

2 Samuel 17

Verses 1 - 4

Furthermore, Ahithophel said to Absalom, “Please let me choose twelve thousand men and let me set out and pursue David tonight. ² And I will attack him while he is weary and exhausted and startle him, so that all the people who are with him will flee. Then I will strike and kill the king *when he is alone*, ³ and I will bring all the people back to you. The return of everyone depends on the man whom you are seeking; *then* all the people will be at peace.” ⁴ And the plan pleased Absalom and all the elders of Israel.

Furthermore, Ahithophel said to Absalom, “Please let me choose twelve thousand men and let me set out and pursue David tonight.

Absalom’s army of 12,000 men to David’s 600 men was a 20 to 1 ratio. However, David and his men were skilled at war and had evaded the Army of Saul for 10 years.

Then I will strike and kill the king when he is alone, ³ and I will bring all the people back to you.

David’s 600 men of war had been with him for years and they would remain at his side to the very end. David would never be alone.

⁴ And the plan pleased Absalom and all the elders of Israel.

One has to wonder if God blinded the minds of Absalom and the elders because they were looking at the situation with rose colored glasses.

Had they forgotten the song that the women once sang about David? How Saul killed his thousands and David his 10 thousands.

Absalom must have forgotten how David spared his life when he murdered Amnon. David allowed Absalom to live as an exile and then eventually took him back.

But now that David had fled Jerusalem Absalom eagerly seeks his father's life and has no regard for his father who had forgiven him.

Verses 5 -14

⁵ Nevertheless, Absalom said, “Now call Hushai the Archite also, and let’s hear what he has to say.” ⁶ When Hushai had come to Absalom, Absalom said to him, “Ahithophel has proposed this plan. Should we carry out his plan? If not, say so yourself.” ⁷ So Hushai said to Absalom, “This time the advice that Ahithophel has given is not good.” ⁸ Then Hushai said, “You yourself know your father and his men, that they are warriors and they are fierce, like a bear deprived of her cubs in the field. And your father is an expert in warfare, and he will not spend the night with the people.” ⁹ Behold, he has now hidden himself in one of the ravines, or in another place; and it will be that when he falls on them at the first *attack*, whoever hears *it* will say, ‘There has been a slaughter among the people who follow Absalom!’ ¹⁰ And even the one who is valiant, whose heart is like the heart of a lion, will completely despair; for all Israel knows that your father is a mighty man, and those who are with him are valiant men. ¹¹ But I advise that all Israel be fully gathered to you, from Dan even to Beersheba, like the sand that is by the sea in abundance; and that you personally go into battle. ¹² Then we will come to him in one of the places where he can be found, and we will fall on him just as the dew falls on the ground; and of him and of all the men who are with him, not even one will be left. ¹³ And if he withdraws into a city, then all Israel shall bring ropes to that city, and we will drag it into the valley until not even a pebble is found there.” ¹⁴ Then 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 ordained to foil the good advice of Ahithophel, in order for the Lord to bring disaster on Absalom.

⁷ So Hushai said to Absalom, “This time the advice that Ahithophel has given is not good.”

Hushai had agreed with Ahithophel's counsel regarding the concubines but Ahithophel's notion that he might take David by surprise was foolish.

⁸ Then Hushai said, “You yourself know your father and his men, that they are warriors and they are fierce, like a bear deprived of her cubs in the field. And your father is an expert in warfare, and he will not spend the night with the people.

David and his men knew how to evade an army because they had an intimate knowledge of the land scape (10 years of hiding from Saul) and knew what tactics worked best under any given circumstance. Absalom and his men would be sitting ducks against David and his men.

¹¹ But I advise that all Israel be fully gathered to you, from Dan even to Beersheba, like the sand that is by the sea in abundance; and that you personally go into battle.

It was unlikely that all of Israel would follow Absalom in his war against David. Absalom riding at the head of a mighty army probably appealed to his vanity but what practical experience did he have in armed combat?

¹² Then we will come to him in one of the places where he can be found, and we will fall on him just as the dew falls on the ground; and of him and of all the men who are with him, not even one will be left.

When something sounds too good to be true; it's too good to be true.

¹⁴ Then 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 ordained to foil the good advice of Ahithophel, in order for the Lord to bring disaster on Absalom.

God intervened so Absalom and the men of Israel would reject the advice of Ahithophel. God can and does temporarily harden the hearts of men at times to bring about His Will.

Verses 15 - 20

¹⁵ Then Hushai said to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, "This is what Ahithophel advised Absalom and the elders of Israel *to do*, and this is what I have advised.

¹⁶ Now then, send *a messenger* quickly and tell David, saying, 'Do not spend the night at the river crossing places of the wilderness, but by all means cross over, or else the king and all the people who are with him will be destroyed.'" ¹⁷ Now

Jonathan and Ahimaaz were staying at En-rogel, and a female servant would go and inform them, and they would go and inform King David, for they could not allow themselves to be seen entering the city. ¹⁸ But a boy did see them, and he told Absalom; so the two of them left quickly and came to the house of a man in

Bahurim, who had a well in his courtyard, and they went down into it. ¹⁹ And the woman took a cover and spread it over the well's mouth and scattered barley meal on it, so that nothing was known. ²⁰ Then Absalom's servants came to the

woman at the house and said, "Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?" And the woman said to them, "They have crossed the brook of water." And when they searched and did not find *them*, they returned to Jerusalem.

15 Then Hushai said to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, “This is what Ahithophel advised Absalom and the elders of Israel to do, and this is what I have advised.

Hushai would inform Zadok and Abiathar the High Priests what Absalom had decided and they in turn would give the message to a maidservant. She would inform Jonathan and Ahimaaz the High Priest’s sons and they would go and tell King David.

Do not spend the night at the river crossing places of the wilderness, but by all means cross over, or else the king and all the people who are with him will be destroyed.

Hushai had been invited to give his advice to Absalom but he was not a part of the final session in which the decision was made. Since he did not know which plan would be followed he warned David on the assumption that Ahithophel's counsel might be followed.

17 Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz were staying at En-rogel, and a female servant would go and inform them, and they would go and inform King David, for they could not allow themselves to be seen entering the city.

See Map 1705



¹⁸ But a boy did see them, and he told Absalom; so the two of them left quickly and came to the house of a man in Bahurim, who had a well in his courtyard, and they went down into it.

See chart 1710



²⁰ Then Absalom's servants came to the woman at the house and said, "Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?" And the woman said to them, "They have crossed the brook of water." And when they searched and did not find *them*, they returned to Jerusalem.

After hiding the two priests in the well she disguised it with a covering and some barley grain. When the servants of Absalom arrived and asked where the two men were, she directed them to a nearby brook but the priests could not be found so the servants went back to Jerusalem.

Verses 21 - 22

²¹ It came about after they had departed, that they came up out of the well and went and reported to King David; and they said to David, “Set out and cross over the water quickly, because this is what Ahithophel has advised against you.”

²² Then David and all the people who were with him set out and crossed the Jordan; by dawn not even one remained who had not crossed the Jordan.

Some scholars believe David may have penned Psalms 42 and 43 about this event. However, these two Psalms could apply to any number of events that David had experienced during his life.

Verse 23

²³ Now when Ahithophel saw that his advice had not been followed, he saddled *his* donkey and set out and went to his home, to his city, and set his house in order, and hanged himself; so he died and was buried in his father’s grave.

Ahithophel's hope of getting control of the army was rejected. This left only two possible outcomes.

1. If David defeats Absalom, Ahithophel would be executed as a traitor.
2. If Absalom defeats David, all of David's sons, including Solomon, would have been killed. Solomon was Ahithophel’s great grandson.

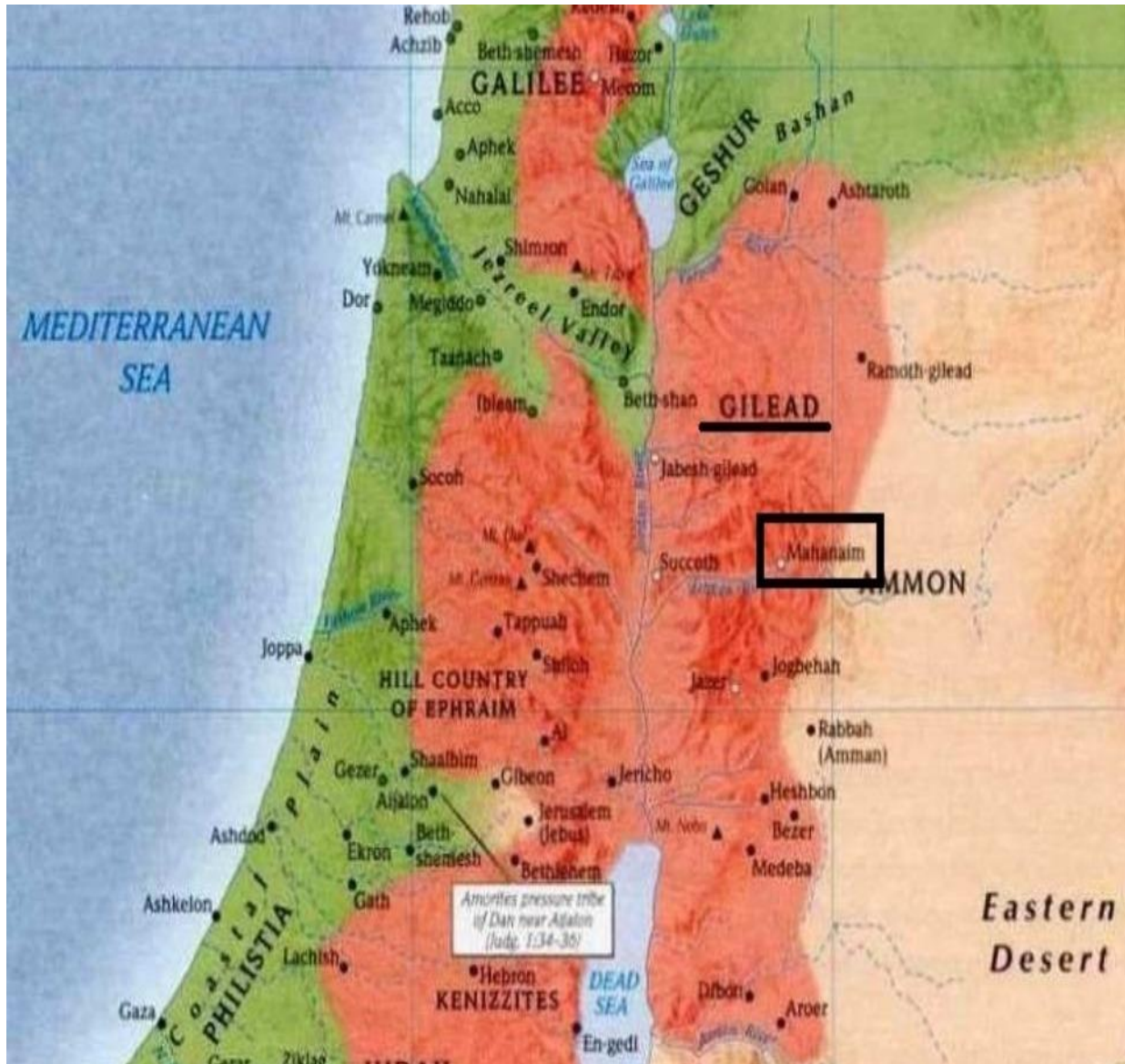
Verses 24 - 26

²⁴ Then David came to Mahanaim. And Absalom crossed the Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him. ²⁵ Absalom put Amasa in command of the army in place of Joab. Now Amasa was the son of a man whose name was Ithra the Israelite, who had relations with Abigail the daughter of Nahash, sister of Zeruiah, Joab’s mother. ²⁶ And Israel and Absalom camped in the land of Gilead.

²⁴ Then David came to Mahanaim. And Absalom crossed the Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him.

Mahanaim is near the Jabbok River.

See Map 1715



²⁵ **Absalom put Amasa in command of the army in place of Joab.**

Absalom was already at quit a disadvantage in the war against David.

1. He had lost his most competent advisor (by suicide)
2. And had to replace Joab who was the long standing leader of the army.

²⁶ **And Israel and Absalom camped in the land of Gilead.**

See map 1715 above.

Verses 27 - 29

²⁷ Now when David had come to Mahanaim, Shobi the son of Nahash from Rabbah of the sons of Ammon, Machir the son of Ammiel from Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim, ²⁸ brought beds, basins, pottery, wheat, barley, flour, roasted *grain*, beans, lentils, roasted *seeds*, ²⁹ honey, 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 exhausted and thirsty in the wilderness.”

²⁷ Now when David had come to Mahanaim, **Shobi** the son of Nahash from Rabbah of the sons of Ammon, **Machir** the son of Ammiel from Lo-debar, and **Barzillai** the Gileadite from Rogelim

The three men mentioned above were princes of Israel. The second man, Machir, was Bathsheba's brother.

For they said, “The people are hungry and exhausted and thirsty in the wilderness.”

These three men had the ability to supply David with the provisions needed for this large group of people.