

**Bringing Back The King (2 Sam. 17:1-19:43, 23:1-7)**

**Ahithophel’s Advice (2 Sam. 17:1-4)**

*1 Moreover Ahithophel said to Absalom, “Now 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 weak, and make him afraid. And all the people who are with him will flee, and I will strike only the king. 3 Then I will bring back all the people to you. When all return except the man whom you seek, all the people will be at peace.” 4 And the saying pleased Absalom and all the elders of Israel.*

- Notice: there is no one to speak on David’s behalf or to suggest leniency.

**Hushai’s Counsel (2 Sam. 17:5-14)**

*5 Then Absalom said, “Now call Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear what he says too.” 6 And when Hushai came to Absalom, Absalom spoke to him, saying, “Ahithophel has spoken in this manner. Shall we do as he says? If not, speak up.”*

*7 So Hushai said to Absalom: “The advice that Ahithophel has given is not good at this time. 8 For,” said Hushai, “you know your father and his men, that they are mighty men, and they are enraged in their minds, like a bear robbed of her cubs in the field; and your father is a man of war, and will not camp with the people. 9 Surely by now he is hidden in some pit, or in some other place. And it will be, when some of them are overthrown at the first, that whoever hears it will say, ‘There is a slaughter among the people who follow Absalom.’ 10 And even he who is valiant, whose heart is like the heart of a lion, will melt completely. For all Israel knows that your father is a mighty*

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man, and those who are with him are valiant men.

11 Therefore I advise that all Israel be fully gathered to you, from Dan to Beersheba, like the sand that is by the sea for multitude, and that you go to battle in person. 12 So we will come upon him in some place where he may be found, and we will fall on him as the dew falls on the ground. And of him and all the men who are with him there shall not be left so much as one. 13 Moreover, if he has withdrawn into a city, then all Israel shall bring ropes to that city; and we will pull it into the river, until there is not one small stone found there.”

14 So Absalom and all the men of Israel said, “The advice of Hushai the Archite is better than the advice of Ahithophel.” For the LORD had purposed to defeat the good advice of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring disaster on Absalom.

- Ahithophel’s advice was sound, but Hushai’s advice was very clever.
- He knew how to appeal to Absalom’s vanity, and give David time to get away.

### **David’s Spy Network (2 Sam. 17:15-23)**

15 Then Hushai said to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, “Thus and so Ahithophel advised Absalom and the elders of Israel, and thus and so I have advised. 16 Now therefore, send quickly and tell David, saying, ‘Do not spend this night in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily cross over, lest the king and all the people who are with him be swallowed up.’”

17 Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed at En Rogel, for they dared not be seen coming into the city; so a female servant would come and tell them, and they would go and tell King David. 18 Nevertheless a lad saw them, and told Absalom. But both of them went away quickly and came to a man’s house in Bahurim, who had a well in his court; and they went down into it. 19 Then the woman took and spread a covering

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over the well's mouth, and spread ground grain on it; and the thing was not known. 20 And when Absalom's servants came to the woman at the house, they said, "Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?" So the woman said to them, "They have gone over the water brook." And when they had searched and could not find them, they returned to Jerusalem.

21 Now it came to pass, after they had departed, that they came up out of the well and went and told King David, and said to David, "Arise and cross over the water quickly. For thus has Ahithophel advised against you." 22 So David and all the people who were with him arose and crossed over the Jordan. By morning light not one of them was left who had not gone over the Jordan.

23 Now when Ahithophel saw that his advice was not followed, he saddled a donkey, and arose and went home to his house, to his city. Then he put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died; and he was buried in his father's tomb.

- Once Ahithophel realized his advice was not going to be followed, he knew there would be no way to prevail.

### **David Helped (2 Sam. 17:24-29)**

24 Then David went to Mahanaim. And Absalom crossed over the Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him. 25 And Absalom made Amasa captain of the army instead of Joab. This Amasa was the son of a man whose name was Jithra, an Israelite, who had gone in to Abigail the daughter of Nahash, sister of Zeruiah, Joab's mother. 26 So Israel and Absalom encamped in the land of Gilead.

27 Now it happened, when David had come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash from Rabbah of the people of Ammon, Machir the son of Ammiel from Lo

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*Debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim, 28 brought beds and basins, earthen vessels and wheat, barley and flour, parched grain and beans, lentils and parched seeds, 29 honey and curds, sheep and cheese of the herd, for David and the people who were with him to eat. For they said, “The people are hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness.”*

- Since Joab left, Absalom made Amasa his general. Amasa’s father had apparently raped Joab’s cousin, who would also have been David’s niece.
- One of David’s helpers is the son of the king of the Ammonites.
- Another man who helps is Machir, who had previously helped Mephibosheth.

**Preparing For Battle (2 Sam. 18:1-5)**

*1 And David numbered the people who were with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them. 2 Then David sent out one third of the people under the hand of Joab, one third under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab’s brother, and one third under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said to the people, “I also will surely go out with you myself.” 3 But the people answered, “You shall not go out! For if we flee away, they will not care about us; nor if half of us die, will they care about us. But you are worth ten thousand of us now. For you are now more help to us in the city.”*

*4 Then the king said to them, “Whatever seems best to you I will do.” So the king stood beside the gate, and all the people went out by hundreds and by thousands. 5 Now the king had commanded Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, saying, “Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom.” And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains orders concerning Absalom.*

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- David is still in charge, and appoints commanders.
- The forest allowed experienced fighters to win against larger numbers.

**Rebellious Israel Defeated; Absalom’s Sad End (2 Sam. 18:6-18)**

*6 So the people went out into the field of battle against Israel. And the battle was in the woods of Ephraim. 7 The people of Israel were overthrown there before the servants of David, and a great slaughter of twenty thousand took place there that day. 8 For the battle there was scattered over the face of the whole countryside, and the woods devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.*

*9 Then Absalom met the servants of David. Absalom rode on a mule. The mule went under the thick boughs of a great terebinth tree, and his head caught in the terebinth; so he was left hanging between heaven and earth. And the mule which was under him went on. 10 Now a certain man saw it and told Joab, and said, “I just saw Absalom hanging in a terebinth tree!”*

*11 So Joab said to the man who told him, “You just saw him! And why did you not strike him there to the ground? I would have given you ten shekels of silver and a belt.” 12 But the man said to Joab, “Though I were to receive a thousand shekels of silver in my hand, I would not raise my hand against the king’s son. For in our hearing the king commanded you and Abishai and Ittai, saying, ‘Beware lest anyone touch the young man Absalom!’ 13 Otherwise I would have dealt falsely against my own life. For there is nothing hidden from the king, and you yourself would have set yourself against me.”*

*14 Then Joab said, “I cannot linger with you.” And he took three spears in his hand and thrust them through Absalom’s heart, while he was still alive in the midst of the terebinth tree. 15 And ten young men who bore Joab’s armor surrounded Absalom, and struck and killed him.*

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16 So Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing Israel. For Joab held back the people. 17 And they took Absalom and cast him into a large pit in the woods, and laid a very large heap of stones over him. Then all Israel fled, everyone to his tent. 18 Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and set up a pillar for himself, which is in the King's Valley. For he said, "I have no son to keep my name in remembrance." He called the pillar after his own name. And to this day it is called Absalom's Monument.

- Absalom was caught by his own vanity. Joab did not give him an easy death.
- Joab must have rightly figured that that his followers would flee, and they did.
- David didn't even get a body!

### **Distressing News Delivered (2 Sam. 18:19-33)**

19 Then Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said, "Let me run now and take the news to the king, how the LORD has avenged him of his enemies." 20 And Joab said to him, "You shall not take the news this day, for you shall take the news another day. But today you shall take no news, because the king's son is dead." 21 Then Joab said to the Cushite, "Go, tell the king what you have seen." So the Cushite bowed himself to Joab and ran.

22 And Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said again to Joab, "But whatever happens, please let me also run after the Cushite." So Joab said, "Why will you run, my son, since you have no news ready?" 23 "But whatever happens," he said, "let me run." So he said to him, "Run." Then Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain, and outran the Cushite.

24 Now David was sitting between the two gates. And the watchman went up to the roof over the gate, to the wall, lifted his eyes and looked, and there was a man, running alone. 25 Then the watchman cried out and told the king. And the king said, "If he is

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alone, there is news in his mouth.” And he came rapidly and drew near.

26 Then the watchman saw another man running, and the watchman called to the gatekeeper and said, “There is another man, running alone!” And the king said, “He also brings news.” 27 So the watchman said, “I think the running of the first is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok.” And the king said, “He is a good man, and comes with good news.” 28 So Ahimaaz called out and said to the king, “All is well!” Then he bowed down with his face to the earth before the king, and said, “Blessed be the LORD your God, who has delivered up the men who raised their hand against my lord the king!” 29 The king said, “Is the young man Absalom safe?” Ahimaaz answered, “When Joab sent the king’s servant and me your servant, I saw a great tumult, but I did not know what it was about.” 30 And the king said, “Turn aside and stand here.” So he turned aside and stood still.

31 Just then the Cushite came, and the Cushite said, “There is good news, my lord the king! For the LORD has avenged you this day of all those who rose against you.” 32 And the king said to the Cushite, “Is the young man Absalom safe?” So the Cushite answered, “May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise against you to do harm, be like that young man!” 33 Then the king was deeply moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept. And as he went, he said thus: “O my son Absalom—my son, my son Absalom—if only I had died in your place! O Absalom my son, my son!”

- Joab wanted to spare Ahimaaz from casting David into grief.
- David’s primary concern is for his son, and in fact it’s his only concern.

### **David Roused From Grief (2 Sam. 19:1-8)**

1 And Joab was told, “Behold, the king is weeping and mourning for Absalom.” 2 So

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*the victory that day was turned into mourning for all the people. For the people heard it said that day, “The king is grieved for his son.” 3 And the people stole back into the city that day, as people who are ashamed steal away when they flee in battle. 4 But the king covered his face, and the king cried out with a loud voice, “O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!”*

*5 Then Joab came into the house to the king, and said, “Today you have disgraced all your servants who today have saved your life, the lives of your sons and daughters, the lives of your wives and the lives of your concubines, 6 in that you love your enemies and hate your friends. For you have declared today that you regard neither princes nor servants; for today I perceive that if Absalom had lived and all of us had died today, then it would have pleased you well. 7 Now therefore, arise, go out and speak comfort to your servants. For I swear by the LORD, if you do not go out, not one will stay with you this night. And that will be worse for you than all the evil that has befallen you from your youth until now.” 8 Then the king arose and sat in the gate. And they told all the people, saying, “There is the king, sitting in the gate.” So all the people came before the king. For everyone of Israel had fled to his tent.*

- David’s grief overwhelmed the sense of victory and relief among the people.
- Joab knew that it was an insult to his loyal followers for David to wallow in grief.

### **Returning To Jerusalem (2 Sam. 19:9-18)**

*9 Now all the people were in a dispute throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, “The king saved us from the hand of our enemies, he delivered us from the hand of the Philistines, and now he has fled from the land because of Absalom. 10 But Absalom, whom we anointed over us, has died in battle. Now therefore, why do you say nothing about bringing back the king?”*

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11 So King David sent to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, saying, “Speak to the elders of Judah, saying, ‘Why are you the last to bring the king back to his house, since the words of all Israel have come to the king, to his very house? 12 You are my brethren, you are my bone and my flesh. Why then are you the last to bring back the king?’ 13 And say to Amasa, ‘Are you not my bone and my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if you are not commander of the army before me continually in place of Joab.’” 14 So he swayed the hearts of all the men of Judah, just as the heart of one man, so that they sent this word to the king: “Return, you and all your servants!”

15 Then the king returned and came to the Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to escort the king across the Jordan. 16 And Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite, who was from Bahurim, hurried and came down with the men of Judah to meet King David. 17 There were a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they went over the Jordan before the king. 18 Then a ferryboat went across to carry over the king’s household, and to do what he thought good.

- The people are in conflict among themselves again, wondering why it is that no public move has been made to receive David back in Jerusalem.
- Perhaps the leaders of Judah were embarrassed by the chaos surrounding David’s family at this point.
- David replaces Joab with Amasa. Did Joab do a service for Israel?

### **David Shows Mercy To Shimei (2 Sam. 19: 18b-23)**

Now Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king when he had crossed the Jordan. 19 Then he said to the king, “Do not let my lord impute iniquity to me, or

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*remember what wrong your servant did on the day that my lord the king left Jerusalem, that the king should take it to heart. 20 For I, your servant, know that I have sinned. Therefore here I am, the first to come today of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king.”*

*21 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said, “Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD’s anointed?” 22 And David said, “What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah, that you should be adversaries to me today? Shall any man be put to death today in Israel? For do I not know that today I am king over Israel?” 23 Therefore the king said to Shimei, “You shall not die.” And the king swore to him.*

- Here is another example of David’s mercy on display. Abishai, Joab’s brother, was just like Joab: always ready to solve a problem with the sword.
- David then swears to Shimei not to kill him.

### **Reunited With Mephibosheth (2 Sam. 19:24-30)**

*24 Now Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king. And he had not cared for his feet, nor trimmed his mustache, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he returned in peace. 25 So it was, when he had come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said to him, “Why did you not go with me, Mephibosheth?”*

*26 And he answered, “My lord, O king, my servant deceived me. For your servant said, ‘I will saddle a donkey for myself, that I may ride on it and go to the king,’ because your servant is lame. 27 And he has slandered your servant to my lord the king, but my lord the king is like the angel of God. Therefore do what is good in your*

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eyes. 28 For all my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king. Yet you set your servant among those who eat at your own table. Therefore what right have I still to cry out anymore to the king?"

29 So the king said to him, "Why do you speak anymore of your matters? I have said, 'You and Ziba divide the land.'" 30 Then Mephibosheth said to the king, "Rather, let him take it all, inasmuch as my lord the king has come back in peace to his own house."

- What's odd about this story?
- David seems to be tired of this situation also.

### **David Wishes To Repay Barzillai (2 Sam. 19:31-39)**

31 And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim and went across the Jordan with the king, to escort him across the Jordan. 32 Now Barzillai was a very aged man, eighty years old. And he had provided the king with supplies while he stayed at Mahanaim, for he was a very rich man. 33 And the king said to Barzillai, "Come across with me, and I will provide for you while you are with me in Jerusalem."

34 But Barzillai said to the king, "How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? 35 I am today eighty years old. Can I discern between the good and bad? Can your servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Can I hear any longer the voice of singing men and singing women? Why then should your servant be a further burden to my lord the king? 36 Your servant will go a little way across the Jordan with the king. And why should the king repay me with such a reward? 37 Please let your servant turn back again, that I may die in my own city, near the grave of my father and mother. But here is your servant Chimham; let him cross over with my lord the king, and do for him what seems good to you."

38 And the king answered, "Chimham shall cross over with me, and I will do for him what seems good to you. Now whatever you request of me, I will do for you." 39 Then

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*all the people went over the Jordan. And when the king had crossed over, the king kissed Barzillai and blessed him, and he returned to his own place.*

- David wants to return the favor, but Barzillai showed a beautiful character by giving his servant to David.

### **Fighting Over Their King (2 Sam. 19:40-43)**

*40 Now the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him. And all the people of Judah escorted the king, and also half the people of Israel. 41 Just then all the men of Israel came to the king, and said to the king, “Why have our brethren, the men of Judah, stolen you away and brought the king, his household, and all David’s men with him across the Jordan?”*

*42 So all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, “Because the king is a close relative of ours. Why then are you angry over this matter? Have we ever eaten at the king’s expense? Or has he given us any gift?” 43 And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, “We have ten shares in the king; therefore we also have more right to David than you. Why then do you despise us—were we not the first to advise bringing back our king?” Yet the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.*

- This scene ends with David restored to Jerusalem, and people actually fighting about Judah bringing him into the city before everyone can get there.
- It’s a powerful moment of unity, but there’s an ominous bit of foreshadowing.

### **The Last Words Of David (2 Sam. 23:1-7)**

*1 Now these are the last words of David. Thus says David the son of Jesse; thus says*

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*the man raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel: 2 “The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue. 3 The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spoke to me: ‘He who rules over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. 4 And he shall be like the light of the morning when the sun rises, a morning without clouds, like the tender grass springing out of the earth, by clear shining after rain.’ 5 “Although my house is not so with God, yet He has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure. For this is all my salvation and all my desire; will He not make it increase? 6 But the sons of rebellion shall all be as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands. 7 But the man who touches them must be armed with iron and the shaft of a spear, and they shall be utterly burned with fire in their place.”*

- This is David’s life in a capsule summary:
  - raised up high
  - anointed by the God of Jacob
  - a sweet psalmist
  - one who learned that we must lead in the fear of God.
- His own weakness had caused his house not to be like that.

David learned to worship and to inquire of the Lord. He learned about the fear of God, and he learned that God will be faithful even when we ourselves are faithless. All of this is what made him a man after God’s own heart.

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