

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

2 SAMUEL 14-17

When the British government commissioned an artist to paint the portrait of Puritan leader Oliver Cromwell the painter noticed an ugly wart on his subject's nose. His desire was to enhance Cromwell's image so he excluded the wart.

But when the portrait was unveiled Oliver Cromwell was upset. Rather than appreciating the artist's efforts, he ordered the wart added to his portrait.

He wanted to be seen “warts and all” – coining a phrase that's still in use.

Yet this has always been the Bible's approach. In fact, one of the proofs of the Bible's inspiration is how it treats its heroes. Works of antiquity rarely depicted the good guys in an unfavorable light. Historical touch-ups were commonplace.

Become too honest about the king in power, and he might silence the author.

But the Biblical writers painted their subjects “warts and all”. Rather than gloss over blunders and blemishes they hang them out on the line for all to see. The Bible is brutally honest with all its heroes... Moses, Abraham, Elijah, Peter...

And of course, David – a man after God's own heart was also a flawed and sin-prone man. He was guilty of lust, deceit, adultery, manipulation, and murder... He could rule a kingdom and command men – but couldn't control his own children.

In chapter 14 David is reeling... The Bathsheba Gate

scandal rocks his own household. His kids lose respect for their dad and start to mimic his mistakes.

Amnon rapes Tamar. Her brother, Absalom, kills his half-brother Amnon.

Absalom flees the palace, and David longs to go to him. He loves his son, but his royal pride won't allow reconciliation. As I mentioned last week, David seems *too weak to discipline his kids*, and *too proud to forgive them*. He refuses to take responsibility for either end of his parenting – prevention and reconciliation.

Absalom's actions brought shame to David, and publicly David spouts a hard line toward Absalom. He's acting more like Saul – concerned with his own image.

Joab is David's general and long-time friend. He knows the king's heart like few other people. Joab understands how much the king loves his son – and desires to be reunited. He feels the king's pain over his separation from his son, Absalom.

Joab also sees how the king's despondency is affecting his ability to rule the nation. The commander and chief has turned to Jello. Joab knows the two men need to be reconciled, so he comes up with a plan to soften David's heart...

Chapter 14, "So Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart was concerned about Absalom. And Joab sent to Tekoa and brought from there a wise woman, and said to her, "Please pretend to be a mourner, and put on mourning apparel; do not anoint yourself with oil, but act like a woman

who has been mourning a long time for the dead.” This is all being staged. “Go to the king and speak to him in this manner.” So Joab put the words in her mouth.

And when the woman of Tekoa spoke to the king, she fell on her face to the ground and prostrated herself, and said, "Help, O king!" Then the king said to her, "What troubles you?" And she answered, "Indeed I am a widow, my husband is dead. Now your maidservant had two sons; and the two fought with each other in the field, and there was no one to part them, but the one struck the other and killed him. And now the whole family has risen up against your maidservant, and they said, 'Deliver him who struck his brother, that we may execute him for the life of his brother whom he killed; and we will destroy the heir also.' So they would extinguish my ember that is left, and leave to my husband neither name nor remnant on the earth." Joab's plan comes straight from Nathan's playbook.

When the prophet confronted the king over his sin with Bathsheba he used a subtle approach. He caught David off-guard with a paralleling parable.

“Then the king said to the woman, "Go to your house, and I will give orders concerning you." And the woman of Tekoa said to the king, "My lord, O king, let the iniquity be on me and on my father's house, and the king and his throne be guiltless." So the king said, "Whoever says anything to you, bring him to me, and he shall not touch you anymore." There were people calling for justice, and her son's punishment. But David believes in mercy. He's received mercy. And he's willing to stand up for this woman's son, and have mercy upon him.

Then she said, "Please let the king remember the LORD

your God, and do not permit the avenger of blood to destroy anymore, lest they destroy my son." And he said, "As the LORD lives, not one hair of your son shall fall to the ground." David issues a royal pardon to the woman's son on behalf of the pleas of his mother.

The whole ploy was to soften David's heart – to create some empathy toward the ache of separation. If David starts showing mercy toward estranged boys he doesn't know, then it should be a small leap to reconcile with his own son.

"Therefore the woman said, "Please, let your maidservant speak another word to my lord the king." She's about to lower the boom. And he said, "Say on."

So the woman said... (She must've gulped hard and mustered all the courage she could. She's about to boldly confront the king of Israel.): "Why then have you schemed such a thing against the people of God? For the king speaks this thing as one who is guilty, in that the king does not bring his banished one home again."

David, you're willing to show mercy on my son... why not on your own son?

Verse 14 contains a profound truth which underpins our salvation. "For we will surely die and become like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. Yet God does not take away a life; but He devises means, so that His banished ones are not expelled from Him." Life is too short for relationships to be interrupted. Families shouldn't be broken. Friends shouldn't stay separated.

When God sees someone alienated and isolated - living

apart from the people he loves – the Father does whatever it takes to bring the banished one home.

Understand reconciliation fills the heart of God. Reconciliation between man and God, and man with his fellow man – and God “**devises means**” to do both...

The means by which He brings banished ones home to Himself is Jesus!

“Now therefore, I have come to speak of this thing to my lord the king because the people have made me afraid. And your maidservant said, 'I will now speak to the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his maidservant.

For the king will hear and deliver his maidservant from the hand of the man who would destroy me and my son together from the inheritance of God.'

"Your maidservant said, 'The word of my lord the king will now be comforting; for as the angel of God, so is my lord the king in discerning good and evil.

And may the LORD your God be with you.' "

David was blindsided once before by Nathan, he senses it's happening again.

“Then the king answered and said to the woman, "Please do not hide from me anything that I ask you." And the woman said, "Please, let my lord the king speak."

So the king said, "Is the hand of Joab with you in all this?" And the woman answered and said, "As you live, my lord the king, no one can turn to the right hand or to the left from anything that my lord the king has spoken.

For your servant Joab commanded me, and he put all these

words in the mouth of your maidservant. To bring about this change of affairs your servant Joab has done this thing; but my lord is wise, according to the wisdom of the angel of God, to know everything that is in the earth."

And the king said to Joab, "All right, I have granted this thing. Go therefore, bring back the young man Absalom." Okay, I see your point. Bring him back...

Then Joab fell to the ground on his face and bowed himself, and thanked the king. And Joab said, "Today your servant knows that I have found favor in your sight, my lord, O king, in that the king has fulfilled the request of his servant."

So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem."

David brings Absalom back to Jerusalem – but this is not the way it should be done. Remember verse 14 God “**devises means**” to bring back his banished ones. God doesn’t redeem without a reason and a rationale. There’s a plan to salvation.

God expects repentance and faith on the part of the recipient. He doesn’t allow people to ignore their sin. He provides a sacrifice that satisfies justice and also shows mercy. His plan allows God to save face and save us at the same time.

FB Meyer puts it, “Some seem to think that God can welcome His Absaloms back, just because He wills to do so. If He did, there would be revolt right through the universe.” This is why we talk about God’s plan of salvation. God doesn’t pardon people randomly. You can’t be saved unless you follow His plan.

But David has no plan. Verse 24 “And the king said, "Let him return to his own house, but do not let him see my face." So Absalom returned to his own house, but did not see the king's face.” David brings back Absalom, but requires nothing of him. David mistakenly assumes you can have restoration without repentance.

This was a painful error, and eventually leads to Absalom’s all-out rebellion.

Nor does David require anything of himself – he never bothers to greet Absalom, or sit down and talk with him. For two years he ignores his son.

David would’ve been better off not bringing him back than to do it this way.

“Now in all Israel there was no one who was praised as much as Absalom for his good looks. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him.”

Absalom was a Hebrew hunk. He won the Mr. Israel contest.

And the trait that made him so handsome was his long hair. Women love men with long hair. And Absalom kept his hair long. He had one annual haircut a year.

“And when he cut the hair of his head - at the end of every year he cut it because it was heavy on him--when he cut it, he weighed the hair of his head at 200 shekels according to the king's standard.” 200 shekels weighed 6 pounds.

Absalom obviously, had course, thick, bushy hair. Absalom had a fro.

And “To Absalom were born three sons, and one daughter whose name was Tamar. She was a woman of beautiful appearance.” Notice, Absalom named his daughter after his sister, Tamar. I don’t think Absalom ever got over her rape.

“And Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, but did not see the king's face.” This was terrible on David’s part. If he didn’t want a relationship with his son why did he allow him to return? Every son longs for his dad’s acceptance.

And the fact that David withholds it from Absalom - for no reason - only pours fuel on the rage brewing in his son’s heart. David is stoking Absalom’s bitterness.

David is a classic example of how not to parent... Set a bad example. Then fail to discipline when they follow in your footsteps. Then get angry at your child, and alienate yourself from them. Then ignore the problem and invite them back into your good graces. Then pretend to forgive them, yet continue to hold a grudge.

Here’s a surefire recipe for rebellion...

“Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to send him to the king, but he would not come to him. And when he sent again the second time, he would not come.

So he said to his servants, "See, Joab's field is near mine, and he has barley there; go and set it on fire." And Absalom's servants set the field on fire.” Maybe your kids are setting your fields on fire because that’s the only way they can get their parent’s attention. The only time you both talk is when they get into trouble.

“Then Joab arose and came to Absalom's house, and said to him, "Why have your servants set my field on fire?" And Absalom answered Joab, "Look, I sent to you, saying, 'Come here, so that I may send you to the king, to say, "Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me to be there still.'" Now therefore, let me see the king's face; but if there is iniquity in me, let him execute me."

Absalom is desperate. He says to communicate to his dad, either *embrace me* or *execute me*. I'm miserable living in limbo – not knowing where I stand.

All dads in the house tonight need to pay attention! Absalom is a grown man - an adult. But his relationship with his father still shapes who he is - how he feels.

A father has an inexplicable power over his kids. And when you withhold your acceptance because of stubborn pride you do irreparable damage to your family.

Verse 33, “So Joab went to the king and told him. And when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king. Then the king kissed Absalom.” Father and son are finally reunited...

But it was too little too late. David's belated blessing doesn't uproot the seeds of rebellion already sown in his heart. A confrontation between father and son is on the horizon that will draw the entire nation into a vicious and bloody civil war.

Chapter 15, After this it happened that Absalom provided himself with chariots and horses, and 50 men to run before him.” He develops his own secret service.

“Now Absalom would rise early and stand beside the way to

the gate. So it was, whenever anyone who had a lawsuit came to the king for a decision, that Absalom would call to him and say, "What city are you from?"

And he would say, "Your servant is from such and such a tribe of Israel."

Then Absalom would say to him, "Look, your case is good and right; but there is no deputy of the king to hear you." *And whose fault would that be?* The king!

"Moreover Absalom would say, "Oh, that I were made judge in the land, and everyone who has any suit or cause would come to me; then I would give him justice." If I were king, it would all be different – justice would be better served.

"And so it was, whenever anyone came near to bow down to him, that he would put out his hand and take him and kiss him. In this manner Absalom acted toward all Israel who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel." Absalom created the impression King David was too busy for the common man's concerns, but he would make time to hear everyone's grievances.

Slowly, Absalom turned the affection of the people away from David to himself.

"Now it came to pass after 40 years that Absalom said to the king, "Please, let me go to Hebron and pay the vow which I made to the LORD.

For your servant took a vow while I dwelt at Geshur in Syria, saying, 'If the LORD indeed brings me back to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD.' "

And the king said to him, "Go in peace." So he arose and

went to Hebron.

Absalom's subtle betrayal culminates in Hebron, the site where his father was first crowned king. There Absalom reveals his intentions to take over the throne from his father. All over Israel shouts go up, "Absalom reigns in Hebron".

"Then Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then you shall say, 'Absalom reigns in Hebron!'" Absalom plans to launch his coup d' tat against his dad at Hebron...

Don't miss the significance of the location. Before David reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel, he was king over Judah in Hebron. He ruled 7½ years in Hebron.

Absalom is returning to his father's first throne to initiate his revolt.

"And with Absalom went 200 men invited from Jerusalem, and they went along innocently and did not know anything." Over the years Absalom has been building support for an overthrow. He's courted friends in high places, but these 200 men were not privy to the plot. They just happen to accompany him to Hebron.

One of the key defectors though, was one of David's chief advisors and trusted counselors... "Then Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his city - from Giloh - while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy grew strong, for the people with Absalom continually increased in number.

It's interesting that David refers to Ahithophel in Psalm 41:9, and 55:12-14. He remembers the pain of being betrayed by someone so close. David writes...

“Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me... For it is not an enemy who reproaches me; then I could bear it. Nor is it one who hates me who has magnified himself against me; then I could hide from him. But it was you, a man my equal, my companion and my acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in the throng.”

As the saying goes, “Against a foe I can defend. But heaven help me against a disloyal friend.” Wounds that hurt most are those inflicted by a supposed friend.

Ahithophel was wise and skillful... and like Absalom... *bitter*. His family tree reveals why he betrayed David. Piece together 2 Samuel 23:34 and 11:3, and you discover Ahithophel was Bathsheba's grandpa. She was the daughter of Eliam – one of David's mighty men – the grandchild of Ahithophel.

Evidently, Ahithophel and Absalom had this in common - they never got over their bitterness. He resented what David had done to Uriah and Bathsheba.

Hey, bitterness is quick to find a buddy - and Ahithophel joins the revolt.

Verse 13 “Now a messenger came to David, saying, “The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom.” So David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, “Arise, and let us flee; or we shall not escape from Absalom. Make

haste to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly and bring disaster upon us, and strike the city with the edge of the sword." David knows Absalom's revolt has momentum. He flees Jerusalem, and regroups in the Judean wilderness.

Ironically, David has come full circle. He's back in the wilderness where he used to hide while he was on the run from the madman, King Saul.

"And the king's servants said to the king, "We are your servants, ready to do whatever my lord the king commands." They renew their loyalty to David.

"Then the king went out with all his household after him. But the king left ten women, concubines, to keep the house. And the king went out with all the people after him, and stopped at the outskirts. Then all his servants passed before him; and all the Cherethites, all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, 600 men who had followed him from Gath, passed before the king." He's inventorying whose left.

"Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, "Why are you also going with us? Return and remain with the king. For you are a foreigner and also an exile from your own place. In fact, you came only yesterday. Should I make you wander up and down with us today, since I go I know not where? Return, and take your brethren back. Mercy and truth be with you." And Ittai answered the king and said, "As the LORD lives, and as my lord the king lives, surely in whatever place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also your servant will be." Ittai's loyalty was an encouragement to David. He still had the allegiance of a number of brave men.

“So David said to Ittai, "Go, and cross over." Then Ittai the Gittite and all his men and all the little ones who were with him crossed over. And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people crossed over. The king himself also crossed over the Brook Kidron (*the ravine separating the Temple Mount and Mount of Olives*). Imagine David near the top of the Mount of Olives – looking down on the capitol that he conquered - but is now being forced to abandon.

He doesn't know when or if he'll ever return. This was his lowest moment... “And all the people crossed over toward the way of the wilderness.”

“There was Zadok also, and all the Levites with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God. And they set down the ark of God, and Abiathar went up until all the people had finished crossing over from the city. Then the king said to Zadok, "Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the LORD, He will bring me back and show me both it and His dwelling place. But if He says thus: 'I have no delight in you,' here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him.”

David's faith was not in symbols of the Lord – for example, the Ark of the Covenant. The king's faith was in the Lord Himself and in His mercies.

“The king also said to Zadok the priest, "Are you not a seer? Return to the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz your son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. See, I will wait in the plains of the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me." Therefore Zadok and Abiathar carried the ark of God back to Jerusalem. And they remained there.”

David hoped to use the two priests as undercover agents – informants. They could invade Absalom’s inner-circle.

“So David went up by the Ascent of the Mount of Olives, and wept as he went up; and he had his head covered and went barefoot. And all the people who were with him covered their heads and went up, weeping as they went up.”

It reminds me of Jesus’ departure from Jerusalem after being rejected by the religious establishment. From the top of the Mount of Olives He wept over the city.

Perhaps both David and the son of David wept at the same spot.

Remember too, the Garden of Gethsemane was on the Mount of Olives. It’s possible David wept over his betrayal by Absalom at the same spot Jesus wept just hours before his betrayal by Judas. There’re some interesting possibilities...

Jesus even told a parable of 10 virgins who needed to keep oil in their lamps and be ready for His return. It’s interesting, David left behind 10 concubines.

Verse 31 “Then someone told David, saying, “Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.” And David said, “O LORD, I pray, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness!” David was afraid of Ahithophel - he was a wise man.

“Now it happened when David had come to the top of the mountain, where he worshiped God...” Notice, in the midst of David’s weeping, he worships God.

Psalm 3 is prefaced, “A Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom his son.”

The psalm begins, "LORD, how they have increased who trouble me! Many are they who rise up against me. Many are they who say of me, "There is no help for him in God." But You, O LORD, are a shield for me, my glory and the One who lifts up my head." I love how the psalm ends, "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around. Arise, O LORD; Save me, O my God!... Salvation belongs to the LORD. Your blessing is upon Your people."

Verse 32 tells us as David worshipped, "there was Hushai the Archite coming to meet him with his robe torn and dust on his head. David said to him, "If you go on with me, then you will become a burden to me. But if you return to the city, and say to Absalom, 'I will be your servant, O king; as I was your father's servant previously, so I will now also be your servant,' then you may defeat the counsel of Ahithophel for me." David plants another mole. *Hushai the spy - the private eye.*

And do you not have Zadok and Abiathar the priests with you there? Therefore it will be that whatever you hear from the king's house, you shall tell to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. Indeed they have there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz, Zadok's son, and Jonathan, Abiathar's son; and by them you shall send me everything you hear." So Hushai, David's friend, went into the city.

And Absalom came into Jerusalem."

Chapter 16 "When David was a little past the top of the mountain, there was Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth, who met him with a couple of saddled donkeys, and on them 200

loaves of bread, 100 clusters of raisins, 100 summer fruits, and a skin of wine. And the king said to Ziba, "What do you mean to do with these?"

So Ziba said, "The donkeys are for the king's household to ride on, the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat, and the wine for those who are faint in the wilderness to drink." Then the king said, "And where is your master's son?"

And Ziba said to the king, "Indeed he is staying in Jerusalem, for he said, 'Today the house of Israel will restore the kingdom of my father to me.' "

So the king said to Ziba, "Here, all that belongs to Mephibosheth is yours." David may've acted hastily. We find out in chapter 19 there's another side to the story. "And Ziba said, "I humbly bow before you, that I may find favor in your sight, my lord, O king!" Later, the crippled Mephibosheth claims that Ziba left him behind to make it look like he was forsaking David and pledging his loyalty to Absalom.

"Now when King David came to Bahurim, there was a man from the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei the son of Gera, coming from there.

He came out, cursing continuously as he came. And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David. And all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left." Shimei was a Saul sympathizer. He had never liked David – and now he comes out to kick him when he's down.

"Also Shimei said thus when he cursed: "Come out! Come out! You bloodthirsty man, you rogue!" This guy has the

nerve. He hurls insults at the king. "The LORD has brought upon you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned; and the LORD has delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom your son. So now you are caught in your own evil, because you are a bloodthirsty man!" Shimei is not only flirting with David's judgment, but also with God. He's putting words in God's mouth. Be careful what you call a judgment from God.

Right after Hurricane Katrina hit folks called the storm God's judgment on the evil city of New Orleans. The only problem was the least effected area of town – what came back first - was the French Quarter and Bourbon Street.

If Katrina was a judgment from God why did it hit wipe out Pastor Kevin's house and not the strip joints? Be careful what you call God's judgment.

Verse 9 "Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Please, let me go over and take off his head!"

Abishai was one of David's mighty men and fiercely loyal to the king.

"But the king said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? So let him curse, because the LORD has said to him, 'Curse David.'

Who then shall say, 'Why have you done so?' And David said to Abishai and all his servants, "See how my son who came from my own body seeks my life. How much more now may this Benjamite? Let him alone, and let him curse; for so the LORD has ordered him. It may be that the LORD will look on my affliction, and that the LORD will repay me with good

for his cursing this day."

"And as David and his men went along the road, Shimei went along the hillside opposite him and cursed as he went, threw stones at him and kicked up dust.

Now the king and all the people who were with him became weary; so they refreshed themselves there." They stop their exodus to rest along the road.

Verse 15 "Meanwhile Absalom and all the people, the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem; and Ahithophel was with him. And so it was, when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, came to Absalom, that Hushai said to Absalom, "Long live the king! Long live the king!" So Absalom said to Hushai, "Is this your loyalty to your friend? Why did you not go with your friend?" He knew Hushai and his father were close.

"And Hushai said to Absalom, "No, but whom the LORD and this people and all the men of Israel choose, his I will be, and with him I will remain. Furthermore, whom should I serve? Should I not serve in the presence of his son?

As I have served in your father's presence, so will I be in your presence." Of course it was all a lie. Its part of the espionage and sabotage he plans to work.

"Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, "Give counsel as to what we should do."

And Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Go in to your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house; and all Israel will hear that you are abhorred by your father. Then the hands of all who are with you will be strong." In the Oriental

world of ancient times, when a new king took the throne he inherited his predecessor's harem. Ahithophel's motive behind this maneuver was to signal a new regime.

Yet from God's perspective this was the judgment He'd predicted on David for his sin with Bathsheba. What David did secretly, would be done to him openly.

“So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the top of the house, and Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.” It brought shame to David.

And Ahithophel relished every minute. He's finally getting the revenge he's waited on for years. In his commentary, David Guzik writes, **“Ahithophel was willing to see these women abused, Absalom grievously sin, and the kingdom of Israel suffer greatly – all simply to satisfy his bitter longing for revenge.”**

“Now the advice of Ahithophel, which he gave in those days, was as if one had inquired at the oracle of God. So was all the advice of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom.” Ahithophel was a master strategist. When it came to political power plays he knew all the right strings to pull at just the right times...

Chapter 17, **Moreover Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Now let me choose 12,000 men, and I will arise and pursue David tonight. 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. 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." And the saying pleased Absalom and all the elders of Israel." At that moment David was resting by the road. This was wise counsel. Now was the time to strike. David was reeling... Absalom had *Big Mo* on his sideline.

"Then Absalom said, "Now call Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear what he says too." 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."

So Hushai said to Absalom: "The advice that Ahithophel has given is not good at this time." Remember Hushai is really on David's team. He's undercover.

"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. Surely by now he is hidden in some pit, or in some other place." Hushai paints David as some kind of desert fox. He's cunning, and adept at wilderness warfare.

You attack his camp, and chances are he won't be there. He's an Osama Ben Laden – a mountain rabbit. He has holes to hide everywhere. The truth be known it had probably been a long time since the pampered king slept under the stars.

"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.

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 man, and those who are with him are valiant men.” Your father is so sneaky he’ll strike first and hard.

Even if your army goes on to win the battle the initial news will be of your casualties and David’s surprise attack. It might discourage your troops.

Ahithophel’s counsel was exactly what Absalom needed to do to defeat David - and Hushai knew it. David is discouraged and needs time to refresh and regroup.

This is why Hushai proposes another plan that’s in the best interests of David.

“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. 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. 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.”

Ahithophel says strike quickly - use speed. Hushai suggests a show of force – take your time.

“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.” God sees to it Ahithophel’s plan is rejected - Hushai’s is adopted.

“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.

Now therefore, send quickly and tell David, saying, 'Do not spend this night in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily cross over (this time the Jordan River), lest the king and all the people who are with him be swallowed up.' "

Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz (the priests’ sons) 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. Nevertheless a lad saw them, and told Absalom.” Their cover is blown. They’re ratted out and now in grave danger.

“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. Then the woman took and spread a covering over the well's mouth, and spread ground grain on it; and the thing was not known. And when Absalom's servants came to the woman at the house, they said, "Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?" They’re on their trail.

“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.”

“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." At that point it must've still been up in the air whose plan Absalom would ultimately adopt.

"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." They successfully engineered a night crossing of the river.

"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."

Remember what Judas did after he betrayed Jesus - then realized he'd made an awful mistake? He too went out and hung himself.

Ahithophel was such a proud man he couldn't stand that his advice was rejected. He went home - paid his bills - and hung himself.

It's been said, "Bitterness is an acid that does far more damage on where it's stored than where it's poured."

Bitterness, revenge, the need to be vindicated - mattered more to Ahithophel than life itself. A brilliant man had a bitter end.

"Then David went to Mahanaim." This was Ishbosheth's former capitol. On the night he lay in bed with Bathsheba he never dreamed he'd be a fugitive king – on the run from his own son – held up the capitol of a disgraced son of Saul.

“And Absalom crossed over the Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him. 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 Zeruah, Joab's mother.” He was Joab’s cousin. “So Israel and Absalom encamped in the land of Gilead.”

“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 Debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim, brought beds and basins, earthen vessels and wheat, barley and flour, parched grain and beans, lentils and parched seeds, 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." David finds supporters east of the Jordan - in Gilead. Three relatively obscure men come to David’s aid at a very strategic time...

It’s been said, “Friends in need are friends indeed.”