



A House Divided (Part 1): Trouble in David's Family (2 Sam 17-18)

Notes: Week Nine

*** Please note that Scripture Studies (SS) and the Sermon Focus aim to be similar, but the objective of our Scripture Studies is to lead you through the book of 2 Samuel **chapter by chapter** whereas the Sermon focus deals with various **themes** found in 2 Samuel.*

2 Samuel 17-18 (HCSB)

¹ Ahithophel said to Absalom, “Let me choose 12,000 men, and I will set out in pursuit of David tonight. ² I will attack him while he is weak and weary, throw him into a panic, and all the people with him will scatter. I will strike down only the king ³ and bring all the people back to you. When everyone returns except the man you’re seeking, all^[a] the people will be at peace.” ⁴ This proposal seemed good to Absalom and all the elders of Israel.

⁵ Then Absalom said, “Summon Hushai the Archite also. Let’s hear what he has to say as well.”

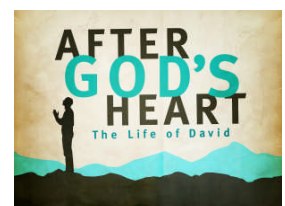
⁶ So Hushai came to Absalom, and Absalom told him: “Ahithophel offered this proposal. Should we carry out his proposal? If not, what do you say?”

⁷ Hushai replied to Absalom, “The advice Ahithophel has given this time is not good.” ⁸ Hushai continued, “You know your father and his men. They are warriors and are desperate like a wild bear robbed of her cubs. Your father is an experienced soldier who won’t spend the night with the people. ⁹ He’s probably already hiding in one of the caves^[b] or some other place. If some of our troops fall^[c] first, someone is sure to hear and say, ‘There’s been a slaughter among the people who follow Absalom.’ ¹⁰ Then, even a brave man with the heart of a lion will melt because all Israel knows that your father and the valiant men with him are warriors. ¹¹ Instead, I advise that all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba—as numerous as the sand by the sea—be gathered to you and that you personally go into battle. ¹² Then we will attack David wherever we find him, and we will descend on him like dew on the ground. Not even one will be left of all the men with him. ¹³ If he retreats to some city, all Israel will bring ropes to that city, and we will drag its stones into the valley until not even a pebble can be found there.” ¹⁴ Since the LORD had decreed that Ahithophel’s good advice be undermined in order to bring about Absalom’s ruin, Absalom and all the men of Israel said, “The advice of Hushai the Archite is better than Ahithophel’s advice.”

David Informed of Absalom’s Plans

¹⁵ Hushai then told the priests Zadok and Abiathar, “This is what^[d] Ahithophel advised Absalom and the elders of Israel, and this is what^[e] I advised. ¹⁶ Now send someone quickly and tell David, ‘Don’t spend the night at the wilderness ford of the Jordan, but be sure to cross over, or the king and all the people with him will be destroyed.’”

¹⁷ Jonathan and Ahimaaz were staying at En-rogel, where a servant girl would come and pass along information to them. They in turn would go and inform King David, because they dared not be seen entering the city. ¹⁸ However, a young man did see them and informed Absalom. So the two left quickly and came to the house of a man in Bahurim. He had a well in his courtyard, and



they climbed down into it. ¹⁹ Then his wife took the cover, placed it over the mouth of the well, and scattered grain on it so nobody would know anything.

²⁰ Absalom's servants came to the woman at the house and asked, "Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?" "They passed by toward the water," ^[l] the woman replied to them. The men searched but did not find them, so they returned to Jerusalem.

²¹ After they had gone, Ahimaaz and Jonathan climbed out of the well and went and informed King David. They told him, "Get up and immediately ford the river, for Ahithophel has given this advice against you." ²² So David and all the people with him got up and crossed the Jordan. By daybreak, there was no one who had not crossed the Jordan. ²³ When Ahithophel realized that his advice had not been followed, he saddled his donkey and set out for his house in his hometown. He set his affairs in order ^[g] and hanged himself. So he died and was buried in his father's tomb.

²⁴ David had arrived at Mahanaim by the time Absalom crossed the Jordan with all the men of Israel. ²⁵ Now Absalom had appointed Amasa over the army in Joab's place. Amasa was the son of a man named Ithra ^[h] the Israelite; ^[i] Ithra had married Abigail daughter of Nahash. ^[j] Abigail was a sister to Zeruah, Joab's mother. ²⁶ And Israel and Absalom camped in the land of Gilead. ²⁷ When David came to Mahanaim, Shobi son of Nahash from Rabbah of the Ammonites, Machir son of Ammiel from Lodebar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim ²⁸ brought beds, basins, ^[k] and pottery items. They also brought wheat, barley, flour, roasted grain, beans, lentils, ^[l] ²⁹ honey, curds, sheep, and cheese ^[m] from the herd for David and the people with him to eat. They had reasoned, "The people must be hungry, exhausted, and thirsty in the desert."

Absalom's Defeat

¹⁸ David reviewed his troops and appointed commanders of hundreds and of thousands over them. ² He then sent out the troops, a third under Joab, a third under Joab's brother Abishai son of Zeruah, and a third under Ittai the Gittite. The king said to the troops, "I will also march out with you."

³ "You must not go!" the people pleaded. "If we have to flee, they will not pay any attention to us. Even if half of us die, they will not pay any attention to us because you are worth ^[n] 10,000 of us. Therefore, it is better if you support us from the city."

⁴ "I will do whatever you think is best," the king replied to them. So he stood beside the gate while all the troops marched out by hundreds and thousands. ⁵ The king commanded Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, "Treat the young man Absalom gently for my sake." All the people heard the king's orders to all the commanders about Absalom.

⁶ Then David's forces marched into the field to engage Israel in battle, which took place in the forest of Ephraim. ⁷ The people of Israel were defeated by David's soldiers, and the slaughter there was vast that day—20,000 casualties. ⁸ The battle spread over the entire region, and that day the forest claimed more people than the sword.

Absalom's Death

⁹ Absalom was riding on his mule when he happened to meet David's soldiers. When the mule went under the tangled branches of a large oak tree, Absalom's head was caught fast in the tree. The mule under him kept going, so he was suspended in midair. ^[o] ¹⁰ One of the men saw him and informed Joab. He said, "I just saw Absalom hanging in an oak tree!"

¹¹ "You just saw him!" Joab exclaimed. ^[p] "Why didn't you strike him to the ground right there? I would have given you 10 silver pieces ^[q] and a belt!"

¹² The man replied to Joab, “Even if I had the weight of 1,000 pieces of silver^[t] in my hand, I would not raise my hand against the king’s son. For we heard the king command you, Abishai, and Ittai, ‘Protect the young man Absalom for me.’^[s] ¹³ If I had jeopardized my own^[t] life—and nothing is hidden from the king—you would have abandoned me.”

¹⁴ Joab said, “I’m not going to waste time with you!” He then took three spears in his hand and thrust them into Absalom’s heart while he was still alive in the oak tree, ¹⁵ and 10 young men who were Joab’s armor-bearers surrounded Absalom, struck him, and killed him.

¹⁶ Afterward, Joab blew the ram’s horn, and the troops broke off their pursuit of Israel because Joab restrained them. ¹⁷ They took Absalom, threw him into a large pit in the forest, and piled a huge mound of stones over him. And all Israel fled, each to his tent.

¹⁸ When he was alive, Absalom had set up a pillar for himself in the King’s Valley, for he had said, “I have no son to preserve the memory of my name.” So he gave the pillar his name. It is still called Absalom’s Monument today.

¹⁹ Ahimaaz son of Zadok said, “Please let me run and tell the king the good news that the LORD has delivered him from his enemies.”

²⁰ Joab replied to him, “You are not the man to take good news today. You may do it another day, but today you aren’t taking good news, because the king’s son is dead.” ²¹ Joab then said to the Cushite, “Go tell the king what you have seen.” The Cushite bowed to Joab and took off running.

²² However, Ahimaaz son of Zadok persisted and said to Joab, “No matter what, please let me also run behind the Cushite!”

Joab replied, “My son, why do you want to run since you won’t get a reward?”

²³ “No matter what, I want to run!”

“Then run!” Joab said to him. So Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain and outran the Cushite.

²⁴ David was sitting between the two gates when the watchman went up to the roof of the gate and over to the wall. The watchman looked out and saw a man running alone. ²⁵ He called out and told the king.

The king said, “If he’s alone, he bears good news.”

As the first runner came closer, ²⁶ the watchman saw another man running. He called out to the gatekeeper, “Look! Another man is running alone!”

“This one is also bringing good news,” said the king.

²⁷ The watchman said, “The way the first man runs looks to me like the way Ahimaaz son of Zadok runs.”

“This is a good man; he comes with good news,” the king commented.

²⁸ Ahimaaz called out to the king, “All is well,” and then bowed down to the king with his face to the ground. He continued, “May the LORD your God be praised! He delivered up the men who rebelled against my lord the king.”

²⁹ The king asked, “Is the young man Absalom all right?”

Ahimaaz replied, “When Joab sent the king’s servant and your servant, I saw a big disturbance, but I don’t know what it was.”

³⁰ The king said, “Move aside and stand here.” So he stood to one side.

³¹ Just then the Cushite came and said, “May my lord the king hear the good news: today the LORD has delivered you from all those rising up against you!”

³² The king asked the Cushite, “Is the young man Absalom all right?”

The Cushite replied, “May what has become of the young man happen to the enemies of my lord the king and to all who rise up against you with evil intent.”

³³ ^[u] The king was deeply moved and went up to the gate chamber and wept. As he walked, he cried, “My son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you, Absalom, my son, my son!”

Footnotes:

- a. [2 Samuel 17:3](#) LXX reads *to you as a bride returns to her husband. You seek the life of only one man, and all*
- b. [2 Samuel 17:9](#) Or *pits, or ravines*
- c. [2 Samuel 17:9](#) Lit *And it will be when a falling on them at*
- d. [2 Samuel 17:15](#) Lit *Like this and like this*
- e. [2 Samuel 17:15](#) Lit *and like this and like this*
- f. [2 Samuel 17:20](#) Or *brook*; Hb obscure
- g. [2 Samuel 17:23](#) Lit *He commanded his house*
- h. [2 Samuel 17:25](#) Or *Jether*
- i. [2 Samuel 17:25](#) Some LXX mss read *Ishmaelite*
- j. [2 Samuel 17:25](#) Some LXX mss read *Jesse*
- k. [2 Samuel 17:28](#) LXX reads *brought 10 embroidered beds with double coverings, 10 vessels*
- l. [2 Samuel 17:28](#) LXX, Syr; MT adds *roasted grain*
- m. [2 Samuel 17:29](#) Hb obscure
- n. [2 Samuel 18:3](#) Some Hb mss, LXX, Vg; other Hb mss read *because there would now be about*
- o. [2 Samuel 18:9](#) Lit *was between heaven and earth*
- p. [2 Samuel 18:11](#) Lit *Joab said to the man who told him*
- q. [2 Samuel 18:11](#) About 4 ounces of silver
- r. [2 Samuel 18:12](#) About 25 pounds of silver
- s. [2 Samuel 18:12](#) Some Hb mss, LXX, Tg, Vg; other Hb mss read *Protect, whoever, the young man Absalom*; Hb obscure
- t. [2 Samuel 18:13](#) Alt Hb tradition reads *jeopardized his*
- u. [2 Samuel 18:33](#) 2Sm 19:1 in Hb

Holman Christian Standard Bible - *Study Bible*¹

2 Samuel 17-18

2 Samuel 17

17:2 Ahithophel believed panic would envelop David and his followers if Absalom's forces came upon them while the king was weak and weary. Rather than turning the battle into a civil war, Ahithophel would then strike down only the king.

17:3 Ahithophel thought if David could be killed quickly, all the people would accept Absalom's kingship.

17:6 Hushai probably knew Ahithophel's proposal would succeed. He had to convince Absalom to delay in pressing the attack against David.

17:7 Hushai's negative evaluation was probably surprising to his hearers in view of Ahithophel's reputation ([16:23](#)).

17:8-10 Hushai cited David's military genius. The king would anticipate Absalom's quick strike and hence would not spend the night with the people but would hide in one of the many caves (or pits or ravines) on the northern edge of the Dead Sea. Further, any news of a setback among the people who followed Absalom could lead to popular support swinging back to David again.

17:11 From Dan to Beer-sheba was a distance of 110 miles. The two cities basically served as the northern and southern points of Israel, so Hushai is calling for a nation-wide muster. Hushai's proposal was much more extensive and time-consuming, giving David and his forces time to regroup.

17:12 Hushai suggested that David and all the men with him should die—well beyond what Ahithophel had proposed. This strategy might appeal to Absalom's vengeful pride.

17:14 The Lord guided the fateful discussion to answer David's prayer ([15:31](#)).

17:15 Now that he knew Absalom's strategy, Hushai moved quickly to relay the information to Zadok and Abiathar ([15:27-29](#)).

17:16 Having received some escape time through Hushai's counsel to Absalom, David's forces needed to put distance between themselves and Absalom's forces as quickly as possible. Of course, if Absalom decided to follow Ahithophel's advice after all, Hushai's advice to David was all the more urgent.

17:17 En-rogel was a spring in the Kidron Valley about one-fourth of a mile from Jerusalem where the Kidron and Hinnom valleys met.

17:18 Bahurim was the village in Benjamin from which Shimei came ([16:5](#)).

17:19 The woman scattered grain to make it look like the cover had not been recently disturbed.

17:20 Absalom's servants must have received word that Ahimaaz and Jonathan had gone to or toward Bahurim.

1. Jeremy Royal Howard, ed., *HCSB Study Bible*, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2010), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "2 Samuel 17-18".

[17:21](#) The advice of Ahimaaz and Jonathan further suggested that it was still uncertain what Absalom would do ([v. 16](#)).

[17:23](#) Ahithophel knew that since his advice had not been followed, David would regain the throne. And when David was re-established, Ahithophel would be considered a traitor. Thus he committed suicide.

[17:24](#) Mahanaim was more than 30 miles from Jerusalem. So David and his men may have been about 20 miles from Absalom when he crossed the Jordan.

[17:25](#) Amasa was another of David's nephews and a cousin of Joab and Abishai ([19:13](#); [20:8-13](#)).

[17:27](#) Machir had cared for Mephibosheth before David brought Mephibosheth to his palace ([9:4](#)).

[17:28-29](#) These men of influence knew about David's quick flight from Jerusalem, and they brought him food and supplies. These provisions restored the bodies and spirits of the king's group.

2 Samuel 18

[18:1](#) The phrase commanders of hundreds and of thousands shows that David had been able to rally considerable support for his cause.

[18:2](#) Dividing his warriors into thirds would provide David more flexibility in battling Absalom's forces.

[18:3](#) The people considered David's suggestion to march out with them too risky, so they prevailed on him to support them from the city—to stay away from direct confrontation with Absalom's forces.

[18:5](#) The text makes it clear that David gave specific instructions about Absalom's treatment, and it emphasizes that all the people heard the king's orders.

[18:6](#) The forest of Ephraim lay a few miles northwest of Mahanaim.

[18:7-8](#) David divided his troops into three groups. This allowed him to spread Absalom's forces thinly over the entire region, preventing their united stand in the open country where their superior numbers would give them the advantage. A forest presented natural obstacles or threats such as wild animals, pits, low branches, and marshes.

[18:11](#) Joab learned about Absalom's defenseless position. David's general had once again determined to take matters into his own hands for what he believed to be the king's own good.

[18:12](#) This soldier was not ready to disobey a charge that David had given his generals. He also repeated David's charge; the writer is making it clear that Joab knew David's command.

[18:13](#) The warriors did not trust Joab. If they killed Absalom, they thought Joab might let the blame fall on them.

[18:14-15](#) Now at the place where Absalom was hanging alive in the oak tree, Joab and his men surrounded him, struck him, and killed him in violation of David's order.

[18:16](#) Joab then blew the ram's horn to assemble the troops ([2:28](#); [20:1,22](#)). With Absalom dead, the battle was over.

[18:17](#) All Absalom's supporters fled, uncertain what reprisal might come from David's victorious forces. Absalom's body was taken down and thrown into a large pit in the forest and covered with a huge mound of stones, thus denying him a place in his family's tombs and dishonoring him in his death ([Jos 7:26](#)).

[18:18](#) Absalom had claimed that he had no son. Actually, he had three sons ([14:27](#)), so they must have preceded him in death.

[18:19](#) Ahimaaz had been David's trusted messenger throughout the ordeal, and now he wished to carry the good news of David's victory. He also may have thought he could more gently break the news of Absalom's death to his father than another messenger could.

[18:20](#) Certain runners brought good news and others brought bad news. That way, as soon as a runner was recognized, the people knew the basic outcome ([v. 27](#)). Sometimes a solitary runner indicated good news and two runners together indicated bad news ([vv. 25-26](#)).

[18:23](#) Ahimaaz appears to have taken the longer but easier route and thus outran the Cushite.

[18:27](#) David's recognition of Ahimaaz brought the king hope that all was well.

[18:28](#) Ahimaaz announced David's victory without specifically mentioning Absalom's death.

[18:29](#) David's question revealed the focus of his concern. Ahimaaz, who knew the truth, suddenly found himself at a loss for words.

[18:32](#) After the Cushite responded essentially as Ahimaaz had ([vv. 28,31](#)), David's further inquiry specifically about Absalom brought the reply the king did not want to hear. The kingdom was David's again, but he had lost another son.

[18:33](#) The gate chamber over the gate provided isolation for David, though the sound of his wailing could be heard by others ([19:1](#)).

English Standard Version - *Study Bible*²

2 Samuel 17-18

2 Samuel 17

17:1-23 This chapter presents the crucial contest between Ahithophel and Hushai before Absalom and the elders of Israel ([vv. 4, 14](#)). Ahithophel makes the very sound proposal to attack and kill David immediately. With no one else to turn to, he says, the whole country would embrace Absalom. If this “good counsel” ([v. 14](#)) had been followed, it is likely that David, whose large group was indeed **weary and discouraged** ([v. 2](#); see [16:14](#)), would have been defeated. Absalom, however, decides to hear the opinion of Hushai. He trusts him enough to hear him but, sensibly, not enough to invite him to take part in the deliberations of the war council (**Call Hushai**, [17:5](#)). Hushai gives a vivid, time-consuming speech full of similes, making a proposal that is flattering to Absalom as leader of **all Israel** ([v. 11](#)), but that will let David regroup and choose his own time and place of battle with his experienced, trained force. Hushai apparently then withdraws while the council considers the proposals. Hushai knows that if Ahithophel’s advice is accepted, there will be no time to lose, so even before he hears the results of the deliberations he sends word to David that he should at least cross the Jordan River ([vv. 15-16](#)). The council rejects Ahithophel’s good counsel in favor of Hushai’s deceptive and wrong counsel. The writer specifically says that this rejection was the work of the Lord: **for the LORD had ordained to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel** ([v. 14](#)). The poor decision seals Absalom’s doom. When Absalom finally gathers his army and goes after David ([v. 24](#)), David is already in Mahanaim in Gilead, with the forest of Ephraim ([18:6](#)) between him and Absalom.

17:1 Ahithophel suggests that he himself lead the force against David.

17:7-13 my counsel is that all Israel be gathered to you... and that you go to battle in person ([v. 11](#)). Hushai appeals to Absalom’s pride and suggests that Absalom, not Ahithophel, should gather even more support and then personally lead the forces against David ([v. 11](#)). Hushai also stresses the undisputed facts of the bravery of David and his men and David’s reputation as a soldier among all Israel.

17:13 Cities were often attacked by pulling down the walls by means of **ropes** attached to grappling hooks. Since cities were usually built on high places, they were hard to rebuild once the stones of their walls had been dragged **into the valley**. For attacking an entire **city** in order to get one person who had fled there, cf. [1 Sam. 23:7-13](#); [2 Sam. 20:14-22](#).

17:17 **En-rogel**, now known as “Job’s Well,” is just south of where the Kidron Valley joins the Hinnom Valley, on the boundary between Judah and Benjamin ([Josh. 15:7](#); [18:16](#)). It would have been dangerous for the priests’ sons, apparently known supporters of David ([2 Sam. 17:18](#)), to be seen in Jerusalem. Therefore, a necessary link in the chain from Hushai to David is the **female servant**, probably a maid in the household of one of the priests whose normal duties took her to the water.

17:23 **He set his house in order and hanged himself**. Ahithophel is wise enough to realize that the rejection of his advice means the defeat of Absalom and his own ruin, for God is with David, not Absalom.

17:24-29 **David Arrives at Mahanaim**. From the place where he crossed the Jordan River (see [16:14](#)), David had traveled another 37 miles (59 km) north.

2. Lane T. Dennis, ed., *ESV Study Bible, The: English Standard Version*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Bibles, 2008), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, Under: "2 Samuel 17-18".

[17:24](#) As Hushai suggested ([v. 11](#)), Absalom gathers **all the men of Israel** and goes after David.

[17:25](#) For Absalom's cousin **Amasa**, see note on [2:13](#).

[17:27](#) **Mahanaim**, a city in the deep canyon of the Jabbok River, is where Ish-bosheth had his capital. **Shobi the son of Nahash from Rabbah of the Ammonites** apparently was the brother of Hanun, the king of Ammon ([10:2](#)). David had probably set him on the throne in place of his brother ([12:30](#)). It is remarkable that he did not try to revolt at this time. **Machir** had sheltered Mephibosheth in his childhood ([9:4](#)). **Barzillai** later accompanies David on his trip back to Jerusalem ([19:31-39](#)). The fact that these people came from a distance suggests that David had real support in the area of Gilead.

2 Samuel 18

[18:1-19:8a](#) **Death of Absalom.** After a brief description of the battle, the author focuses on how Absalom died and on David's grief over his son's death.

[18:2-3](#) **Ittai** was mentioned in [15:19](#). David's men believe that the success or failure of the rebellion depends on whether Absalom can kill David, an opinion that was also expressed by Ahithophel ([17:3](#)).

[18:5](#) **Deal gently... with... Absalom.** Why did David make this request? Was it out of pure fatherly love, or also a feeling of guilt toward Absalom?

[18:6-8](#) The **forest of Ephraim** was actually not in Ephraim, but east of the Jordan in Gilead. Gilead was apparently known for its forests ([Jer. 22:6](#)). Here David's experienced army could effectively attack a much larger force, most of whom were apparently unable to move around effectively in a forest (**the forest devoured more people... than the sword**).

[18:9](#) Mules were the normal mounts of the king's sons ([13:29](#)). **his head caught fast in the oak.** Most take this to mean that the specific part of Absalom's head that got tangled in the tree was his hair (cf. [14:26](#)). In God's providence, the source of his pride became the cause of his downfall.

[18:14](#) The narrator stresses repeatedly ([vv. 5, 12](#)) that David had ordered all the troops to spare Absalom. **Joab** probably worries that Absalom, who had risen from disgrace once before, even using Joab himself ([14:1-24](#)), might be able to cause problems again.

[18:17](#) **every one to his own home.** See note on [1 Sam. 4:10](#).

[18:18](#) **I have no son.** See note on [14:27](#). The author contrasts the memorial pillar with Absalom's actual tomb, a big pile of rocks ([18:17](#); cf. [Josh. 7:26](#); [8:29](#)). The "Absalom's Tomb" now seen in the Kidron Valley in Jerusalem is a Hellenistic or Roman-period structure.

[18:19-23](#) **today you shall carry no news, because the king's son is dead.** Joab does not seem to be trying to hide anything from David (**Go, tell the king what you have seen**). But he apparently wants to protect **Ahimaaz, son of Zadok** the priest, from having to deliver the bad news to David. **Then Ahimaaz... outran the Cushite.** It may be that the Cushite took a direct road over the mountains, while Ahimaaz took the longer but easier way along the plain.

[18:24](#) The **two gates** are the outer gate and the inner gate of the gate complex.

[18:25](#) A man running **alone** would be a messenger; a group would probably be men fleeing.

18:29 a great commotion. Ahimaaz may have been trying to break the news gently. He must have known Absalom was dead, or else he would have just said he did not know anything.

18:33 O Absalom, my son, my son! David is overcome with grief. He has lost another son whom he loved. First he lost Absalom's love and loyalty, and now he has lost Absalom's life and all hope of reconciliation. It is possible that David is beginning to see how God's punishment for his sin with Bathsheba (prophesied by Nathan in [12:10-11](#)) has tragically come to pass; but his grief is clouding his sight of his duties toward his loyal troops ([19:1-8](#)).

NLT Life Application Study Bible³ *2 Samuel 17-18*

Chapter 17

17:11 Hushai appealed to Absalom through flattery, and Absalom's vanity became his own trap. Hushai predicted great glory for Absalom if he personally led the entire army against David.

"Pride goes before destruction" ([Proverbs 16:18](#)) is an appropriate comment on Absalom's ambitions.

17:25 Joab and Amasa were David's nephews and Absalom's cousins. Because Joab had left Jerusalem with David (see [18:5](#), 10ff), Amasa took his place as commander of Israel's troops.

Chapter 18

18:1 David took command as he had in former days. In recent years, his life had been characterized by indecisiveness and moral paralysis. At this time he began to take charge and do his duty.

18:12-14 This man had caught Joab in his hypocrisy. He knew Joab would have turned on him for killing the man if the king had found out about it. Joab could not answer, but only dismissed him. Those about to do evil often do not take the time to consider what they are about to do. They don't care whether or not it is right or lawful. Don't rush into action without thinking. Consider whether what you are about to do is right or wrong.

18:29 Although he reached the city first, Ahimaaz was afraid to tell the king the truth about the death of his son Absalom.

18:33 Why was David so upset over the death of his rebel son? (1) David realized that he, in part, was responsible for Absalom's death. Nathan the prophet had said that because David had killed Uriah, his own sons would rebel against him. (2) David was angry at Joab and his officers for killing Absalom against his wishes. (3) David truly loved his son, even though Absalom did nothing to deserve his love. It would have been kinder and more loving to deal with Absalom and his runaway ego when he was younger.

3. *Life Application Study Bible*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), WORDsearch CROSS e-book, 491-494.