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Hushai's Advice is Declared Better Than Ahithophel's
Second Samuel 17: 5-16

Husahi's advice is declared better than Ahithophel's DIG: What different approach did ADONAI direct Hushai to take when giving counsel to Absalom? Why was Hushai's advice better than Ahithophel's? Why was it successful? Why do you think Absalom didn't go with the bloodless, easy victory? What word did Hushai send to David? Why? Did loyalty to David justify deceiving Absalom or confounding Ahithophel? Why or why not?

REFLECT: Where do you go for advice? What risks is the LORD asking you to take for Him? What "enemy lines" are you willing to cross, as Hushai did? Why "spy messages" will you communicate for your Master in disregard for your own comfort and safety, as Zadok and Abiathar did? When making decisions, what did Absalom substitute for seeking the LORD? When have you caught yourself doing the same thing? Why do we sometimes fall into that trap? As you look back on your life as a believer, can you discern the hidden sovereignty of God?

977 BC
This is part of a 24-hour period starting at 15:13 and extending all the way to 17:23.



Humanly speaking, if **Absalom** followed **Ahithophel's** plan, **David** would have been killed and **Absalom's** problems would have been solved. But **David** had prayed that **YHVH** would **turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness (Second Samuel 15:31)**, and **God** used **Hushai** to do just that. It is important to understand that **Ahithophel** put **himself** front and center by using phrases like: **I would choose . . . I would attack . . . I would strike. He** wanted to be the general of the army because he wanted personally to supervise the murder of the **king**. **His** plan was a good one: use a small army that could move swiftly, attack suddenly at night and have **David's** death be the only goal. **He** would then bring back **David's** followers who would swear loyalty to the new king. It would be a quick, bloodless victory.[420]

But this decision was so important that **Absalom** wanted a second opinion. **Hushai** wasn't in the room when **Ahithophel** outlined **his** plan, so **Absalom** said: **Summon also Hushai the Arkite, so we can hear what he has to say as well. God** was in control. **Absalom** didn't merely ask **Hushai** what **he** thought, but **he** divulged **Ahithophel's** entire plan and asked for **his opinion**. In this way, **Hushai** knew exactly what **he** was up against and how to counter it.[421]

When Hushai came to him, Absalom said, "Ahithophel has given this advice. Should we do what he says? If not, give us your opinion." Directed by **ADONAI**, **Hushai** took an entirely different approach and focused on the ego of **the** young **king**. **Hushai's** reply wasn't a series of **I would** statements about **himself**, but rather a series of statements about **the** new **king** that couldn't help but ignite **Absalom's** imagination and inflate **his** ego. **Hushai** laid out an effective verbal trap, and **Absalom** fell right into it.[422]

Hushai replied to Absalom, saying: **The advice Ahithophel has given is not good at this time** (although it had been **good** at other times)**. Hushai** knew that **Ahithophel's** advice was excellent, and if carried out would prove fatal to **David**. So now **he** must find a way to gain time for **David** to regroup **his** troops. Being master of the double-talk, **Hushai** began **his** deception based on **David's** track record: **You know your father and his men; they are fighters, and as fierce a wild bear robbed of her cubs. Besides, your father is an experienced fighter.** Being a **son** of the royal house, **Absalom** could not deny the prowess of **his father**, which had become proverbial. Then **Hushai** proceeded to weave a web of conjectures. Furthermore, **David** was too smart to stay with the troops; **he will not spend the night with the people. Even now, he is hidden in a cave or some other place.** If that were true (which it was not) **Ahithophel** would not be able to surprise **him** and kill **him** quickly as **he** claimed. **If he should attack your troops first, whoever hears about it will say, "There has been a slaughter among the troops who follow Absalom." Then** there will be panic among **Absalom's men**, and **even the bravest soldier, whose heart is like the heart of a lion, will melt with fear, for all Isra'el knows that your father is a fighter and that those with him are brave" (Second Samuel 17:5-10).**

Then **Hushai** presented a plan that overcame all of those difficulties. First, **the** new **king himself** needed to lead the army and it needed to be the biggest army **he** could possibly assemble. **So Hushai** advised: **Let all Isra'el, from Dan to Beersheba – as numerous as the sand on the seashore – be gathered to you.** Of course this not only appealed to **Absalom's** ego, but would also have taken some time to accomplish, giving **David** time to mobilize **his** army.[423] And **Hushai** also advised **Absalom** to **lead his men into battle himself.** This would eventually be **Absalom's** undoing and lead to his death. **Then we will attack him wherever he may be found.** If we catch **him** in the open field, then **we will fall on him** with great numbers **as dew settles on the ground. Neither he nor any of his men will be left alive.** Realizing that Absalom might worry about the time element, **Hushai** proposed that **if he withdraws into a city, then all Isra'el** (a rhetorical exaggeration)**will bring ropes to that city, and we will drag it down to the valley until not so much as a pebble is left (Second Samuel 17:11-13).** What a demonstration of power! With **his** con completed **Hushai** was dismissed. The contrast couldn't be clearer: the simple, quick plan of **Ahithophel** verses the slow, grandiose strategy of **Hushai**. Common sense would dictate embracing the former.[424]

Absalom and all the men of Isra'el said: **The advice of Hushai is better than that of Ahithophel (Second Samuel 17:14a). He** had been persuaded by a speech that pulled the wool over **his** eyes. Smoke and mirrors. With this decision, **Hushai** had saved **David** and doomed **Absalom**. It gave **David** the opportunity to shape **his** troops, recover **his** strength, and decide on the terrain advantageous in the coming battle.[425] This is one of the key verses in **Samuel** for the narrator tells us immediately why **Hushai** prevailed. It was all a part of the sovereignty of **God**. **For the LORD had determined to frustrate the good advice of Ahithophel in order to bring disaster on Absalom (Second Samuel 17:14b).** The choice had been made, not because of clever deception but because **ADONAI** had commanded it. **Isra'el's** history has within it this hidden **Agent** who works for **David's** advantage. **David** prayed that **the counsel of Ahithophel** should be rejected **(2 Samuel 15:31)**. In **Second Samuel 17:14, David's** prayer was answered and the advice of **Ahithophel** was rejected.[426]

More often than not that is how **God** works. **His** scepter is unseen, **His** sovereignty hidden behind the conversations and decisions and activities and crises of our lives. We only see grocery lines and diaper changes and school assignments; but through and over and behind it all . . . **the LORD** reigns. **He** is not absent, but neither is **He** obvious. Sometimes we need to be told that, lest we become too enamored with "the Hushai" in all of us.[427]

You must remember that you know the secret: **YHVH** was at work to protect **David** and fulfill **His** covenant relationship with **him**. You know what **Ha'Shem** had decided about **Absalom** and what ruin **the LORD** intended to bring upon **him**. The narrator knows this and you know this, but the folks in the drama don't have this information. In fact, **Hushai** didn't even know what **Absalom** had decided. **He** had been dismissed before **the king** had made up **his** mind. **He** could only tell **David** what **he** and **Ahithophel** had both said and urge **him** to act on the assumption that **Ahithophel's** advice would prevail.[428] Therefore, **Hushai told Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, "Ahithophel has advised Absalom and the elders of Isra'el to do such and such, but I have advised them to do so and so. Now send a message at once and tell David, 'Do not spend the night at the fords in the** west side of **the Jordan River; cross over** to the east side of **the Jordan without fail, or the king [David] and all the people with him will be swallowed up' (Second Samuel 17:15-16)."**