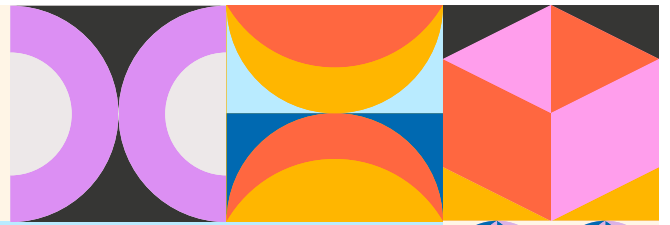
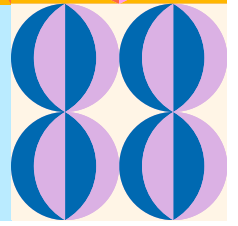


The Long-Term Consequences of Sin - Part 2



2 Samuel 17 & 18



Key Bible Texts	2 Samuel 17 & 18
Key Bible Verse(s)	“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.” (2 Samuel 17:14)

Background to the Study

Absalom, in his attempt to usurp the throne from his father, King David, sought counsel from Ahithophel, who proposed a swift attack with 12,000 light-footed soldiers. Ahithophel's plan was to surprise David before he could cross the Jordan River into the wilderness. This sudden assault, he believed, would create panic among David's followers, leading them to flee, and David could be captured and killed. While the elders of Israel approved of Ahithophel's advice, Absalom hesitated, knowing the power and wisdom of his father. God intervened, causing Absalom to seek a second opinion. He consulted Hushai, who was secretly loyal to David. Hushai, while flattering Absalom, proposed a more deliberate strategy that would delay the attack, buying David time. Though Ahithophel's plan seemed tactically sound, God's will was for it to fail. Hushai's counsel clouded Absalom's judgment, and the elders of Israel were swayed.

Ahithophel had been one of David's counselors. He realized that Absalom would be defeated, and then he would be judged for being a traitor. If Ahithophel followed Absalom to get revenge for David's sin against Bathsheba and Uriah, Ahithophel paid dearly for harbouring the bitterness in his heart.

David, meanwhile, gathered his troops and divided them into three divisions under Joab, Abishai, and Ittai. His supporters advised him to stay behind in the city, understanding that the battle was a direct confrontation between father and son. The fighting took place in dense, treacherous woods, and the “wood devoured more” than the sword, indicating the natural obstacles that claimed many lives. When Joab blew the trumpet, it signalled the troops to cease fighting and regroup.

Though David had commanded that Absalom be spared, Joab disobeyed and killed him. Absalom had three sons, but they had likely died before this battle. Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok the priest, and a Cushite messenger were sent to deliver the news to David. Ahimaaz took a longer, easier route, while the Cushite went a more direct, rugged path. David was anxiously waiting near the gates of the city,

where the two walls created a courtyard-like space. When King David asked Ahimaaz what had happened to his son Absalom, Ahimaaz said that he did not know. One Bible commentary suggests that because he feared the wrath of the king, he would not say. Because of that, his testimony was worthless. He was told to stand aside, while David waited for someone else to arrive who actually knew what had happened. As Christians, whether we know anything else or not in life, we had better know that we are spiritually right with God. It is imperative that we have a clear testimony of salvation. It needs to be real in our lives so that we know for sure that we are on the road to Heaven. And we need to be able to put this into words so that we can be effective in helping someone else along the path toward God.

Upon hearing of Absalom's death, David cried out in grief. David grieved deeply for several reasons. Certainly he grieved for him because he was his son. David also knew that this was part of God's judgment for his murder of Uriah. His sorrow was compounded by his awareness that this tragedy was part of God's judgment for his sin against Uriah.

TESTIMONIES FROM OUR DAY

When facing opposition, betrayal, or attack, it's important to remember that God is in complete control. One woman shared a recent challenge she experienced as a teacher. The father of one of her students falsely accused her of slapping his child in class. The principal called her in for a meeting and informed her that an investigation would be conducted. That night, she prayed about the situation, laying it before the Lord. The next day, the principal, concerned for her, said, "I was thinking about you last night." The teacher responded, "I did not come here by myself. Where God's will places me, His grace will sustain me."

God answered her prayers. Although the motive behind the false accusation was never fully revealed, it was later discovered that the father and a teacher's aide had conspired to implicate her. Through this trial, God intervened in a powerful way, and the teacher's testimony even became a witness to the principal.

This story echoes the prayer of David, who fervently asked God to "turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness." In the same way, when we face adversity, we should follow the example of both this teacher and David: pray earnestly for God's intervention. Sometimes God answers in ways we don't expect, but He always answers when we pray with honesty and faith. The challenges we face may seem insurmountable, but so did David's. While Ahithophel's advice seemed sound in the natural, God defeated it.

God wants to work in your life today. Will you trust Him to lead you to victory?

A Closer Look

Question 1

Why did Absalom choose Hushai's advise when Ahithophel's counsel would have best served his purpose and goal to overthrow his father, King David? II Samuel 17:5-14

Question 2

God can affirm or turn to foolishness the counsel of man. Knowing this, how might we pray for those in authority in our country?

Question 3

What were David's instructions to Joab and the other generals regarding the treatment of Absalom if he were caught? Did Joab follow these orders? II Samuel 18:5,14-15

Question 4

When King David asked Ahimaaz what had happened to his son Absalom, what was his response? What should be our response as Christians?

Question 5

In 2 Samuel 18:6-18, we read Absalom's death; verse 33 records David's great anguish. Why do you think David was so upset over the death of his rebellious son?

Question 6

How does God's love for us compare to David's love for Absalom?

Take Home

If you face a situation today that looks impossible, remember that God can defeat the forces of the enemy that come against you. Hold fast in God! Many things in life may be confusing, but our relationship with God should not be one of them. At every moment, we need to know that our hearts are right with Him.