

## Message #23

## II Samuel 17:1-14

There is a statement in Proverbs that has always affected me concerning the sovereignty of God. It is Proverbs 21:1 and it says, “The king’s heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes.”

What this very practically teaches is that God is completely sovereign over a person’s brain and He can turn that brain any way He wants at any time. In any capacity where some subordinate faces some superior. In any situation or circumstance whether the world of politics, occupation, or education, God has the sovereign power to turn that superior’s mind any way He wants.

If ever you want to see that in living color, it is right here in this amazing text.

**GOD SOVEREIGNLY PROTECTS DAVID BY TURNING ABSALOM’S MIND TO ACCEPT THE COUNSEL OF DAVID’S FRIEND, HUSHAI, SO THAT GOD COULD BRING CALAMITY AND DESTRUCTION ON ABSALOM.**

Now let’s set the context for this. Absalom is in Jerusalem and has elevated himself to be king. He has taken over the city and he has raped all the concubines of David. He seems to have the people on his side. All we know at this point is that there are a handful of people in Jerusalem who are on David’s side.

**PART #1 – Ahithophel presents a plan to Absalom to kill David. 17:1-4**

Let us remember that David had prayed that God would “make the counsel of Ahithophel foolishness” (II Sam. 15:31). God has already started to answer that prayer with his concubine counsel and now we will see God answer that prayer in quite another remarkable way.

According to **verse 1**, now that Absalom had raped the concubines, Ahithophel, the traitor weasel, said to Absalom, select 12,000 men that I may go after David tonight. This is big talk from a punk. His thinking is, I’ll surprise him and kill him.

Carefully observe the arrogance here. Ahithophel says, “let **ME** choose...that **I** may...**I** will come upon him...**I** will strike him down alone...**I** will bring back all the people.” He is an arrogant, self-promoting, egotistical, power-crazed jerk. He is a godless, Satanic snake who looks out for number one. The real fact is Ahithophel is a big-mouthed coward.

There is actually an underlying motive why Ahithophel would want David dead. If David, by some miracle survived and became the reinstated King, it would be curtains for Ahithophel. So he wants him dead.

At this point in time, Ahithophel was Absalom’s number one advisor and Absalom completely trusted him.

At the time this is happening, David doesn't have a massive number of soldiers with him. In fact, we know from 15:18 that he had about 600 men. So numerically speaking, 12,000 men would completely outnumber David by 20 to 1.

According to **verses 2-3**, Ahithophel's plan was to take 12,000 men and go after David and track him down while he was weary and exhausted. The numbers would overwhelm him and the men with him and they would flee and then he could assassinate David.

He told Absalom that he would then bring back all the people to Absalom and everyone will support you and be at peace. If we can destroy David, all will be well.

The whole focus of this plan is to kill David. His idea if we kill David, he is gone and everyone will support you.

According to **verse 4**, this plan pleased Absalom. Of course this plan would please a guy like Absalom. This was the kind of plan that really fed his ego.

#### **PART #2** – Absalom decides to consult Hushai. **17:5-6**

Right here is where we see the secret, silent, sovereign hand of Almighty God at work in an egotistical, immoral, power-crazed, arrogant Absalom. **This decision will turn out to be one of the most significant events in Israel's history.**

Absalom decided to present Ahithophel's plan to Hushai to get his view on it. He wants Hushai to give his perspective and critique of the plan.

Absalom summoned Hushai and basically said, here is Ahithophel's plan and I would like your opinion on this.

According to **verse 6**, he requested that Hushai give his honest opinion. He truly did want him to speak his mind on this matter.

#### **PART #3** – Hushai responds to Ahithophel's plan. **17:7-13**

When you read Hushai's response, it is not a response filled with pronouns such as "I" and "Me." There are no "I will" statements.

Robert Bergen, who has written a good commentary on this book, said, "Hushai's words spoken in response to Absalom's invitation are perhaps the most significant ones uttered by a counselor in the history of united Israel's monarchy" (*1,2 Samuel*, p. 412).

What we are seeing here is the amazing work of the sovereignty of God in not only sparing David, but ultimately destroying Absalom and raising up David. In the end, Hushai's plan and counsel will give David time and bring him right back to the city of Jerusalem. There are ten responses we see here:

**Hushai Response #1** - Ahithophel's plan is not good. **17:7**

Now Hushai cannot just say the plan is not good because he is on David's side. He needs to present solid evidence why it is not good.

**Hushai Response #2** - David and his men are fierce fighters. **17:8a**

Hushai says you cannot take David and his men lightly. You do not want to misjudge him based on numbers. These guys are the best of the best military fighters. They are like a team of special ops, Navy SEALs, or Green Berets. David and his men are fierce fighters. They are dangerous men. They are as dangerous as a mother bear robbed of her cubs.

David is Absalom's father, and he certainly realizes what Hushai is saying is absolutely true. His father was the ultimate military strategist and a mighty fierce warrior, who had proved himself time and time again in military conflicts.

**Hushai Response #3** - David, your father, is an expert in war. **17:8b**

David and his men are smart. Hushai says if you think you can sneak in on David and his team, think again. They know warfare. They are skilled in warfare tactics. You will never catch David and his men off guard. You will never take them by surprise.

**Hushai Response #4** - David, your father, will not spend his night with other people. **17:8c**

David does not put himself in a position with people so he can be captured or trapped. He is way too smart for that.

**Hushai Response #5** - David has hidden himself in some cave or other place. **17:9a**

Along the north end of the Dead Sea there are all kinds of caves, even to this day. David does not put himself in some place where you can easily access him.

**Hushai Response #6** - David will ambush Absalom's men and word will spread that Absalom and his men have been slaughtered. **17:9b**

Hushai says what Ahithophel thinks will be an easy assassination may turn out to be his own death trap. David and his men know how to set traps to lure in enemies.

In fact, David is smart enough to ambush and destroy those men who came after him and then word will spread that you lost.

**Hushai Response #7** - Your most valiant and brave men will lose heart to David and his valiant men. **17:10**

In other words, your bravest soldiers will "melt with fear." Your bravest soldiers will panic.

At this point, Hushai has completely discredited Ahithophel's plan. His argumentation is solid. But he is not done yet.

God has used him at this point to shoot holes in Athihophel's scheme, but God is now going to actually use Hushai to present a plan that will ultimately destroy Absalom and raise up David.

**Hushai Response #8** - You should gather all Israel with you and personally go to battle yourself. **17:11**

Hushai comes up with an alternative plan. Instead of taking just 12,000 soldiers, you should take as many troops from Israel as you possibly can.

Hushai says you need to get all the military troops you can from Dan to Beersheba and create a massive military force. Increase the numbers as the sand of the sea and overwhelm David and his men with your numbers.

What no one but Hushai is thinking here is that in order for Absalom to do this, it will take a great deal of time. During that time, David would be able to form a strategy and escape to the other side of the Jordan.

Notice that Hushai says at the end of **verse 11, make sure that you yourself go on this mission.**

In other words, when the military goes to get David, you leave Jerusalem and you yourself go out and show everyone that you are top dog. This plays right into the egotistical mind of Absalom.

**Hushai Response #9** - We will go to one of the places where David may be found and we will fall on him and his men and not one will be left. **17:12**

Now had Absalom really thought this through, he could have rationally said didn't you just say that David's team are fierce fighters who are experts in war?

Do you really think that David will allow himself and his men to get boxed into some area so we can just fall on them and destroy them?

**Hushai Response #10** - If David flees to some city, we will go after him and destroy the city. **17:13**

The massive numbers of men will enable you to track David down no matter where he goes. You will be able to drag the city down with ropes and drag the city into the valley.

**PART #4** – Absalom concludes that Hushai’s plan is better than Ahithophel’s plan. **17:14**

At the conclusion of Hushai’s recommendations, Absalom and the other men with him decided Hushai’s plan was far better than Ahithophel’s plan.

But notice what is said here in **verse 14**, “the LORD had ordained this.” God was sovereign in every bit of this.

Why? Because this plan was a sovereign plan of God to thwart the counsel of Ahithophel, and bring Absalom down.

When we are doing God’s will and when we are where God wants us to be, we are invincible. God is watching over us and protecting us. That does not mean we do not need to be good, smart soldiers. But it does mean we can trust Him to guide us, protect us, and give us victory.