

YHWH Answers David's Prayer: 2 Samuel 17:1-29



INTRODUCTION



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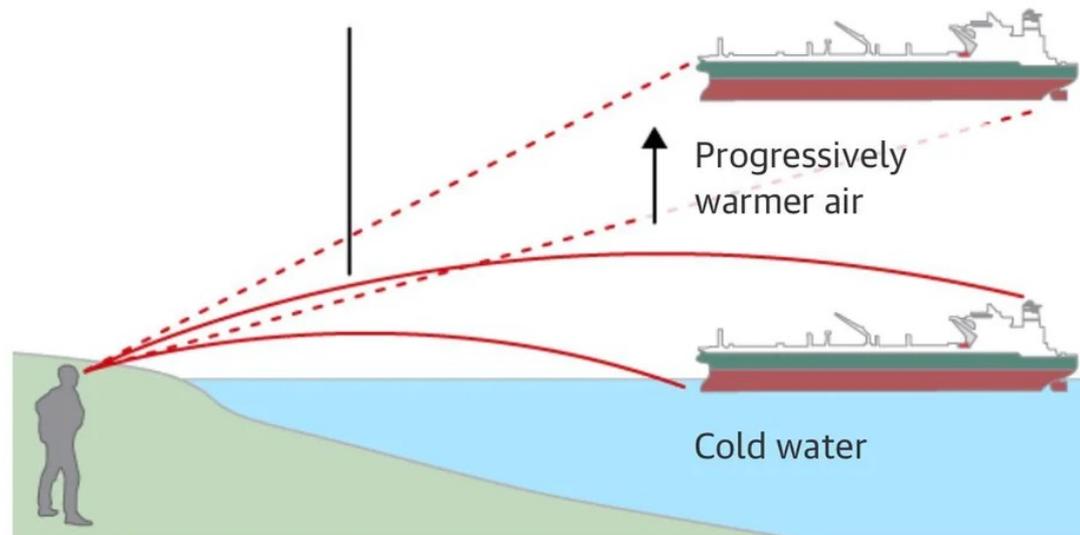


INTRODUCTION

Warm air over cold water can produce a 'superior' mirage

Refraction bends light downwards towards colder region

Ship appears to float in the air



Guardian graphic. Source: HyperPhysics, Georgia State University. Note: vertical scale exaggerated

OUTLINE OF LIFE OF DAVID

- I. David's Rise and King Saul's Demise** 1 Sam 16 - 2 Sam 1

- II. David's Reign as King over Israel** 2 Sam 2 - 20
 - a. David's Ascension to King** 2 Sam 2 - 5
 - b. David's Triumphant Reign** 2 Sam 6 - 10
 - c. David's Troubled Reign** 2 Sam 11 - 20

- Epilogue** 2 Sam 21 - 1 Kings 2

PROPOSITION:

God accomplishes His redemptive purposes by confounding Absalom's corrupt plan, providing David with a clear path back to the throne.

God accomplishes His purposes through David's prayer—the quick and precise arrow prayer shot up to YHWH as he fled Absalom on insurrection day. (2 Samuel 15:31)



OBJECTIVE

God cares for us as we experience His preserving care and accomplish His prescribed will. In obedience we must present our specific concerns and pleas before the Throne of Grace.



KEY CHAPTER VERSE

“Then Absalom and all the men of Israel said, ‘The advice of Hushai the Archite is better than the advice of Ahithophel. For the Lord had ordained to foil the good advice of Ahithophel, in order for the Lord to bring disaster on Absalom.’” (17:14)

OUTLINE

I. Ahithophel's Strategic Advice (17:1-4)

SUN TZU

The Nature of Surprise

- In conflict, direct confrontation will lead to **engagement and surprise** will lead to victory.
- Those who are **skilled in producing surprises** will win. Such tacticians are as versatile as the changes in heaven and earth.
- In directing a conflict, there is only ambush or direct confrontation. Yet their combinations produce a variation of possible battle plans.

OUTLINE

I. Ahithophel's Strategic Advice (17:1-4)

II. Hushai's Deceptive Advice (17:5-13)

SUN TZU

The Nature of Deception

- A military operation involves deception. Even though you are competent, appear to be incompetent. Though effective, appear to be ineffective.

OUTLINE

- I. Ahithophel's Strategic Advice (17:1-4)**
- II. Hushai's Deceptive Advice (17:5-13)**
- III. YHWH's Ordained Choice (17:14)**

MOUNT OF OLIVES – JERUSALEM



KIDRON VALLEY



OUTLINE

I. Ahithophel's Strategic Advice (17:1-4)

II. Hushai's Deceptive Advice (17:5-13)

III. YHWH's Ordained Choice (17:14)

IV. Hushai's Warning & Plan Executed as David Crosses the Jordan (17:15-22)

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No Foreign Dissem

*The influence agent
in Biblical times.*

THE TALE OF HUSHAI THE ARCHITE

C. N. Geschwind

Since the publication of the *Studies* article, "Wanted: An Integrated Counterintelligence" in the summer of 1963, there has been an increase of community interest and concern about that most dangerous and least publicized of all agents, the "agent of influence."¹

Accordingly, it seems appropriate to review the story of the first influence agent operation on record. This operation was set up by King David and is recounted in II Samuel, 15-16. This account is a good deal more circumstantial and detailed than the frequently cited cases of Rahab the Safe House Keeper (Joshua 2: 1), and Delilah the Penetration Agent (Judges 16: 5). Furthermore, besides its historical and human interest, this operation reminds us of the efficacy of simplicity, audacity, speed, and the exploitation of human frailties in this kind of enterprise. Here is what happened, when King David played for time to counter his son Absalom's surprise attack.

The Situation

David's handsome and popular son, Absalom, having waited many years in vain for his father to go the way of all kings, formed a conspiracy to kill him and usurp the throne. King David soon became aware that Absalom had assembled a large revolutionary force from among the men of Israel, and that the King's best privy counsellor, Ahithophel the Gilonite, had defected to Absalom. Upon hearing of this counsellor's defection, King David prayed that the "counsel of Ahithophel might be turned to foolishness" but he also gathered his loyal generals and bureaucrats and fled. Absalom thereupon occupied the royal palace.

Mounting the Operation

When David stopped to pray in the course of his flight, Hushai the Archite, an aged counsellor, came to him with his coat rent and earth upon his head, professing grief and loyalty which the King

¹ *Studies* VII 3, p. 19.

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The Influence Operatton

At the council of war which Absalom called, Ahithophel advised Absalom as follows: "Let me now choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David this night and will come upon him while he is weary and weakhanded and will make him afraid. All the people that are with him shall flee, and I will smite the king only. I will bring back all the people unto thee." This proposal reportedly pleased Absalom and all the elders well, but they must have had some doubts and second thoughts as to where the glory would land, for Absalom said: "Call now Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear likewise what he saith."

Hushai lost no time in exploiting the distrust, jealousy, fear, and guilt complexes inherent in the situation, saying: "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. Behold, he is hid now in some pit or in some other place and it will come to pass when some of (our men) be overthrown at the first that whosoever heareth it will say, 'There is slaughter among the people that

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The Espionage Action

Like Alger Hiss millennia later, Hushai the Archite was not content to stick to the relatively safe business of influence operations, but had also to dabble in espionage. Hushai immediately called on Zadok and Abiathar the priests and told them: "Thus and thus did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel, and thus and thus I have counselled. Now therefore send quickly and tell David not to lodge in the wilderness but speedily pass over (the Jordan)." The sons of these priests, the couriers Jonathan and Abimaaz, were staying under cover outside the royal city, and received this message via "a wench," not otherwise identified. An informer observed this contact and reported it to Absalom, who sent out an investigative force. The couriers were aware of the leak and sought help from a village woman who hid them in a well. When the investigators queried the woman she said, "They went that-away," or words to that effect, and the search went astray. The couriers then hastened to King David, who promptly crossed the Jordan and mobilized a desperate army.

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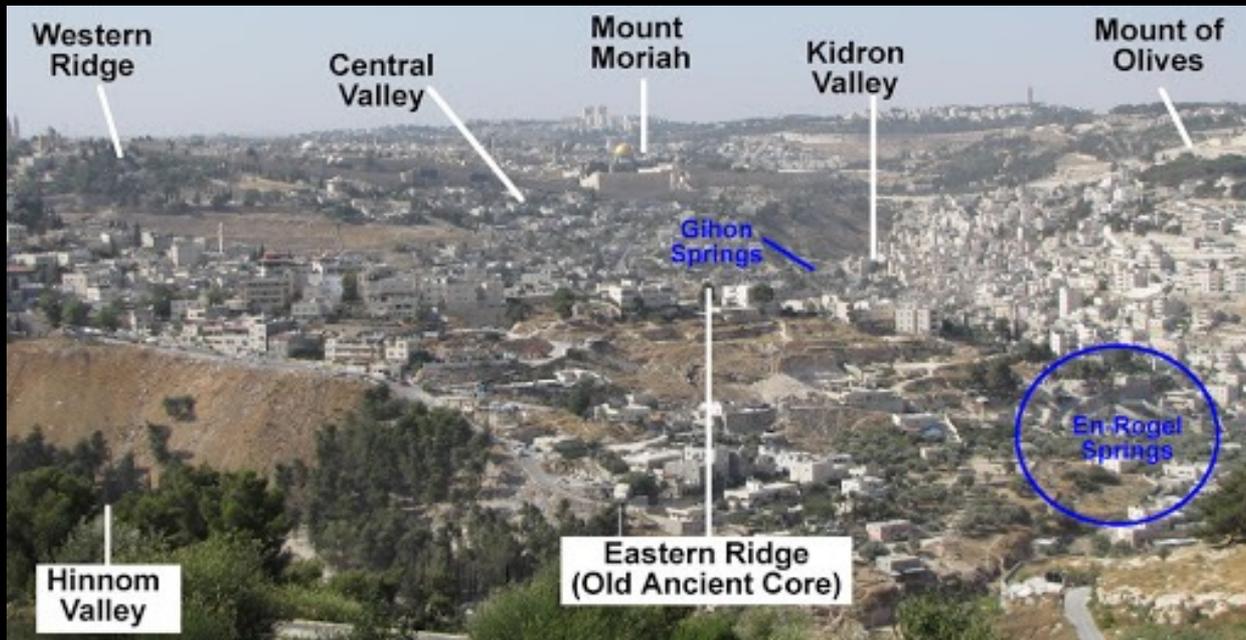
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Hushai

The Pay-off

Eventually Absalom brought a large, but inexperienced force into battle against the tightly organized forces of the King in terrain in which the King's professionals had every advantage, producing twenty thousand corpses: "The wood devoured more people that day than the sword" Among the casualties in the woods was Absalom himself, who appears to have been something of a beatnik, for he had long golden tresses of which he was very proud, and by which he got caught in a tree. There General Joab found and killed him, ending the insurrection. Since Hushai's accomplices subsequently prospered, it is reasonable to assume that he also retained an honored place in the restored administration and ultimately retired with a large pension. General Joab, however, did not fare so well, for King David bore him a lethal grudge for killing Prince Absalom. Perhaps the King saw his renegade counsellor Abithophel as the real villain in the piece.

WELL OF EN-ROGEL



WELL OF EN-ROGEL



WELL OF EN-ROGEL



COUNSEL OF HUSHAI



LEGEND:
----- David flees from Jerusalem to Mahanaim

After fleeing from Jerusalem, David and all his people moved on and crossed the Jordan and arrived at Mahanaim. (2 Samuel 17:22-24)

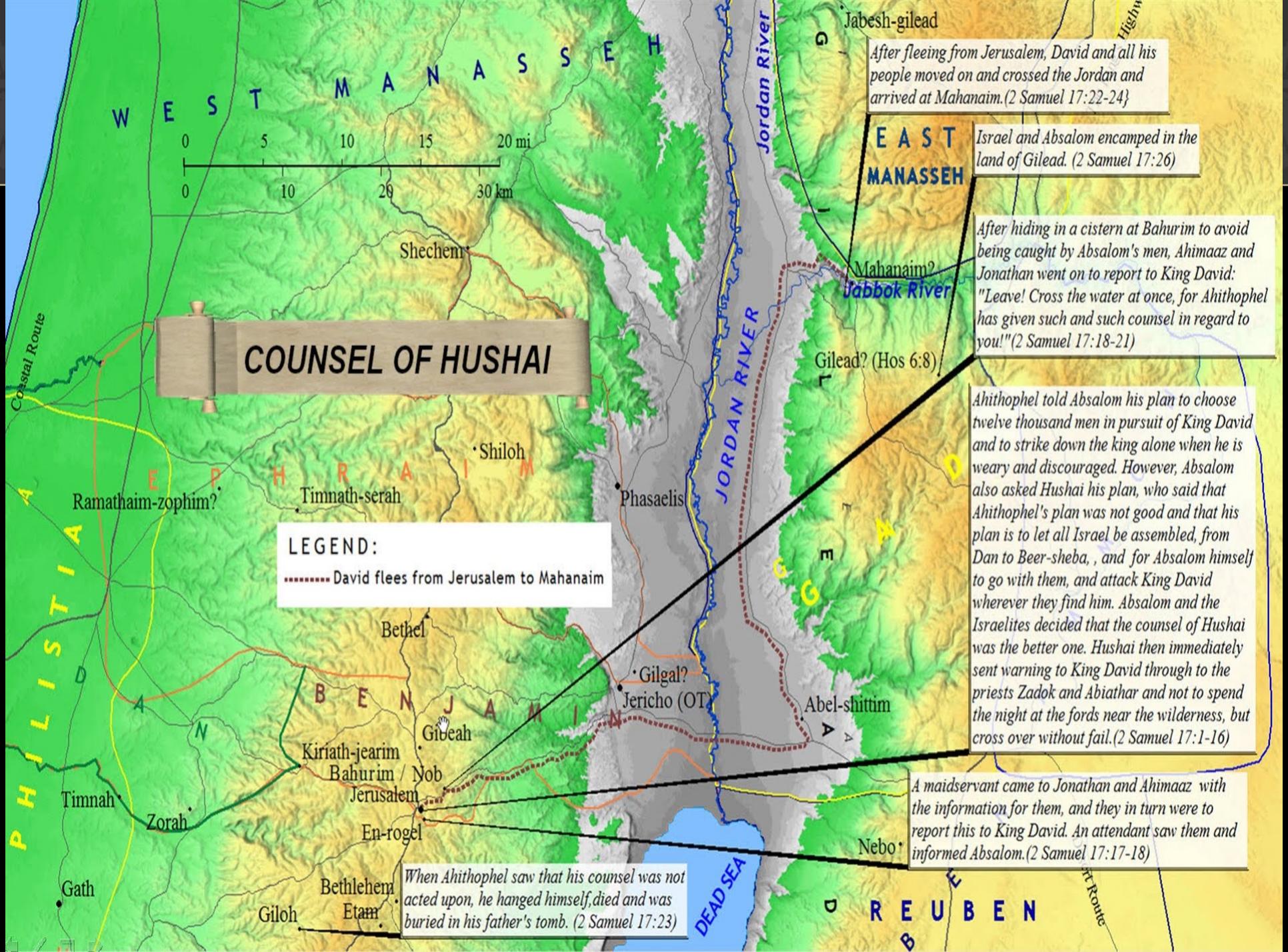
EAST MANASSEH
Israel and Absalom encamped in the land of Gilead. (2 Samuel 17:26)

After hiding in a cistern at Bahurim to avoid being caught by Absalom's men, Ahimaaz and Jonathan went on to report to King David: "Leave! Cross the water at once, for Ahithophel has given such and such counsel in regard to you!" (2 Samuel 17:18-21)

Ahithophel told Absalom his plan to choose twelve thousand men in pursuit of King David and to strike down the king alone when he is weary and discouraged. However, Absalom also asked Hushai his plan, who said that Ahithophel's plan was not good and that his plan is to let all Israel be assembled, from Dan to Beer-sheba, and for Absalom himself to go with them, and attack King David wherever they find him. Absalom and the Israelites decided that the counsel of Hushai was the better one. Hushai then immediately sent warning to King David through to the priests Zadok and Abiathar and not to spend the night at the fords near the wilderness, but cross over without fail. (2 Samuel 17:1-16)

A maidservant came to Jonathan and Ahimaaz with the information for them, and they in turn were to report this to King David. An attendant saw them and informed Absalom. (2 Samuel 17:17-18)

When Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not acted upon, he hanged himself, died and was buried in his father's tomb. (2 Samuel 17:23)



WELL OF BAHURIM



JORDAN RIVER



OUTLINE

I. Ahithophel's Strategic Advice (17:1-4)

II. Hushai's Deceptive Advice (17:5-13)

III. YHWH's Ordained Choice (17:14)

IV. Hushai's Warning & Plan Executed as David Crosses the Jordan (17:15-22)

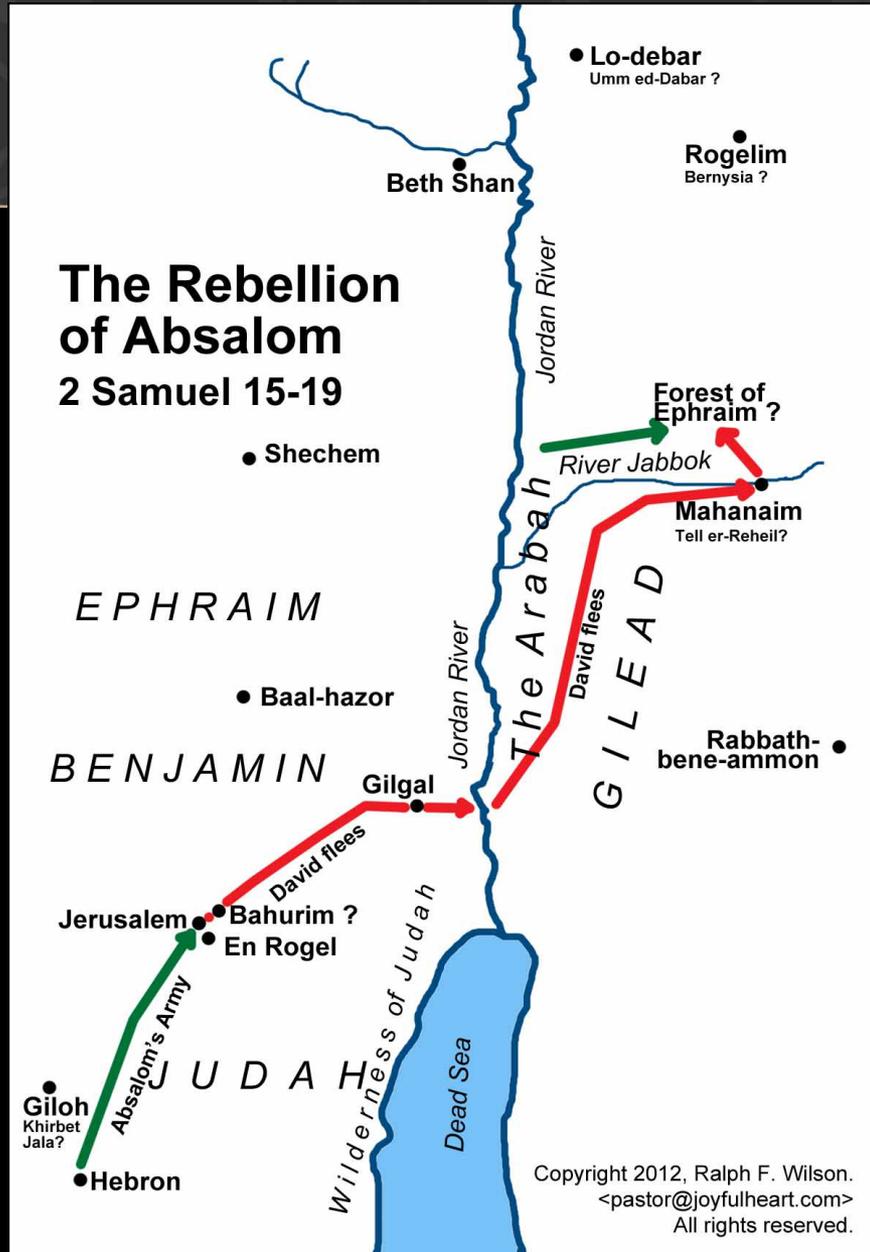
V. Ahithophel's Demise and Death (17:23)

OUTLINE

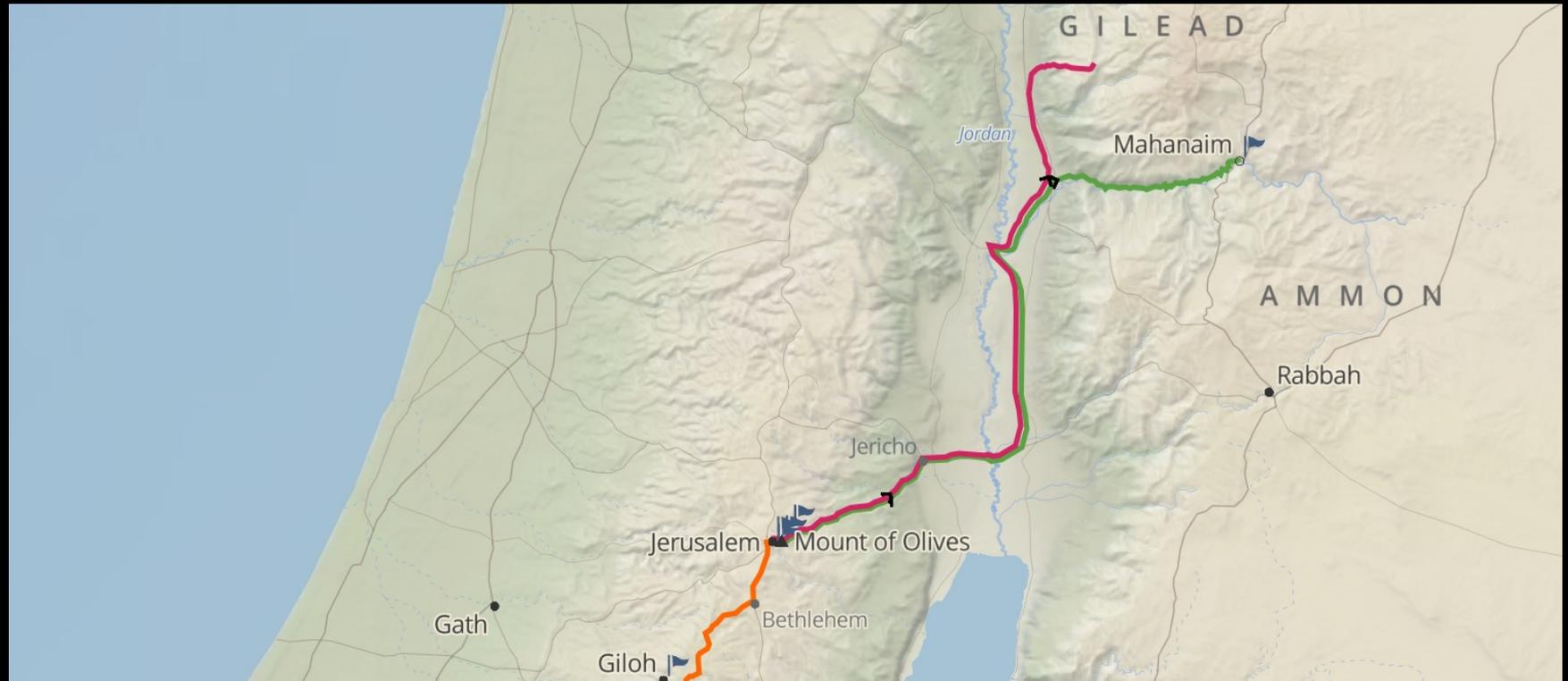
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- V. Ahithophel's Demise and Death (17:23)**
- VI. Absalom crosses the Jordan and Assembles for a Doomed Battle (17:24b-26)**

MAP

The Rebellion of Absalom 2 Samuel 15-19



ROUTE



OUTLINE

- I. Ahithophel's Strategic Advice (17:1-4)**
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- V. Ahithophel's Demise and Death (17:23)**
- VI. Absalom crosses the Jordan and Assembles for a Doomed Battle (17:24b-26)**
- VII. YHWH Supplies David with Needed Resources (17:24a, 27-29)**

SUN T'ZU

“Amidst the chaos of a sea of flags in the battlefield, order must be maintained. Even when the view is unclear, adherence to an army’s formation will ensure it cannot be defeated. Yet, disorder can arise from order, fear from bravery and weakness from strength.

Orderliness can be fostered (or instilled) via **coordination**, bravery via the impetus of a situation and strength via training. A commander may stir an enemy (i.e. disrupt its formation) by misleading it with an enticement of a false advantage, from which point the enemy can be defeated by troops lying in wait.”

FOREST



BATTLE'S END



IMPLICATIONS:

1) What does this text teach us about God?

God advances His kingdom by maneuvering history to accomplish His redemptive goals. At this time David has no understanding of how God could ever use Absalom's rebellion for His glory and good, but he nonetheless acknowledges the power and control of his sovereign God.

IMPLICATIONS:

2) What does this passage teach about David's correct response to this insurmountable trial? We see David's knee-jerk reaction to pray once he discovers Ahithophel's role in the insurrection.

IMPLICATIONS:

3) What does this text teach us about our proper response to trials? There is a tight relationship between Prayer & the Sovereignty of God. There is a relationship between the means and the ends as God hears our prayers and accomplishes His Sovereign will. (Pennington)

IMPLICATIONS:

- A. Recognize God's wisdom and sovereignty, and in your heart and prayers, submit your plans to His will (Lk. 22:42; Acts 18:21; Jam. 4:13-15).**
- B. Understand that prayer complements and cooperates with God's sovereignty (2 Kings 20:1-5; Isaiah 37:21).**
- C. Remember that God always answers our requests as He determines best.**

IMPLICATIONS:

- 1. Yes—exactly as we asked (2 Samuel 15:31)**
- 2. Yes—differently than we imagined (Genesis 22:8)**
- 3. No—forever (2 Cor. 12:7-9)**
- 4. No—for now (Rom. 1:10)**

QUOTE

Regardless of the circumstances, we need to be like David and learn contentment, holding tight to the grace of God in prayer!