The King’s Friend

Prepared by Nathan L Morrison for Sunday April 21st, 2024

Text: I Chronicles 27:33 Scripture Reading: II Samuel 15:31; 16:23; 17:14

### Intro

1. **I Samuel 16:23:** The advice of Ahithophel, which he gave in those days, was as if one inquired of the word of God; so was all the advice of Ahithophel regarded by both David and Absalom.
2. **I Samuel 15:31:** Now someone told David, saying, “Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.” And David said, “O LORD, I pray, make the counsel of Ahithophel foolishness.”
3. David asked for God to turn the wisdom of Ahithophel into foolishness.
4. Sometimes God answers prayer through the bravery and friendship of others!
5. **I Chronicles 27:33:** Ahithophel was counselor to the king; and Hushai the Archite was the king's friend.
   1. In a passage of men in important roles in David’s kingdom *(27:25-34),* we read that “Hushai the Archite was the king’s friend.” *(Joshua 16:2: Archites were Canaanites)*
   2. ***What did he do?***
6. The effects of David’s sin with Bathsheba are in full bloom *(II Samuel 11-12).*
   1. ***II Samuel 15:*** David is at the lowest point of his life! His own son, Absalom, has risen up in rebellion against David and has driven him from his palace and from the city of Jerusalem. This passage finds David on the run for his life from his own son.
   2. At this point in time David does not need a lecture on being a better father. He does not need a lesson on how to govern a kingdom. He does not need someone coming along to tell him what a failure he is. He knows that well enough by now.
   3. ***What David needs is a friend!*** (Have you ever been there? Not like Job’s friends!)
7. As soon as David says that prayer (I Samuel 15:31), he meets with his friend, Hushai, who God will use to answer David’s prayer through his bravery and friendship!

#### “Mounting the Operation”

* 1. The CIA has a file on Hushai the Archite that they taught a course on as the first recorded “Influence Agent” and it was declassified in 1994.
  2. The CIA has this account broken down into an operational lesson on the original “influence agent!” Hushai is used as a lesson on espionage: Loyalty and Trustworthiness!
     1. <https://www.cia.gov/resources/csi/studies-in-intelligence/archives/vol-13-no-2/the-tale-of-hushai-the-archite/>
     2. Free .pdf at: <https://www.cia.gov/static/The-Tale-of-Hushai.pdf>
  3. “Mounting the Operation” (as labeled by the CIA) – II Samuel 15:31-37
     1. On David’s flight from Jerusalem, he met with two men:
        1. Ittai the Gittite said he would stay with David and was accepted (II Samuel 15:1-23) and was made a general (1/3 of David’s forces – 18:2, 5).
        2. Hushai the Archite also met David but was refused to stay with him! (II Samuel 15:31-37)
     2. As soon as David prayed to God to turn the wisdom and counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness (II Samuel 15:31), Hushai turns up. He is a welcome sight to David.
     3. He wanted to throw in his lot with the affliction of God’s people (like Moses – Hebrews 11:25) – He wanted to be David’s friend.
  4. **Application:** He empathized & identified with the exiled king. As Christians, we empathize with & identify with and follow the crucified King.
     1. **Hebrews 13:12-15:** As Christians, our identity is wrapped up in Jesus, who suffered outside the gate. We are to follow Him outside the gate!
     2. We are seeking that eternal reward, that city which is to come!
  5. David sends his friend into the court of Absalom as a spy, behind enemy lines to thwart Ahithophel’s good counsel! (II Samuel 15:32-37).
  6. **Application:** David told his friend that he can’t go with him, but he can better serve him by going for him! Jesus told His disciples they couldn’t go with Him (Mark 14:27; John 16:32), but He tells us we can go for Him!
     1. **II Timothy 2:3-4:** Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.
     2. **II Timothy 2:24-26:** The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.
     3. A soldier goes where he is told. Paul says Jesus sends us out to teach and save the lost, to rescue those ensnared by the devil!
  7. Hushai, David's friend, willingly went into danger and God used his bravery to answer David’s prayer!

#### “Capturing the Dupe”

1. II Samuel 16:15-23: Hushai braved death to stay with Absalom!
   * 1. Absalom was even surprised to see Hushai there. *The CIA labeled this part of the mission as: “Capturing the Dupe”* 
        1. He knew Hushai was David’s friend and he was suspicious.
        2. David told Hushai what to say: The king’s words became his protection/defense and his commission.
        3. He said, “Long live the king! I am the friend of the king, whoever that king is. As I served your father, I will serve you.”
2. **Application:** Jesus sends His followers out as sheep amidst the wolves so we are to be wise.
3. **Matthew 10:16:** “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.”
4. In the world of darkness around us, we are behind enemy lines and there is an adversary that prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour (I Peter 5:8), and we are to be alert!
5. **I Peter 4:11:** Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God.
6. When we speak it is to be the words of God. The words of the King are our protection/defense and our commission!
7. Absalom took Hushai’s word and allowed him to stay and then turned to Ahithophel for counsel on what to do next.
8. He counsels him to take David’s wives in a public way, thus fulfilling one of the consequences for David’s sin with Bathsheba *(II Samuel 12:11-12).* David committed adultery in private, Absalom commits adultery in front of all Israel!
9. Ahithophel’s counsel was so good it was as if it came from God so was sought after by both David and Absalom! (II Samuel 16:23)
10. ***Who was Ahithophel?***
11. He is the father of Eliam, one of David’s Mighty Men (II Samuel 23:34); and Eliam is the father of Bathsheba (II Samuel 11:3), thus he was the grandfather of Bathsheba!
12. As such, it is thought he betrayed David out of revenge for what happened to Bathsheba and her husband Uriah the Hittite. *(No concrete evidence as to why)*
13. David took his betrayal hard and prayed to God that his counsel would be thwarted (II Samuel 15:31).
14. It is often thought that Psalm 41 & 55 were written about the betrayal of Ahithophel *(Psalm 41:9 is applied to Judas in John 13:18).*
15. Hushai is behind enemy lines with the mission to thwart Absalom and Ahithophel:
16. *II Samuel 15:34-36:* His covert mission is one of espionage to undermine David’s enemies.
17. David trusted his loyalty and asked him to be in a dangerous position to benefit him and his men *(The CIA says loyalty is a needed trait in a spy).*
18. **Application:** Our relationship to the world needs to be like Hushai’s in Absalom’s kingdom: Saints operate within it, but are not part of it.

Hushai is in Absalom’s kingdom but is not part of Absalom’s kingdom – Christians are to be in the world but not of the world – **John 17:15-16**

Hushai is making room for the real king.

Christians try to influence the world around us, who will listen to us, to make room for the King, who will one day return! **(II Thessalonians 1:6-9).**

1. True friendship with the King is one of loyalty! *(David could count on Hushai! Can Jesus count on you?)*

#### “The Influence Operation”

* 1. *II Samuel 17:1-14:* “The Influence Operation” *(labeled as such by the CIA)*
  2. Ahithophel’s Counsel – II Samuel 17:1-4:
     1. His advice was militarily sound: chase them down while they are tired – don’t let them rest.
     2. He would take 12,000 men against David who was weary and weak and they would strike at David alone, and bring back all the people to Absalom, who would be kept safe from harm during the fighting.
     3. One man’s life for the nation – Caiaphas said the same thing concerning Jesus (the Son of David) in John 11:48-53.
     4. Ahithophel betrayed the Lord’s anointed as did Judas later in betraying Jesus.
  3. Hushai’s Counsel – II Samuel 17:5-14:
     1. He gives ***terrible*** advice but uses flattery in giving it. He played upon the vanity, arrogance, and insecurity of Absalom, and perhaps the fear he had for his father (Wise and cunning in knowing his opponent).
     2. He reminded him of David’s valor in battle, and of his mighty men *(legendary in their own time – II Samuel 23; I Chronicles 11),* and that David wouldn’t sleep with the people.
     3. David’s men are mighty but they are weary and discouraged, and by waiting, they would have time to be refreshed.
     4. He plays up Absalom’s role in the fighting – he would go into battle (lead the charge) and personally take out his enemies: Absalom would be the hero!
     5. They would kill all of those loyal to David, not just take David alone.
  4. The deception worked, for God worked through Hushai to answer David’s prayer against Ahithophel (II Samuel 15:31), “the Lord had determined to frustrate the good advice of Ahithophel in order to bring disaster on Absalom” (II Samuel 17:14).
     1. **Strategic Wisdom:** Hushai’s advice to Absalom showcased not only his bravery but also his strategic wisdom.
     2. He proposed a plan that delayed Absalom’s pursuit of David, giving David time to escape and regroup.
     3. This demonstrates the importance of strategic thinking in critical situations.
  5. **Application:** Saints are to be wise, even cunning, in serving God – **Matthew 10:16 (NKJV)**
     1. *“Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.”*
     2. True friendship is one based in wisdom and cunning for one another! *(Having one another’s best interests at heart.*
     3. **Philippians 2:3-4:** By being a friend to one another, God may use you as the answer to someone’s prayer!
  6. When you act as a friend to others, it may be God is answering their prayer through you!

#### “The Espionage Action”

* 1. II Samuel 17:15-22: “The Espionage Action” *(labeled as such by the CIA)*
     1. Hushai was heroic in that he laid his life on the line for his friend – One slip and Hushai would have been a dead man!
     2. The “Cloak and Dagger” part of the mission: Once the deception worked, the info still needed to get to David – and here we see the secret mission unfold, complete with secret messages, lies, and spies!
     3. Hushai utilized David’s network of spies through the sons of Zadok and Abiathar the priests *(II Samuel 15:24-29),* Jonathan and Ahimaaz.
     4. David was blessed in that he had a few people who were willing to take a chance to help him in his time of need. He had Hushai, Zadok, Abiathar, their two sons Jonathan and Ahimaaz, an unknown girl who took a message (17:17), and an unnamed woman who hid Jonathan and Ahimaaz as they carried a message to David and lied to Absalom’s men to save them (17:18-21).
     5. All of the deception adds to the intensity of the account, and reminds us that sin causes strife and danger even in the lives of the righteous.
     6. **Loyalty and Sacrifice:** Hushai’s actions reflect deep loyalty to King David.
        1. Despite the risk to his own life, he chose to infiltrate Absalom’s council and act as a double agent.
        2. His willingness to sacrifice his safety for the sake of David’s kingdom underscores the value of loyalty and self-sacrifice.

1. **Application:** Saints need to be honest and speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15, 25).
   * + 1. Though these individuals are not condoned or condemned in Scripture, their sins are in other places, but God worked it all out for David’s good (Rom. 8:28).
       2. Saints are to be loyal and true to the King and be willing to sacrifice.
       3. **Revelation 2:10:** To the church at Smyrna, Jesus said, “Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”
       4. **Revelation 2:13:** To the church at Pergamum, Jesus said, “I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.”
       5. Saints are required to remain loyal to Christ and be willing to sacrifice, if necessary, as Antipas did and the saints at Smyrna were to do!
2. II Samuel 17:23: When Ahithophel saw his counsel was not heeded, he hanged himself!
   * + 1. One of 5 recorded suicides in the Scriptures (King Saul and his unnamed armor-bearer *[I Samuel 31:4-5];* Zimri *[I Kings 16:18:* brought down a house upon himself]; Ahithophel & Judas *[II Samuel 17:23; Mt. 27:5]*). ***Some count Samson but his death was an act of war [Judges 16:30], making it 5 suicides!***
       2. Ahithophel’s suicide reminds of us of Judas, who also committed suicide after betraying the Son of God, who was also the Son of David, *both anointed by God! (NKJ: He “hanged himself” – II Samuel 17:23)*
          1. They both were trusted friends who betrayed their friend (II Samuel 15:31; Matthew 26:14–16).
          2. They both sided with the enemy to plot their king’s death (II Samuel 17:1–4; Luke 22:2–6).
          3. They both hanged themselves once the betrayal was complete (II Samuel 17:23; Matthew 27:5).
       3. With his great wisdom, Ahithophel knew Absalom was doomed to failure and didn’t want to be around to see it or face the consequences!
3. King David and his men were refreshed by “gifts” given to them – *II Samuel 17:27-29*
   * 1. Hushai’s counsel gave David time; and Ammonites and Gileadites (Tribe of Manasseh) came to David in the wilderness with gifts of food.
     2. They said, “The people are hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness.”
     3. This meant a lot to David: On his deathbed, David remembered Barzillai's kindness and reminded Solomon to care for his children *(I Kings 2:7).*
4. *II Samuel 18:* King David’s victory over Absalom’s rebellion *(CIA: “The Pay Off”)*
5. God answered David’s prayer and saved him through his friend, Hushai, a secret agent who was loyal, wise, and trustworthy to David.
6. David and his men being allowed time to be refreshed and rested was Absalom’s undoing!
7. David chose the battleground, the forest of Ephraim, and “the forest devoured more people that day than the sword devoured” (II Samuel 18:8). Absalom’s hair, his vanity, got caught in a tree and General Joab killed him.
8. **Divine Providence:** The narrative illustrates the concept of divine providence, where God’s hand is seen in the unfolding events.
   * + 1. The Scripture notes that the Lord had purposed to thwart the good counsel of Ahithophel through Hushai’s advice, which ultimately led to Absalom’s downfall (II Samuel 17:14).
       2. This confirms that God can work through individuals to fulfill His divine will.
9. I Chronicles 27:33: In David’s impressive cabinet, Hushai is listed as the king’s friend. What did Hushai do?
10. He chose the Lord’s anointed over the usurper and put his life on the line for his friend! *(Trustworthiness is a needed trait in a spy – CIA)*
11. **Application:** Saints choose our loyalties in this life; we will choose Satan or Jesus.
    * + 1. **Matthew 25:31-46:** Jesus says the sheep choose Him and go into eternal life, while the goats choose Satan and will spend eternity with him in eternal punishment.
        2. **Romans 6:16:** Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?
        3. Who do you choose to serve? To whom will you be a loyal friend?
12. True friendship is one that is trustworthy no matter the cost! *(David trusted Hushai! Can Jesus trust you?)*

## Conclusion

1. Most of us don’t have friends who are kings or queens.
   1. But we do know people who face hardships or discouraging circumstances and need our support.
   2. They are tempted to make wrong decisions sexually, financially, and ethically.
   3. Each needs a loyal friend, just as King David did.
   4. When you are friend to someone, you may never know if you were God’s answer to their prayers! But if you are not concerned with their interests, you won’t be a friend! (Philippians 2:3-4)
   5. Jesus said when you are a friend to a brother or sister in need, you are a friend to Him and eternal life is the reward! (Matthew 25:34-40, 46)
2. How can you be a “Hushai” to someone who needs a good friend?
   1. Are you willing to walk into hardships to encourage, offer comfort, and pray?
   2. Are you willing to sacrifice your time, resources, energy, or maybe even put your life on the line to help a friend in need?
   3. Are you using your gifts and abilities to help your friends?
3. ***Are you a true friend to Jesus?***
   1. **John 15:13-14:** Jesus said, “You are My friends if you do what I command you.”
   2. After saying there is no greater love than a person giving his life for his friends, Jesus said those who obey Him are His friends (John 15:13; Hebrews 5:9).
   3. Be ENCOURAGED today by the fact that YOU HAVE the GREATEST FRIEND OF ALL ON YOUR SIDE!
   4. Jesus loved you so much that He went to the cross for you. He gave up His life so that you might live (John 15:13).
4. Are you a “Hushai” to the Lord, God’s anointed?
   * 1. Are you willing to suffer hardships *(II Timothy 3:12),* to encourage others, offer comfort, and pray *(Galatians 6:2, 10)?*
     2. Are you willing to sacrifice your time, resources, energy, or maybe even put your life on the line for the name of Jesus *(I Peter 4:14, 16)?*
     3. Are you using your gifts and abilities to further the gospel *(I Peter 4:8-11)?*
5. Just as Hushai was loyal and trustworthy and a friend of David, the rightful king, we are a friend to Jesus, the Eternal King, in our loyalty, wisdom, and trustworthiness, no matter the cost!
6. If not a Christian, you can be if you repent and be baptized! *(Acts 2:38)*
7. If you are a child of God with sin in your life, you can be forgiven if you repent! *(I John 1:9)*
8. Whatever your request, let it be known ***NOW*** while we stand and sing!

**Sources:**

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**The Tale of Hushai the Archite**

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*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](https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/kent-csi/vol13no2/html/v13i2a04p_0001.htm#1-studies-vii-3)

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, 15-18. 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). Futhermore, 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 evidently knew to be sincere. King David said to Hushai, “If thou return to the city and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, oh King, as I have been thy father's servant hitherto'. ... then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel ... and what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the Palace, thou shalt tell it to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, who have with them their two sons, and by them ye shall send unto me everything that ye can hear.”

**Capturing the Dupe**

When Hushai the Archite had made his way to the palace, he approached Absalom, who knew him well, and said, “God save the King!”

Absalom asked, “Is this thy kindness to thy friend, David. Why wentest thou not with thy friend?”

Hushai replied, “Nay, but whom the Lord and this people and all the men of Israel choose, his will I be and with him will I abide ... as I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence.” And so Hushai the Archite was accepted as a defector and reestablished as a counsellor.

**The Influence Operation**

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 follow Absalom!' And even he that is valiant shall utterly melt, for all Israel knoweth that thy father is a mighty man. Therefore I counsel that all Israel be generally gathered unto thee from Dan even to Beersheba as the sand is by the sea for multitude and that thou go to battle in thine own person. So shall we come upon him in some place . . . as the dew falleth on the ground and of him and of all the men that are with him there shall not be left so much as one. Moreover, if he be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city and we will draw it into the river until there be not one small stone found there.”

Now, Absalom and “all the men of Israel” thought this advice was better than the advice of Ahithophel, no doubt in part because it gave everybody a piece of the action, and when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was rejected, he went home, “put his household in order and hanged himself' rather than get into a stenching contest with a skunk. While this demonstrated Ahithophel's foresight, it also put Hushai the Archite fully in the driver's seat. A little effective counterintelligence work on Ahithophel's part might have yielded bigger dividends.

**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 Ahimaaz, 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.

**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 Ahithophel as the real villain in the piece.

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