

2 Samuel 17

The Hidden Hand of God

THE PLAYERS:

David:	King of Israel
Absalom:	3 rd son; presumptive heir to the throne; celebrity; popular w/ people; great hair
Zadok & Abiathar:	2 current priests; faithful to David; stayed behind in Jerusalem to spy for David
Jonathan & Ahimaaz:	Sons of the two priests; also spies for David
Hushai:	Trusted senior advisor; part of royal court; stays in Jerusalem and pretends to switch loyalties to Absalom's rule. Why? to "frustrate the plans of Ahithophel." (2 Sam 15); David's instructions to him
Ahithophel: (Uh-HITH-oh-fel)	Former advisor to King David - Well known for his advice - Gift of wisdom - Grandfather of Bathsheeba - Left David and became counselor to Absalom

Outline for Ch 17:

Vs 1-4	Ahithophel's plan to destroy David
vs 5-14a	Hushai's alternative plan
v 14b	The plan that really mattered
vs 15-23	Covert actions to save David & his people
vs 24-29	Sweet generosity from far-away friends

Vs 1-4	Ahithophel's plan to destroy David
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Hushai Saves David

17 Moreover, Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Let me choose twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue David tonight. ² I will come upon him while he is weary and discouraged and throw him into a panic, and all the people who are with him will flee. I will strike down only the king, ³ and I will bring all the people back to you as a bride comes home to her husband. You seek the life of only one man, and all the people will be at peace." ⁴ And the advice seemed right in the eyes of Absalom and all the elders of Israel.

What are some of the distinctives of Ahithophel's plan?

⁵ Then Absalom said, "Call Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear what he has to say." ⁶ And when Hushai came to Absalom, Absalom said to him, "Thus has Ahithophel spoken; shall we do as he says? If not, you speak." ⁷ Then Hushai said to Absalom, "This time the counsel that Ahithophel has given is not good." ⁸ Hushai said, "You know that your father and his men are mighty men, and that they are enraged, like a bear robbed of her cubs in the field. Besides, your father is expert in war; he will not spend the night with the people. ⁹ Behold, even now he has hidden himself in one of the pits or in some other place. And as soon as some of the people fall at the first attack, whoever hears it will say, 'There has been a slaughter among the people who follow Absalom.' ¹⁰ Then even the valiant man, whose heart is like the heart of a lion, will utterly melt with fear, for all Israel knows that your father is a mighty man, and that those who are with him are valiant men. ¹¹ But my counsel is that all Israel be gathered to you, from Dan to Beersheba, as the sand by the sea for multitude, and that you go to battle in person. ¹² So we shall come upon him in some place where he is to be found, and we shall light upon him as the dew falls on the ground, and of him and all the men with him not one will be left. ¹³ If he withdraws into a city, then all Israel will bring ropes to that city, and we shall drag it into the valley, until not even a pebble is to be found there." ¹⁴ And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, "The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel."

What are some of the distinctives of Hushai's plan?

AHITHOPHEL'S PLAN	HUSHAI'S PLAN
Short; 42 Hebrew words	Long; 129 Hebrew words
Straight forward	Dramatic; emotional
Surgical strike; smaller army	Expansive strike
TONIGHT; while David is weary & discouraged	LATER; after recruiting & training a new army
Ahithophel leads	Absalom leads
Targets David	Targets David and all fugitives
People will return (no further reason to fight)	No people return; disloyal anyway
Appels to the future	Appeals to vengeance

3rd section

v 14b: THE PLAN THAT REALLY MATTERED

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 ordained to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, so that the LORD might bring harm upon Absalom.

Psalm 33

**10 The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;
he frustrates the plans of the peoples.**

**11 The counsel of the LORD stands forever,
the plans of his heart to all generations.**

Proverbs 21

**The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD;
he turns it wherever he will.**

Where do we see the hand of God—just in these 3 sections?

Scene	God's Hand	God's Attributes
Absalom seeks advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gets great advice but wants 2nd opinion • Calls on Hushai, specifically (David's spy) • Absalom repeats Ahithophel's plan (Hushai's benefit) • Absalom & elders like Hushai's plan best • This decision ensures Absalom's failure & David's success (God's purposes) • Turns Ahithophel's counsel to foolishness (David's prayer) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes minds/hearts • Gives words & abilities when needed • Grants favor in hostile events • Uses evil for his own purposes • His plans cannot be thwarted • Can ordain evil (or anything) for good • Sovereignty can be hidden behind the mundane • Never absent, but not always obvious • Answers prayer

4th Section:

vs 15-23 **Covert actions to save David & his people**

15 Then Hushai said to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, "Thus and so did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel, and thus and so have I counseled. 16 Now therefore send quickly and tell David, 'Do not stay tonight at the fords of the wilderness, but by all means pass over, lest the king and all the people who are with him be swallowed up.'"



One of the narrow fords at River Jordan (shallow crossing point)

17 Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz were waiting at En-rogel.



1857 photo taken from En-Rogel spring -- looking up to Jerusalem

¹⁷ Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz were waiting at En-rogel. A female servant was to go and tell them, and they were to go and tell King David, for they were not to be seen entering the city. ¹⁸ But a young man saw them and told Absalom. So both of them went away quickly and came to the house of a man at Bahurim, who had a well in his courtyard. And they went down into it. ¹⁹ And the woman took and spread a covering over the well's mouth and scattered grain on it, and nothing was known of it. ²⁰ When Absalom's servants came to the woman at the house, they said, "Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?" And the woman said to them, "They have gone over the brook of water." And when they had sought and could not find them, they returned to Jerusalem.

²¹ After they had gone, the men came up out of the well, and went and told King David. They said to David, "Arise, and go quickly over the water, for thus and so has Ahithophel counseled against you." ²² Then David arose, and all the people who were with him, and they crossed the Jordan. By daybreak not one was left who had not crossed the Jordan.

²³ When Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his donkey and went off home to his own city. He set his house in order and hanged himself, and he died and was buried in the tomb of his father.

Where do we see the hand of God?

Scenes	God's Hand	God's Attributes
Secret messages sent. Secrets are blown David/people end-up safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives David clarity to choose in advance: Hushai, priests, sons. Fruits are evident now • Hushai's extra advice to keep moving beyond Jordan • Provides friends in Bahurim willing to hide the sons • Assures the sons are not found • Messages transmitted & received in tact • Grace & mercy to cross Jordan before sunrise • David's eventual victory was assured by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 unnamed women (servant & homeowner) - 1 young man who tattled & sped events along 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouragements thru little Providences • He knows our circumstances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - where we are - what's in our future • He knows HOW to protect His own • He gives strength, grace & mercy at the right time • He uses anyone to accomplish His plans (often the lowliest)

Last Section

vs 24-29 **Sweet generosity from far-away friends**

²⁴ Then David came to Mahanaim. And Absalom crossed the Jordan with all the men of Israel. ²⁵ Now Absalom had set Amasa over the army instead of Joab. Amasa was the son of a man named Ithra the Ishmaelite, who had married Abigail the daughter of Nahash, sister of Zeruiah, Joab's mother. ²⁶ And Israel and Absalom encamped in the land of Gilead. [Gilead = region east of Jordan; means "rocky"]

²⁷ When David came to Mahanaim, Shobi the son of Nahash from Rabbah of the Ammonites, and Machir the son of Ammiel from Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim, ²⁸ brought beds, basins, and earthen vessels, wheat, barley, flour, parched grain, beans and lentils, ²⁹ honey and curds and sheep and cheese from the herd, for David and the people with him to eat, for they said, "The people are hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness."

Remember, the kingdom was under attack---but also under God's protection

Where do we see the hand of God?

Scenes	God's Hand	God's Attributes
Both David & Absalom arrive to east of Jordan (Gilead Region) Old friends arrive with provisions & encouragement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes the confrontation between Absalom & David come quicker (less fugitive living for Israel) • Brought grace, mercy and encouragement from old friends. • More resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouragements thru little Providences • God is our provider • He knows what we want & need • He knows when we need help • Apart from God, we can do nothing