



## *Studies in the Life of David*

Text

Second Samuel 16:14-17:23

Topic

David's traitorous son, Absalom, marches into Jerusalem and claims the throne for himself, openly committing an act of shameful immorality

Title

*"Son of Anarchy"*

Introduction

The writer of Second Samuel went out of his way to emphasize that Hushai was King David's "friend."

- When Hushai was first introduced in chapter fifteen he was called David's friend.
- Here in our text he is described as David's friend, then called David's friend twice by Absalom.

Considering he's the only person called David's friend, **either David didn't have too many friends or the Holy Spirit is trying to tell us something!**

He is reminding us that **we** are friends of the King. In His final talk with His disciples Jesus said, "No longer do I call you servants... but I have called you friends" (John 15:15).

There is another parallel between us and Hushai. King David had departed and for a short time his kingdom would be subject to the rule of a traitor.

Likewise, Jesus has departed and, though the rightful King, a *wrongful* 'king,' Satan, is on the loose.

Hushai was left behind with the assignment of representing David and doing whatever he could to restrain Absalom.

We've been left behind between the ascension of Jesus to Heaven and His Second Coming and are tasked with representing the Lord and with restraining evil.

We should not expect every detail in this episode to have a direct counterpart. But if we keep in mind the big picture, Hushai's courage can inspire our own boldness to serve the Lord here in enemy territory on the earth while we await His coming for us from Heaven.

I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 You're The Friend Who Remains To Represent The Rightful King, and #2 You're The Friend Who Remains To Restrain The Wrongful King.

#1 You're The Friend Who Remains  
To Represent The Rightful King  
(16:14-23)

Hushai had wanted to accompany David as he fled for his life from Absalom. Instead David asked him to remain.

It may sound a bit morbid at first, but there is a part of every Christian's heart that desires to depart and be with the Lord. It's not just to avoid the immense amount of suffering that occurs in your lifetime, but it's to be with the One you love and loves you and to be with the believing loved ones who have preceded you in death.

Jesus' disciples wanted to accompany Him but He told them they could not; not yet, anyway. He was going by way of the Cross and resurrection to be with the Father. He would be busy in Heaven preparing a place for us and would come back for us.

Meantime this is what He asked His Father, **our** Father, to do for us:

John 17:15 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one...

John 17:18 As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world...

John 17:20 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;

We remain and are on assignment to represent the Lord. Hushai is a type, then, of all of us.

We'll have to move quickly through this story to get through all the verses, looking only at the big ideas as we go.

2 Samuel 16:14 Now the king and all the people who were with him became weary; so they refreshed themselves there.

David's son, Absalom, was marching toward Jerusalem to take the throne. David thought it best for his people to not fight so he fled. In a strategic move David had asked Hushai to remain in the palace to both *report* and *thwart* the plans of Absalom.

2 Samuel 16:15 Meanwhile Absalom and all the people, the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem; and Ahithophel was with him.

2 Samuel 16:16 And so it was, when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, came to Absalom, that Hushai said to Absalom, "Long live the king! Long live the king!"

2 Samuel 16:17 So Absalom said to Hushai, "Is this your loyalty to your friend? Why did you not go with your friend?"

2 Samuel 16:18 And Hushai said to Absalom, "No, but whom the Lord and this people and all the men of Israel choose, his I will be, and with him I will remain.

2 Samuel 16:19 "Furthermore, whom should I serve? Should I not serve in the presence of his son? As I have served in your father's presence, so will I be in your presence."

Let's get something out of the way. Hushai either lied outright or he used deception, which is the same as lying. It begs the question, "Is it ever alright for a Christian to lie?"

Christian scholars have given different answers to that question based on the fact that certain Bible characters **do** sometimes lie, especially in order to save lives. Hushai is an example; so are the Hebrew midwives who lied to Pharaoh in order to save the lives of the babies he ordered killed, or

Rahab who hid the two Hebrew spies when the soldiers of Jericho were seeking them.

Norman Geisler summarizes the three main approaches to lying:

1. Lying is always wrong. Therefore there are no exceptions to telling the truth. Results are never to be used as a rationale for lying.
2. Lying is forgivable. Therefore where absolute moral laws run into conflict, e.g., lying to save a life, it is our duty to do the lesser evil. If we break God's law we can plead for His mercy.
3. Lying is sometimes right because there are higher laws.

Hushai obviously thought that, in times of war, either lying was forgivable or that there was a higher law.

Which is it? *You'll have to decide for yourself!* Let me suggest that unless or until you are in a situation in which the truth could get someone killed you don't really know what you would do but I'd guess you'd lie.

The story doesn't resolve this issue, nor is it meant to. It's not a license to lie. Far from it. It's here to show us that we remain to represent the King and might find ourselves in very difficult circumstances. Moral dilemmas will present themselves at home, at work, in school. Most of them will *not* involve the loss of someone's life. They will, in fact, require that we *not* bow down to someone's idol, that we *do* tell the truth, as we represent our King.

2 Samuel 16:20 Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, "Give advice as to what we should do."

2 Samuel 16:21 And Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Go in to your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house; and all Israel will hear that you are abhorred by your father. Then the hands of all who are with you will be strong."

2 Samuel 16:22 So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the top of the house, and Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.

2 Samuel 16:23 Now the advice of Ahithophel, which he gave in those days, was as if one had inquired at the oracle of God. So was all the advice of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom.

The fact that Ahithophel's advice was "as if one had inquired at the oracle of God" does not mean he was a prophet. It means that his worldly wisdom was so spot-on that it could be compared with God's knowing the future.

Worldly wisdom may seem spot-on, or it may just seem overwhelming since all the nonbelievers around you accept it while rejecting the things of the Lord. You may feel small and weak and insignificant. At those times remember that Jesus has chosen you to confound the wise with their worldly wisdom. Hold fast to the precepts and principles in God's Word.

Why does Ahithophel suggest such an awful, immoral act be performed? Turns out that he was the grandfather of Bathsheeba. David had sexually assaulted his granddaughter and then arranged for the murder of his grandson-in-law, Uriah. Now Ahithophel had the opportunity to do to David what David had done to him.

Remember, we want to look at the big picture being drawn for us by these characters. **It's no easy assignment being asked to remain and represent the departed King.** We are left in a moral cesspool, faced with moral dilemmas of varying degrees.

Nevertheless that is the assignment and we ought to approach it with humility and prayer in private expecting God to give us courage and boldness in public.

## #2 You're The Friend Who Remains To Restrain The Wrongful King (17:1-23)

Christians are tasked by Jesus with being "salt" and "light." In other words, we are to act as a preservative to a deteriorating culture, exposing its sin and offering an alternative. In another portion of Scripture we are told that the Spirit-indwelt church on earth is a restrainer of wickedness and will be until we are removed at the rapture (Second Thessalonians). In yet another place, in Second Peter, we're described as "hastening" the return of Jesus by our lives and lifestyle choices in these last days.

Hushai was able to restrain Absalom's plans and hasten David's return as the rightful king. In our own small ways, as we simply obey the Lord and walk with Him as salt, as light, we, too, restrain wickedness and hasten the return of the King.

2 Samuel 17:1 Moreover Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Now let me choose twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue David tonight.

2 Samuel 17:2 I will come upon him while he is weary and weak, and make him afraid. And all the people who are with him will flee, and I will strike only the king.

2 Samuel 17:3 Then I will bring back all the people to you. When all return except the man whom you seek, all the people will be at peace."

2 Samuel 17:4 And the saying pleased Absalom and all the elders of Israel.

Remember that David and those with him had grown weary and stopped to rest, leaving themselves vulnerable. If Absalom had followed Ahithophel's advice David almost certainly would have been killed.

Your enemy, Satan, is constantly planning against you. He's super-intelligent and his devices are as devious as they are dangerous. It seems he has the upper hand in every situation - until you look to the Lord Who thwarts him and causes His own plans for you to prosper.

2 Samuel 17:5 Then Absalom said, "Now call Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear what he says too."

2 Samuel 17:6 And when Hushai came to Absalom, Absalom spoke to him, saying, "Ahithophel has spoken in this manner. Shall we do as he says? If not, speak up."

2 Samuel 17:7 So Hushai said to Absalom: "The advice that Ahithophel has given is not good at this time.

2 Samuel 17:8 For," said Hushai, "you know your father and his men, that they are mighty men, and they are enraged in their minds, like a bear robbed of her cubs in the field; and your father is a man of war, and will not camp with the people.

2 Samuel 17:9 Surely by now he is hidden in some pit, or in some other place. And it will be, when some of them are overthrown at the first, that whoever hears it will say, 'There is a slaughter among the people who follow Absalom.'

2 Samuel 17:10 And even he who is valiant, whose heart is like the heart of a lion, will melt completely. For all Israel knows that your father is a mighty man, and those who are with him are valiant men.

2 Samuel 17:11 Therefore I advise that all Israel be fully gathered to you, from Dan to Beersheba, like the sand that is by the sea for multitude, and that you go to battle in person.

2 Samuel 17:12 So we will come upon him in some place where he may be found, and we will fall on him as the dew falls on the ground. And of him and all the men who are with him there shall not be left so much as one.

2 Samuel 17:13 Moreover, if he has withdrawn into a city, then all Israel shall bring ropes to that city; and we will pull it into the river, until there is not one small stone found there."

What Hushai suggested was a brilliant stall tactic. I'm guessing he had little time to think about what he might say. He let God use him, speak through him, as it were. That's what the Lord wants to do - use your mouth to speak for Him.

2 Samuel 17:14 So 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 purposed to defeat the good advice of Ahithophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring disaster on Absalom.

Absalom had his plans. God overruled them to accomplish His plans.

God has a plan. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ to earth as a man in order to die on the Cross as our Substitute and Savior. Against all the devil's efforts throughout history to thwart that plan, Jesus was born, He died, then rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven, from whence He will return just as He promised and just as God planned.

2 Samuel 17:15 Then Hushai said to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, "Thus and so Ahithophel advised Absalom and the elders of Israel, and thus and so I have advised.

2 Samuel 17:16 Now therefore, send quickly and tell David, saying, 'Do not spend this night in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily cross over, lest the king and all the people who are with him be swallowed up.' "

2 Samuel 17:17 Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed at En Rogel, for they dared not be seen coming into the city; so a female servant would come and tell them, and they would go and tell King David.

2 Samuel 17:18 Nevertheless a lad saw them, and told Absalom. But both of them went away quickly and came to a man's house in Bahurim, who had a well in his court; and they went down into it.

2 Samuel 17:19 Then the woman took and spread a covering over the well's mouth, and spread ground grain on it; and the thing was not known.

2 Samuel 17:20 And when Absalom's servants came to the woman at the house, they said, "Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?" So the woman said to them, "They have gone over the water brook." And when they had searched and could not find them, they returned to Jerusalem.

I could have titled this study, “Liar, Liar.” Hushai lied and now the woman also lied. It was to save lives. The Bible doesn’t commend her for it but simply reports what happened. Whether she thought it was wrong but forgivable or right because it was a higher law, many lives were spared.

If, God forbid, the day comes that Christianity is outlawed, and they seek Christians out to imprison and kill, if in that day, you hid your children when the people were at your door to take you away - if they asked if there was anyone else in the house, what would you do? Would you admit your children were hiding in the house, knowing to admit it would mean sure imprisonment and most likely death for them? Or would you say there was no one else in the house, giving them a chance to get away and possibly survive?

When we ask, “Is it ever alright to lie?” we’re *not* talking about most of the lying we do. We’re *not* talking about lying to make ourselves look better or to save face. But if your answer to the question is “No, never, no matter what,” then you would have killed the Hebrew babies, turned in the spies at Jericho, and revealed the location of Ahimaaz and Jonathan. And you might one day have to turn over your children to a death squad.

2 Samuel 17:21 Now it came to pass, after they had departed, that they came up out of the well and went and told King David, and said to David, "Arise and cross over the water quickly. For thus has Ahithophel advised against you."

2 Samuel 17:22 So David and all the people who were with him arose and crossed over the Jordan. By morning light not one of them was left who had not gone over the Jordan.

Hushai’s strategy gave David warning and he took advantage of it to put the Jordan River between him and his pursuers.

Here’s a devotional thought. **The devil is hard after you.** He will utilize the world and your flesh seeking to destroy you.

God, however, gives you warnings. As you read His Word, as you fellowship with His people, as you talk to Him in prayer, He warns you about the subtle and not-so-subtle influences that can overcome you, overwhelm you.



What has the Lord been warning you about? If you think yourself strong, you'll fail and fall. Heed the warnings and put some spiritual barriers between you and the traps being set for you.

2 Samuel 17:23 Now when Ahithophel saw that his advice was not followed, he saddled a donkey, and arose and went home to his house, to his city. Then he put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died; and he was buried in his father's tomb.

Ahithophel undoubtedly knew that God had thwarted his counsel to the end that David would be triumphant. Once David returned, Ahithophel's life wouldn't be worth spit, that he'd likely be executed for treason, so he killed himself.

Ahithophel was at the top of his game. His advice was considered as accurate as what you'd get from God - only he didn't need God! He had all the world's wisdom. He was the epitome of the worldly man, the career man, establishing himself and building for himself. He was revered, admired, sought out, looked up to.

Then it all came crashing down because he was outside of God's plan. What does it matter if you gain the whole world but, in the end, lose your soul?

Ahithophel "put his household in order." The things a person does or says at the end of their life reveals a lot about where their heart was at. In the end his focus was still on the earthly. He was motivated to be certain his wishes were carried out, that his earthly empire continued. Then he killed himself, revealing the absolute emptiness and vanity of his entire life on earth.

Ahithophel is a dramatic example of what the devil wants to do to people. He wants to prosper them in this world so that they will miss the next world.

We remain to (hopefully) thwart the plans of the devil to destroy people's lives. **Our very presence on the earth, in the places we've been sent, is a restraining force.**

Maybe things are tough for you at home, or at work, or in school. If you are where you are supposed to be (and you probably are), **consider how much worse things would be for nonbelievers around you if you were to remove yourself from those places.** There'd be no salt, no light, no restraint.

In Luke 19:11-13 Jesus told a parable.

Luke 19:11 Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately.

Luke 19:12 Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return.

Luke 19:13 So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, '[Occupy] till I come.'

We could summarize everything we have said today in the phrase, "occupy till I come." Commenting on this J.C. Ryle wrote,

The Lord Jesus bids you "occupy." By that He means that you are to be "a doer" in your Christianity, and not merely a hearer and professor. He wants His servants not only to receive His wages, and eat His bread, and dwell in His house, and belong to His family - but also to do His work. You are to "let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works."

You're to do it "till He comes." You are to be continually looking for, and I would add, longing for, His return.

Quoting Ryle again, he said, "That old rebel, the devil, and all his adherents, shall be cast down. The Lord Jesus, and all His saints, shall be exalted and raised to honor. "The kingdoms of this world" shall "become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ." "

You and I are on assignment as the friends of Jesus. We're sent out to represent Him and to restrain that which is opposed to Him.

It's not an easy assignment, but we're never left alone in it.