### 2 Samuel

## Chapter 18

1It was then that David counted his men to see how many were with him, and he assigned generals and officers to be over them, 2as he readied them for battle.  
  
He put:  
  
 • 1/3 under the direction of JoAb.  
  
 • 1/3 under the direction of AbiShai, son of ZeruJah (JoAb’s brother).  
  
 • 1/3 under the direction of ItTai the Gethite.  
  
Then David said to his men:  
  
 ‘From now on, I’ll be leading you.’  
  
3But they said:  
  
 ‘You can’t come with us; for if [AbSalom’s people] kill half of us, we might lose you, and that would be like losing 10,000 men!  
  
 ‘It’s really best for you to stay in the city and direct us from there.’  
  
4So the king said:  
  
 ‘I’ll do whatever you wish.’  
  
Thereafter, the king stood at the city gate as his army passed by in companies and divisions.  
  
5Now, the king had given orders to JoAb, AbiShai, and ItTai, saying:  
  
 ‘I want you to spare the young man AbSalom for me!’  
  
And everyone heard what the king had said to them about AbSalom.  
  
6Well from there, [David’s army] marched into a forest that was directly across from [the army of] IsraEl, and the battle started there in the Woods of Ephraim.  
  
7But the army of IsraEl didn’t fare well against the followers of David, for they lost 20,000 of their men, 8as the war raged on throughout the land… And the thick forest killed as many men as were killed with swords that day.  
  
9But soon, David’s men caught up with AbSalom. He’d been riding his mule, and the mule had taken off into a dense thicket. There, AbSolom’s head got caught in the branches of an oak tree, which left him hanging between the sky and the ground… The mule just took off and left him hanging there!  
  
10Well, when one of the men saw what had happened, he went and told JoAb:  
  
 ‘I’ve found AbSalom! He’s hanging in an oak tree!’  
  
11And JoAb said:  
  
 ‘You saw this and you didn’t cut him to the ground?  
  
 ‘I would’ve given you 10 large silver coins if you’d done that!’  
  
12But the man told JoAb:  
  
 ‘If you gave me 1,000 large silver coins, I wouldn’t do that! For, I’d never raise a hand against a son of the king!  
  
 ‘And we all heard the king tell you, and both AbiShai and ItTai, to guard the young man AbSalom for him... 13So, it would’ve been wrong for me to kill him!  
  
 ‘For the king would surely hear about it, and then you and I’d find ourselves on opposite sides.’  
  
14But JoAb said:  
  
 ‘Well, that’s what’s going to happen… I’m not going to put up with this!’  
  
So JoAb took three arrows and shot them into the chest of AbSalom as he was still alive, hanging there in the middle of the oak tree! 15Then 10 of his young men took JoAb’s weapons and stabbed AbSalom [to make sure] that he was dead.  
  
16Thereafter, JoAb blew his battle horn to call his people back from their pursuit of IsraEl, because he wanted to spare the rest of the people... 17Then JoAb took AbSalom’s body and threw it into a deep gulley in the forest, and he formed a huge pile of rocks over it as a monument, while the whole army of IsraEl was retreating to their tents.  
  
18Now, while AbSalom was still alive, he’d built a monument to himself in the Valley of the Kings; for he said:  
  
 ‘I have no sons to remind people of my name.’  
  
So he named the monument after himself, calling it ‘The Hand of AbSalom,’ which is still there today.  
  
  
19Well, after this had all happened, AhiMaAz (son of ZaDok) decided to run and bring the good news to the king that Jehovah had passed judgment on his enemies.  
  
20But JoAb told him:  
  
 ‘You shouldn’t bring this as good news today…  
  
 ‘Save that for another day, for it isn’t good news that a son of the king has died.’  
  
21Then JoAb told HuShai:  
  
 ‘You should go and tell the king what you’ve seen!’  
  
And at that, HuShai bowed before JoAb and left.  
  
22However, AhiMaAz (son of ZaDok) said to JoAb:  
  
 ‘Let me run after HuShai!’  
  
But JoAb asked:  
  
 ‘Why do you want to do this, my son?  
  
 ‘Come along, for there’s no good news that will be of any benefit to you if you go there.’  
  
23And AhiMaAz said:  
  
 ‘But what if I run?’  
  
Then JoAb said:  
  
 ‘Okay, then run!’  
  
So AhiMaAz ran along the road to KeChar, and he passed HuShai.  
  
24Well, David was sitting between the two city gates, as the watchman was on the roof of the gate next to the wall... And when the watchman looked out and saw a man running towards them, 25he yelled and reported it to the king.  
  
And the king asked:  
  
 ‘Is he is alone… Is he bringing good news?’  
  
Then, as this one was approaching, 26the watchman saw another man running.  
  
And he yelled out:  
  
 ‘Look, there’s another man running by himself!’  
  
And the king said:  
  
 ‘Surely he’s bringing good news!’  
  
27Then the watchman said:  
  
 ‘I see that the man running ahead is AhiMaAz, son of ZaDok… So he must be bringing good news!’  
  
28And at that, while he bowed to the ground before the king, AhiMaAz yelled out to the king:  
  
 ‘Peace!’   
  
Then he said:  
  
 ‘Praise your God Jehovah!  
  
 ‘For he’s shut the mouths of those who’ve raised their hands against my lord, the king.’  
  
29So the king asked him:  
  
 ‘Do we now have peace with the young man AbSalom?’  
  
And AhiMaAz said:  
  
 ‘Well I saw a large happy crowd standing around the king’s servant JoAb, so I came here.  
  
 ‘However, I’m not sure of all that happened there.’  
  
30Then the king said:  
  
 ‘Step aside and stand over there!’  
  
So he stepped aside and stood nearby, 31as HuShai came and reported this to the king:  
  
 ‘I have good news to announce to my lord the king!  
  
 ‘For today Jehovah has passed judgment upon all those who’ve opposed you!’  
  
32And the king asked HuShai:  
  
 ‘So, how is the young man AbSalom?’  
  
And he replied:  
  
 ‘The young man has fared the same as all the enemies who’ve done evil things against my lord, the king!’  
  
33Well at this, the king became very upset, so he went up into the room above the gate and wept.  
  
He cried:  
  
 ‘O my son AbSalom! O my son! O my son AbSalom!  
  
 ‘Why couldn’t I have died instead of you, AbSalom?  
  
 ‘O my son! O my son!’