

## AND THEY BE CHAFED IN THEIR MINDS

### 2 SAMUEL 17:1 – 18:33

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~ This report from our Spiritual Safari finds David in deep distress as he continues reaping the consequences of what he has sown by his awful, heinous sin involving Uriah and Bathsheba. The nation Israel is mired in unavoidable civil war at this time, and David's own son Absalom is attempting an insurrection. We have seen in several previous reports the triumphs David won and the blessings he brought to Israel. We have also seen the troubles David had; and he is in serious trouble as we begin this leg of our expedition. I trust you have prayed for wisdom, judgment and discernment; and, if you have, then read this portion of the text in your own Bible, and then read this report. If you follow that outline, these reports will mean so much more to your heart.

Absalom is leading a coup d'état against David as we begin this chapter. Naturally, that was hurtful to David, but he doesn't seem to have any interest holding onto the throne. He hastily packs up and flees. In our previous report, we determined that David likely left Jerusalem so the city wouldn't have a battle within the walls and potentially be destroyed. David did send Hushai back so David might have access to inside information and wise council, in general. Ahithophel, who had also been one of David's closest advisors, had already defected to Absalom's army, you may recall. That leads to conflicting advice from Hushai and Ahithophel relative to a battle plan. As we begin reading, Ahithophel lays out his plan - which would have been a disaster; and Hushai provides excellent advice to Absalom. The problem is, even the best advice could not defeat David on the battlefield. Absalom and his men never stood any chance against David, Joab and his army....

## XVII

***1 Moreover Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Let me now choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David this night:***

***2 And I will come upon him while he is weary and weak handed, and will make him afraid: and all the people that are with him shall flee; and I will smite the king only:***

***3 And I will bring back all the people unto thee: the man whom thou seekest is as if all returned: so all the people shall be in peace.***

***4 And the saying pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel.***

***5 Then said Absalom, Call now Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear likewise what he saith.***

***6 And when Hushai was come to Absalom, Absalom spake unto him, saying, Ahithophel hath spoken after this manner: shall we do after his saying? if not; speak thou.***

***7 And Hushai said unto Absalom, The counsel that Ahithophel hath given is not good at this time.***

***8 For, said Hushai, thou knowest thy father and his men, that they be mighty men, and they be chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field: and thy father is a man of war, and will not lodge with the people.***

***9 Behold, he is hid now in some pit, or in some other place: and it will come to pass, when some of them be overthrown at the first, that whosoever heareth it will say, There is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom.***

***10 And he also that is valiant, whose heart is as the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt: for all Israel knoweth that thy father is a mighty man, and they which be with him are valiant men.***

***11 Therefore I counsel that all Israel be generally gathered unto thee, from Dan even to Beersheba, as the sand that is by the sea for multitude; and that thou go to battle in thine own person.***

***12 So shall we come upon him in some place where he shall be found, and we will light upon him as the dew falleth on the ground: and of him and of all the men that are with him there shall not be left so much as one.***

~ Absalom and his men were simply not seasoned men of war like David and his men were. David could have flattened this rebellion in one day; but he doesn't want Absalom killed or Jerusalem destroyed. If any attempt to advance against David had failed, Absalom's men would have known the battle was lost, and would have deserted immediately. Ahithophel was not prepared to do battle against David. A few thousand men were simply not going to be effective. Further, if Absalom was going to be accepted by the people in kingship over Israel, he would have to lead the battle personally. Hushai gave Absalom good advice but, even so, it was not for Absalom's benefit. Absalom didn't stand a chance against David; and everyone knew it except Absalom. I feel as if David is prolonging the inevitable now. And, Hushai has already stalled Absalom, which gave David time to reconnoiter....

***13 Moreover, if he be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there be not one small stone found there.***

***14 And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom.***

***15 Then said Hushai unto Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, Thus and thus did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel; and thus and thus have I counselled.***

***16 Now therefore send quickly, and tell David, saying, Lodge not this night in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily pass over; lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that are with him.***

***17 Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by Enrogel; for they might not be seen to come into the city: and a wench went and told them; and they went and told King David.***

***18 Nevertheless a lad saw them, and told Absalom: but they went both of them away quickly, and came to a man's house in Bahurim, which had a well in his court; whither they went down.***

***19 And the woman took and spread a covering over the well's mouth, and spread ground corn thereon; and the thing was not known.***

***20 And when Absalom's servants came to the woman to the house, they said, Where is Ahimaaz and Jonathan? And the woman said unto them, They be gone over the brook of water. And when they had sought and could not find them, they returned to Jerusalem.***

***21 And it came to pass, after they were departed, that they came up out of the well, and went and told king David, and said unto David, Arise, and pass quickly over the water: for thus hath Ahithophel counselled against you.***

***22 Then David arose, and all the people that were with him, and they passed over Jordan: by the morning light there lacked not one of them that was not gone over Jordan.***

***23 And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father.***

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

***25 And Absalom made Amasa captain of the host instead of Joab: which Amasa was a man's son, whose name was Ithra an Israelite, that went in to Abigail the daughter of Nahash, sister to Zeruah Joab's mother.***

***26 So Israel and Absalom pitched in the land of Gilead.***

***27 And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lodebar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim,***

***28 Brought beds, and basons, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched corn, and beans, and lentiles, and parched pulse,***

***29 And honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for the people that were with him, to eat: for they said, The people is hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness.***

~ So, Absalom attempts to gather the nation and unite the people with him. In verse twenty-six, Absalom assembled as many men under him as he could get. Then, this chapter ends with David on the lam again – which seems to define his entire life; always running away from someone. In this case, he has no one to blame for his problems except his own sin.

Remember, Absalom had forced David to flee Jerusalem in the middle of the night without any preparation or provision whatsoever. Well, David had many allies throughout the land, and I get the impression that very few people had real confidence in Absalom. Absalom had been deceitful and tricky, and I think most of Israel knew he would never have been dependable as a king. So, with the supplies that were brought in verse twenty-eight, David's men prepare for battle. Interestingly, as we begin chapter eighteen, David's men disallow David to fight with them. Please read very carefully....

## **XVIII**

***1 And David numbered the people that were with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them.***

***2 And David sent forth a third part of the people under the hand of Joab, and a third part under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's***

***brother, and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said unto the people, I will surely go forth with you myself also.***

***3 But the people answered, Thou shalt not go forth: for if we flee away, they will not care for us; neither if half of us die, will they care for us: but now thou art worth ten thousand of us: therefore now it is better that thou keep us out of the city.***

***4 And the king said unto them, What seemeth you best I will do. And the king stood by the gate side, and all the people came out by hundreds and by thousands.***

***5 And the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom.***

~ Here we see the tender love David had for Absalom. Yes, Absalom had murdered another son, Amnon, and Absalom was leading this rebellion; but, even so, David loved Absalom. This is likely the saddest chapter in the life of David. David's sin was the most shameful, sordid and sorriest chapter, to be sure; but this is the defining low point in David's life. By the end of this chapter, Absalom will be dead, and David will be in mourning.

As David's three commanders led the army out, David asked each one to spare Absalom. I think some of them resented this request. Joab particularly wanted to get this over with and get back to Jerusalem and a normal life. Well, Absalom is still David's own flesh and blood – his son. I think Absalom was like David in many ways and, of course, David wanted this to end peacefully for Absalom. Certainly, David didn't want to see him killed. I also believe David knew deep down this was going to end badly....

***6 So the people went out into the field against Israel: and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim;***

***7 Where the people of Israel were slain before the servants of David, and there was there a great slaughter that day of twenty thousand men.***

~ America knows all about civil war. The ramifications of our own still run very deep in some parts of the country; and it's always a bad thing, friends. It's too bad it has come to this in Israel at the time in which we are studying; but Absalom has chosen the path, and David's men have no choice but to react accordingly. Absalom underestimated David's capabilities; and had no idea of the deadly prowess of the three men directly under David. So, as we read on, Absalom's men, having picked the wrong place to fight David, find the topography kills more of them than the fighting! I think all David's men had to do was chase them into the forest - and they all died....

***8 For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country: and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.***

***9 And Absalom met the servants of David. And Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that was under him went away.***

***10 And a certain man saw it, and told Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak.***

***11 And Joab said unto the man that told him, And, behold, thou sawest him, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? and I would have given thee ten shekels of silver, and a girdle.***

***12 And the man said unto Joab, Though I should receive a thousand shekels of silver in mine hand, yet would I not put forth mine hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Beware that none touch the young man Absalom.***

***13 Otherwise I should have wrought falsehood against mine own life: for there is no matter hid from the king, and thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against me.***

**14 Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak.**

**15 And ten young men that bare Joab's armour compassed about and smote Absalom, and slew him.**

**16 And Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing after Israel: for Joab held back the people.**

**17 And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him: and all Israel fled every one to his tent.**

**18 Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and reared up for himself a pillar, which is in the king's dale: for he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance: and he called the pillar after his own name: and it is called unto this day, Absalom's place.**

**19 Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, Let me now run, and bear the king tidings, how that the LORD hath avenged him of his enemies.**

**20 And Joab said unto him, Thou shalt not bear tidings this day, but thou shalt bear tidings another day: but this day thou shalt bear no tidings, because the king's son is dead.**

**21 Then said Joab to Cush, Go tell the king what thou hast seen. And Cush bowed himself unto Joab, and ran.**

**22 Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok yet again to Joab, But howsoever, let me, I pray thee, also run after Cush. And Joab said, Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou hast no tidings ready?**

**23 But howsoever, said he, let me run. And he said unto him, Run. Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and overran Cush.**



**24 And David sat between the two gates: and the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold a man running alone.**

**25 And the watchman cried, and told the king. And the king said, If he be alone, there is tidings in his mouth. And he came apace, and drew near.**

**26 And the watchman saw another man running: and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold another man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings.**

**27 And the watchman said, Me thinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. And the king said, He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings.**

**28 And Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king, All is well. And he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king, and said, Blessed be the LORD thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king.**

**29 And the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, and me thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was.**

**30 And the king said unto him, Turn aside, and stand here. And he turned aside, and stood still.**

**31 And, behold, Cushi came; and Cushi said, Tidings, my lord the king: for the LORD hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee.**

**32 And the king said unto Cushi, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Cushi answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is.**

**33 And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son,**

***my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!***

~ Our safari ends this report with the rebellion quashed, Absalom dead, David grief stricken and Joab happy and content. David wasn't interested in the battle – only in Absalom's well-being. Joab was not interested in Absalom's well-being; he was out to win the battle. And he did. I can picture David sitting in the gate awaiting word to come. I'm sure David was in total denial about the report he would receive when the time came. We see messengers running to David in verse twenty-nine; and, friends, there are many messengers today telling the human family all is well when all is *NOT* well. Others have no stomach to make a correct report, like old man Ahimaaz. Well, make no mistake: my report to *YOU* is that things are *NOT* okay. Myriad crises and disasters loom large upon this world today. To make matters worse, *YOU* are a condemned sinner – just like me– and we need a Savior, and to know Jesus Christ Who died on the cross for our sins. That's the message; and very few people have the correct message; and even fewer give the correct message when they do carry it. This is a tremendous section of the Word of God ~

Joab was sick and tired of Absalom and his problematic issues. I DON'T think Joab had a right to do what he did, particularly after being commanded to *NOT* do what he did; but I see Joab's defense, too: he ended the rebellion and made the land safe again. The people would have backed Joab. What a tragedy all the way around. The last verse in this chapter is the most moving statement in the Bible or out, friends. There is no greater grief in this world than losing a loved one and knowing you will never see them again. I'm not sure if Absalom was saved, and David was not sure, either. David had been sure he would someday again be with the son from Bathsheba who had died; but Absalom – not so much.

If you have followed the account of David with us, some of us feel like asking the Lord to stop chastening David now. Personally, I feel like, after this event, David has had enough. God answers my plea by replying in reality: God says, "*....David deserved death for what happened with Uriah and Bathsheba.*" The Lord is *ALREADY* being lenient with David. These are difficult truths to accept in our lives, my beloved. This is another tragedy

that has no good ending; and, my friends, this is why it is crucial we come to understand the Word of God in *THIS* life - and that we be correctly witnessing these truths to others. This sad experience of David is our example of what *NOT* to do. Is *YOUR* family rooted in a proper, correct and complete Bible study? If not, I suggest you begin that immediately. In the next leg of our safari, we're going to consider another deep, tremendous spiritual message the Lord hath prepared for us ~