**2 Samuel 17-18. Fall of Absalom, 7/20/2018**

**Opening**

* Do you like to play chess, Chinese chess, bridge or other board/card games?
	+ How to win? Are strategies important? How to characterize a winning strategy?
* What is a “blind spot”? Visually such as when driving a car. How to overcome them?
	+ How about mentally? Do you have a mental blind spot? Of course not. Examples?
	+ What are the impacts of blind spots? How to overcome them?
* What is “察颜观色” (observe somebody's expressions, or read somebody's face)? Is that important? How to do that?
* What is “谋事在人，成事在天” (Man proposes, God disposes)? Is that generally true?
	+ If God disposes, why shall we work hard or think hard? What are the implications of this statement on our daily lives?
* Do you remember what we discussed last Fridays? Absalom's Conspiracy. David Flees Jerusalem. David and Ziba. Shimei Curses David.

**Outline** (ESV Study Bible)

1. Story of King David ([1:1–20:26](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B1-20/))
	1. David and the death of Saul ([1:1–27](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B1/))
	2. David becomes king ([2:1–5:5](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B2-5.5/))
	3. Jerusalem, the city of David ([5:6–25](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B5.6-25/))
	4. Zion, the place of worship ([6:1–23](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B6/))
	5. Davidic covenant: eternal throne ([7:1–29](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B7/))
	6. Catalog of David’s military activities ([8:1–18](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B8/))
	7. Mephibosheth ([9:1–13](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B9/))
	8. Israel-Ammon war ([10:1–12:31](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B10-12/))
		1. Beginning of Israel-Ammon war ([10:1–19](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B10/))
		2. David and Bathsheba ([11:1–12:25](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B11-12.25/))
		3. End of Israel-Ammon war ([12:26–31](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B12.26-31/))
	9. Absalom’s banishment and reinstatement ([13:1–14:33](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B13-14/))
	10. Absalom’s rebellion ([15:1–19:43](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B15-19/))
		1. Absalom’s conspiracy ([15:1–12](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B15.1-12/))
		2. David’s escape from Absalom ([15:13–16:14](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B15.13-16.14/))
		3. Ahithophel and Hushai ([16:15–17:23](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B16.15-17.23/))
		4. David arrives at Mahanaim ([17:24–29](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B17.24-29/))
		5. Death of Absalom ([18:1–19:8a](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B18-19.8/))
		6. David’s return to Jerusalem ([19:8b–43](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B19.8-43/))
	11. Sheba’s rebellion ([20:1–26](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B20/))
2. Epilogue ([21:1–24:25](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B21-24/))
	1. Famine and the death of Saul’s sons ([21:1–14](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B21.1-14/))
	2. Philistine wars ([21:15–22](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B21.15-22/))
	3. Song of David ([22:1–51](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B22/))
	4. Last words of David ([23:1–7](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B23.1-7/))
	5. David’s heroes ([23:8–39](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B23.8-39/))
	6. The census and the threshing floor ([24:1–25](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B24/))



http://stepintothestory.ca/what-happened-to-david-after-he-was-betrayed-and-cursed/

**Hushai Saves David (17:1-23)**

* How would you compare the two strategies of Ahithophel and Hushai?
* 2 Sam. 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 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. ESV Study Bible.
* 2 Sam. 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. ESV Study Bible.
* 2 Sam. 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. ESV Study Bible.
* 2 Sam. 17:23 Why did Ahithophel hang himself?
* 2 Sam. 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. ESV Study Bible.
* 2 Sam. 17:25 Joab was commander over the army (2 Sam. 8:16) and appears frequently in 2 Samuel, often as a mover of events. He was one of the three sons (Joab, Abishai, and Asahel) of David’s sister Zeruiah, and thus was David’s nephew (v. 18). Joab’s father probably died young, since he had a grave in Bethlehem (v. 32) and it was unusual for a man to be known by his mother’s name. Zeruiah is not identified in Samuel, but according to 1 Chron. 2:16, she and Abigail, the mother of Amasa (2 Sam. 17:25), were sisters of David and his brothers. Abigail is identified in 2 Sam. 17:25 as “the daughter of Nahash, sister of Zeruiah.” Therefore, it appears that Abigail and probably Zeruiah were maternal half-sisters of David by an earlier marriage of their mother. (David’s sister Abigail is a different Abigail from Nabal’s wife, who later became David’s wife.) ESV Study Bible.
* 2 Sam. 17:27 Mahanaim, a city in the deep canyon of the Jabbok River, is where Ish-bosheth had his capital. The fact that these people came from a distance suggests that David had real support in the area of Gilead. ESV Study Bible.
	+ Mahanaim. See also 2 Sam. 2:8, 2:12, and 2:29.
* Discussion
	+ How would you compare the two strategies of Ahithophel and Hushai? Based on what they said and what we now understand, which one’s statements had more “half-truth”? Examples?
	+ Why did Absalom listen to Hushai? Consequences?
	+ Do we know what environment we are in? What are good strategies, not just to survive, but to thrive?

**Absalom Killed (18: 1-18)**

* 2 Sam. 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. ESV Study Bible.
* 2 Sam. 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? ESV Study Bible.
* 2 Sam. 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). ESV Study Bible.
* 2 Sam. 18:9 Mules were the normal mounts of the king’s sons (13:29). His head caught fast in the oak. In God’s providence, the source of his pride became the cause of his downfall. ESV Study Bible.
* 2 Sam. 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. ESV Study Bible.
* 2 Sam. 18:18 I have no son. The author contrasts the memorial pillar with Absalom’s actual tomb, a big pile of rocks. ESV Study Bible.
* Discussion
	+ Is it ironic that the source of Absalom’s pride became the cause of his/her downfall?
	+ Have you seen similar situations?
	+ Have you seen the opposite: a person’s shame became the cause of his/her success?

**David Hears of Absalom's Death and David's Grief (18:19-33)**

* 2 Sam. 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. ESV Study Bible.
* 2 Sam. 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. ESV Study Bible.
* 2 Sam. 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). ESV Study Bible.
* Discussion
	+ Was Ahimaaz good at “察颜观色” (observe somebody's expressions, or read somebody's face)? What did he have in mind?
	+ Are you good at observing somebody's expressions? How to learn that?
	+ Did David have a serious blind spot?
	+ How about ourselves? How to overcome them?

**Wrapping up**

* “谋事在人，成事在天” (Man proposes, God disposes). Implications on us?
* What are your favorite verses?

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