verse 5, Hushai presents his plan which is intended to give to David the best opportunity to defeat Absalom—David had already prayed to the Lord: "*turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness*" (2 Sam 15.31). Considering verse 14, who can deny that the Lord accomplishes this through David's friend, Hushai? David had already set up a system by which news of Absalom's plans could be delivered to him by the sons of the priests who were still in Jerusalem (2 Sam 15.35-36). That plan was nearly compromised, but with help, they were able to get the message to King David. Ahithophel apparently was so convinced of the value of his own advice that he knew that when Absalom rejected it, it meant defeat for Absalom. His fate at the defeat of Absalom would be death at the hand of David (whom he had betrayed), was all he could see in his own future. His decision was to go home and hang himself (2 Sam 17.23). So David, having the advantage of knowing Absalom's plans, goes to Mahanaim, now having time to prepare for battle with his rebellious son. A couple of advantages would bless David in Mahanaim: (1) It was a fortified city in that it had served as the capital of Israel under Ishbosheth (2 Sam 2.8); and (2) David had secured quite a bit of good will among the residents by his previous favors toward Saul's family. In addition, there were powerful rulers (tributaries to Israel) who brought supplies to David which he would desperately need. They evidently preferred to have David as King rather than Absalom.

III. Chronology/Lists/Links.

BIBLE PERIOD: The Period of the United Kingdom.

If you are not familiar with the **15 Bible Periods**, please click here: <https://tinyurl.com/wl79hp7>

You can read an excellent article on Chronology from Wayne Jackson here:

<https://tinyurl.com/wylvljh>

LISTS:**1. 7-Fold Counsel of Ahithophel:**

- 1) Let me now choose 12,000 men (2 Sam 17.1).
- 2) I will pursue David this very night.
- 3) I will come upon him while he is weary and weak-handed (2 Sam 17.2)
- 4) I will make him afraid.
- 5) All the people that are with him shall flee.
- 6) I will smite the king only.
- 7) I will bring back all the people to you so all the people shall be in peace (2 Sam 17.3).

2. 7-Fold Counsel of Hushai:

- 1) The counsel of Ahithophel is not good at this time (2 Sam 17.7).
- 2) You know your father and his men, that they are mighty (2 Sam 17.8).
- 3) They are chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field.
- 4) Your father is a man of war, and will not lodge with the people.
- 5) He is hidden even now in some pit, or in some place of refuge (2 Sam 17.9).
- 6) If you go after him now and some of your men are overthrown, it will be reported that there is slaughter among the people that follow Absalom; this will cause the most valiant among your men to lose heart and give up (2 Sam 17.10).
- 7) All Israel knows what a mighty man your father is, and that those who are with him are valiant men (2 Sam 17.10).

[Dake Study Bible].

3. Interesting Words:

- 1) **ENROGEL** (2 Sam 17.17)... fountain of Rogel. A reservoir of water at the foot of Mount Zion; perhaps the same as the Pool of Siloam (Josh 15.7; 18.16; 1 Kgs 1.9; Jn 9.7).
- 2) **WENCH** (2 Sam 17.17)... Hebrew: *shiphchah* (H8198), a female slave. Translated WENCH only here. Other places: HANDMAID (Gen 16.1, et.al.), MAID (Gen 16.2-8, et.al.), MAIDSERVANT (Gen 12.16, et.al.), MAIDEN (Gen 30.18, et.al.), WOMENSERVANTS (Gen 20.14, et.al.), BONDMAID (Lev 19.20), BONDWOMAN (Dt 18.37, et.al.), HANDMAIDEN (Gen 33.6, et.al.), and SERVANT (1 Sam 25.41).
- 3) **AMASA** (2 Sam 17.25)... Son of David's sister Abigail; he had the same relationship to David as Joab and Abishai, sons of Zeruiah, David's other sister (2 Sam 17.25; 1 Chr 2.17). David forgave him and made him captain in place of Joab who later slew him (2 Sam 19.13; 20.4-12; 1 Kgs 2.5, 32).
- 4) **CHEESE OF KINE** (2 Sam 17.29)... cheese made from cow milk is first mentioned here, but cakes of cheese and curdled (cottage) cheese are mentioned elsewhere (1 Sam 17.18; Job 10.10).

[Dake Study Bible].

LINKS: *These links are to the writings of men and not to inspired Scripture, thus care and caution in weighing the conclusions is always wise. Some might not be online links, but listing of material commonly available in books and publications.*

1. Burton Coffman on 2 Samuel 17:
<https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/2-samuel-17.html>
2. David Guzik on 2 Samuel 17:
<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/2-samuel-17/>
3. Ahithophel ended his own life. An article on suicide from Wayne Jackson:
<https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/1339-is-suicide-the-answer> .

IV. Some Thoughts on the Text.

1. **Ahithophel advises David to send him out with 12,000 men that very night and he would strike David while he was weary (1-4).** The first part of this chapter has as its location Jerusalem and the activity is the reception of advice given to the usurper, Absalom. As has been the case so often, remarkably, David will once again receive help from another loyal friend. Since Ahithophel had such a strong reputation as a reliable advisor, the job of David's friend, Hushai will not be easy! David had assigned to Hushai the difficult task of defeating the counsel of Ahithophel, without revealing his loyalty to King David. To defeat that counsel, he would have to give different advice in such a convincing way that Absalom will reject what Ahithophel had advised. Verse 4 makes clear that Absalom listened to Ahithophel and found the advice made very good sense.
2. **Hushai urged Absalom to take time to round up a full army, then Absalom should lead that great army in battle and kill David and all of his men (5-14).** The main element of Hushai's suggested strategy involved using a longer period of time to round up more soldiers in preparation for battle with David and his battle-wise servants, which, of course, would also give David time to prepare. Absalom was obviously a PROUD man and I would think that the idea of leading a large army would have a certain appeal to his ego. First, though, Hushai lets it be known to Absalom that he appreciates that Ahithophel had given good advice (2 Sam 17.7), but that it was flawed in this particular instance. He paints a picture of what could happen if a portion of Absalom's forces were slaughtered. So Hushai wisely used both the pride of Absalom and his knowledge of the great experience his father had in battle. Besides all this, it was the Lord's will that Ahithophel's advice be rejected and that David should be victorious.
3. **The sons of the priests relay word to David about Ahithophel's advice and Hushai's advice given to Absalom (2 Sam 17.15-16).** David's pre-planned and VITAL communication line begins to do its work successfully (2 Sam 15.33-37).
4. **Jonathan and Ahimaaz were seen by a supporter of Absalom and they had to hide themselves briefly, but they were successful in warning David (17-22).** With the invaluable aid of some unknown woman (vv. 19-21, providential it seems to me, DRL), Ahimaaz and Jonathan, sons of the priests, were able to avoid disaster and pass on the important message they carried. David acts quickly upon the reception of the message and passed over the Jordan River. He will use the advantage he has been given well and eventually return to Jerusalem.
5. **Ahithophel hanged himself because his advice was not followed and he knew David would survive and most likely have him killed when he returned to Jerusalem (23).** Ahithophel knew well that the rejection of his strategy by Absalom was foolish and would lead to victory for David. In this instance, victory for David, at least in Ahithophel's thinking, meant death to

him. Because of his own choices, Ahithophel now found himself in a dilemma which he apparently had not considered when he decided to join in Absalom's rebellion. Rather than face execution as a traitor when David regained the throne, he decided to take his own life.

6. **David goes to Mahanaim, and Absalom is leading the army of Israel to find him (24).** Notice in the summary section above the two advantages David would have in Mahanaim, the particular place he chose to make his stand.
7. **Absalom selects Amasa to be Captain of his army (25-26).** See the note about Amasa in the INTERESTING WORDS section above.
6. **David has some wealthy friends who bring supplies to him (27-29).** "Those who helped David included Shobi (2 Sam 16.27), the son of Nahash, who had been king of Ammon, and who was probably the brother of Hanun, the present Ammonite king who had humiliated David's well-wishers (ch. 10). Ammon was presently subservient to Israel. David and Joab had subdued Ammon about 14 years earlier (2 Sam 12.26-31). Machir had been the host of Mephibosheth before David assumed his support and moved him to Jerusalem from Lo-debar (2 Sam 9.1-5). Barzillai was a wealthy supporter of David from Rogelim, a town farther to the north in Gilead. Shobi, Machir, and Barzillai demonstrate other characteristics of true friends: they initiated help for David and supplied him abundantly with his needs and wants" [Thomas Constable, *The Expository Notes of Dr. Constable*, e-Sword module].

V. Lessons & Applications.

- **Sometimes advice which seems right (2 Sam 17.4) ACTUALLY is right and yet we allow other thoughts to enter in and cause us to reject the good advice.** Absalom chose incorrectly to reject Ahithophel's advice. We cannot know exactly how it would have turned out if he had followed Ahithophel's plan to move quickly. But most likely, that would have been the better strategy of the two he considered. It is hard for me not to believe that Absalom allowed the pride of life to interfere in his decision-making in this instance. Remember, he was always telling the people how inferior his father was regarding care and concern for the interests of the people and how much better things would be if he were king—2 Samuel 15:4 *Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!* His pride was also his downfall. When Hushai planted the thought in his mind that he could gallop in leading a magnificent army to face his father, and then have a pleasant and easy victory over the great hero of Israel, his pride took over and could not resist to follow the friend of his enemy's advice. How foolish to let pride rule in our own lives! After all, Jesus teaches us that PRIDE is one of the things that absolutely DOES defile us (Mk 7.1-23). Let us learn from Absalom.
- **If you are seeking to defend a position, you are wise to give courteous consideration to the position you are seeking to overturn (2 Sam 17.7).** As did all Israel, Hushai knew Ahithophel had a reputation of giving sound advice. In fact, this amazing statement is given: 2 Samuel 16:23 *And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counselled in those days, was as if a man had enquired at the oracle of God: so was all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom.* More importantly, Hushai knew that Absalom had that same understanding of the value of Ahithophel's counsel. He was saying to Absalom, normally we should listen to Ahithophel, but there are certain circumstances here that need to be considered very carefully. For us as we seek to defend/promote the doctrine of Christ (2 John

1.9), let us use the same wisdom successfully used by David's friend here. Being ugly or disrespectful in approaching the super-serious matter of a person's eternal destiny is beyond foolish.

- **How important is good communication?** 2 Samuel 17:16 *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.* Without good communication, David, even the mighty warrior David, would have been in big trouble. There have been elders in the Lord's church who have been sued by members because of being secretive regarding financial matters of the church. Communication is a requirement for good cooperation and effectively accomplishing the Lord's work on earth.
- **The GREAT VALUE of loyalty to a great cause (2 Sam 17.17-22).** Obviously Jonathan and Ahimaaz were risking their lives and their fathers were also participants in the collusion which could cause the death of their sons. What could cause a father to risk his own son's life to accomplish some goal? Great loyalty to God and to God's servant! God was the One who chose David to be king. Whereas, Absalom was the one who chose Absalom to be king. There is that which is worth risking one's life; there are even causes worth risking the lives of one's child—as difficult as that surely would be. Surely submission to the Lord's will is that cause. The last nine verses of Luke 14 (Luke 14.25-33) teach those who would follow Christ that they must FIRST count the cost!
- **Finding oneself FIGHTING AGAINST GOD is never going to turn out well (2 Sam 17.23).** David was chosen by the God of heaven. To participate in removing the God-appointed king of God's people was a tragic mistake for both Absalom and Ahithophel. They both wound up DEAD. It is a great source of comfort and encouragement to faithfulness to read Paul's statement in Romans 8:31 *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?* Being on God's side as we walk in the light as He is in the light (1 John 1.7), surely is the position to hold! How foolish to leave the position where God is for us to the position where Satan is for us!
- **Prayer PLUS action—the winning combination followed by King David (2 Sam 15.31 + 2 Sam 17.22, 24).** David did not ONLY pray. He prayed, his prayer being answered with some helpful information, took advantage of the information to make preparation for battle with the rebels.
- **A PICTURE OF WONDERFUL COMPASSION— 2 Samuel 17:29** *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.* THE PEOPLE IS HUNGRY, AND WEARY, AND THIRSTY, IN THE WILDERNESS. This fact stated at the end of verse 29 was the motivation to act with kindness. These three men were heads of groups of people who were under the tributary control of Israel. Yes, their primary motivation may have been to express appreciation to David based upon political considerations. They likely considered in their minds whether they would be better off with David as king or Absalom and judged it best to choose David, likely based upon past dealings. However, the text does state the obvious fact that these people with David were in deep NEED as the reason for bringing their gifts. How sincere that statement might have been is debatable. Spiritually speaking, Christians can look everywhere around them and find precious souls who are likewise spiritually needy, wandering in the wilderness of sin, and can we allow this statement to move us to be similarly motivated?

VI. Questions.

True or False

- 01. ____ Ahithophel urged Absalom to send him after David the very night he was giving his advice to Absalom.
- 02. ____ Absalom stayed on the east side of the Jordan River.
- 03. ____ Hushai was unaware of what advice Ahithophel gave Absalom.
- 04. ____ The man whose death is recorded in this chapter is Ahimaaz.
- 05. ____ Hushai suggested gathering a LARGE army from Dan to Beersheba.

I Found it in Verse(s)

- 06. ____ Counting sand.
- 07. ____ Lentiles.
- 08. ____ Talk about David being weary and weak.
- 09. ____ Where Ahithophel died.
- 10. ____ The real reason Hushai’s counsel was accepted by Absalom.

Short Answer

- 11. How Ahithophel’s advice was received by Absalom.

- 12. The description of the bear to which David was compared in Hushai’s discourse.

- 13. The reason Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by Enrogel...

- 14. Place where Jonathan and Ahimaaz hid in Bahurim.

- 15. A description of David’s followers.

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: _____

Answers will be found on next week’s handout

ANSWERS to 2 Samuel 16 Questions... **01**—True 16; **02**—True, 19; **03**—True, 9-13; **04**—False, 9; **05**—False, 3; **06**—13; **07**—21; **08**—1; **09**—7; **10**—1) What meanest thou by these, 2) Where is thy master’s son (2-3); **11**—Ahithophel (21); **12**—requite him good (12); **13**—Requite him good (12); **14**— Come out (7); **15**— All the people, the men of Israel (15).

VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle. The words may be backwards, diagonal, upside down, etc. See if you can find them all. The more you use the words of the Bible, the greater blessed you will be! You might be surprised at how much this little exercise will help you retain important truths. THANK YOU for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. -DRL 5.82Wx6.32H

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 B O H K C U T H E N V
 W U U I O B R I N G N
 Y S S N U L F T C W W
 E E H G N F O H O E H
 J O A B S A L O M N E
 A R I S E T L P E T N
 T O L D L H O H C P S
 P E O P L E W E I A O
 S A I D O R D L T S M
 L O C A M E B A Y S E

ABSALOM	AHITHOPHEL	ARISE	BRING	CAME
CITY	COME	COUNSEL	DAVID	FATHER
FOLLOW	HOUSE	HUSHAI	ISRAEL	JOAB
KING	PASS	PEOPLE	SAID	SOME
THEN	THERE	THUS	TOLD	WELL
WENT	WHEN			

VIII. Crossword Puzzle.

2 Samuel 17 (KJV): From Your Friends at Maple Hill Church of Christ 3960 Scale RD, Benton, KY 42025 http://maplehillchurchofchrist.blog													
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<u>ACROSS</u>	<u>DOWN</u>
01) Ahithophel urged pursuing David this ____.	02) Ahithophel urged attack while David was weak ____.
04) Hushai compared David and his men to a female ____.	03) Place Jonathan and Ahimaaz went quickly.
06) Relationship of Abigail to Nahash.	05) All Israel knew David to be a ____ man.
10) The Lord ____ to defeat the counsel of Ahithophel.	07) He requested to command 12,000 men.
12) Time of day David crossed over the Jordan.	08) Amasa was given this title.
13) A girl or young woman.	09) Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not ____.
14) Coupled with Dan.	11) ____ gave advice for the king that he would not be swallowed up.