

2 SAMUEL CHAPTER 18

¹ And David numbered the people with him, and set over them captains of thousands and captains of hundreds. ² And David sent the people away, a third part under the hand of Joab, a third part under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, the brother of Joab, and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And David said to the people, "I also will surely go out with you." ³ And they said, "You shall not go out; for if we should indeed flee, they will not care for us; and if half of us should die, they will not mind us; for you *are* as ten thousand of us; and now *it is* well that you shall be to us an aid to help us in the city." ⁴ And the king said to them, "Whatever seems good in your eyes I will do." And the king stood by the side of the gate, and all the people went out by hundreds and by thousands. ⁵ And the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, "Spare the young man Absalom for my sake." And all the people heard the king charging all the commanders concerning Absalom. ⁶ And all the people went out into the woods against Israel; and the battle was in the woods of Ephraim. ⁷ And the people of Israel fell down there before the servants of David, and there was a great slaughter in that day, *even* twenty thousand men. ⁸ And the battle there was scattered over the face of all the land. And the woods consumed more of the people than the sword consumed in that day.

⁹ And Absalom went to meet the servants of David. And Absalom was mounted on his mule, and the mule came under the thick boughs of a great oak; and his head was entangled in the oak, and he was suspended in the air; and the mule passed on from under him. ¹⁰ And a man saw it, and reported to Joab, and said, "Behold, I saw Absalom hanging in an oak." ¹¹ And Joab said to the man who reported it to him, "Behold, did you indeed see him? Why then did you not strike him there to the ground? And I would have given you ten *pieces* of silver, and a belt." ¹² And the man said to Joab, "Were I even to receive a thousand shekels of silver, I would not lift my hand against the king's son; for in our ears the king charged you and Abishai and Ittai, saying, 'Take care of the young man Absalom for me,' ¹³ so as to do no harm to his life: and nothing of the matter will be concealed from the king, and you will set yourself against me." ¹⁴ And Joab said, "I will begin this; I will not thus remain with you." And Joab took three spears in his hand, and thrust them into the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the heart of the oak. ¹⁵ And ten young men that bore Joab's armor surrounded Absalom, and struck him, and killed him.

¹⁶ And Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing Israel, for Joab spared the people. ¹⁷ And he took Absalom, and cast him into a great cavern in the woods, into a deep pit, and set up over him a very great heap of stones: and all Israel fled, every man to his tent. ¹⁸ Now Absalom, while he was yet alive, had taken and set up for himself the pillar near which he was taken, and set it up so as to have the pillar in the king's valley; for he said he had no son to keep his name in remembrance: and he called the pillar Absalom's Hand, until this day.

¹⁹ And Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said, "Let me run now and carry the good news to the king, for the Lord has delivered him from the hand of his enemies." ²⁰ And Joab said to him, "You *shall not be* a messenger of good news this day; you

shall bear them another day; but on this day you shall bear no news, because the king's son is dead." ²¹ And Joab said to Hushai, "Go, report to the king all that you have seen." And Hushai bowed down before Joab and went out. ²² And Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said again to Joab, "No, let me also run after Hushai." And Joab said, "Why would you thus run, my son? Come, you have no news for profit if you go." ²³ And he said, "Why should I not run?" And Joab said to him, "Run." And Ahimaaz ran along the way of Kechar, and outran Hushai.

²⁴ And David was sitting between the two gates. And the watchman went up on the top of the gate of the wall, and lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was running alone before him. ²⁵ And the watchman cried out, and reported to the king. And the king said, "If he is alone, *he has* good news in his mouth." And the man came and drew near. ²⁶ And the watchman saw another man running. And the watchman cried at the gate, and said, "Behold, another man is running alone." And the king said, "He also brings good news." ²⁷ And the watchman said, "I see the running of the first as the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok." And the king said, "He *is* a good man, and will come to *report* good news." ²⁸ And Ahimaaz cried out and said to the king, "Peace." And he bowed down to the king with his face to the ground, and said, "Blessed *be* the Lord your God, who has delivered up the men that lifted up their hands against my lord the king." ²⁹ And the king said, "*Is* the young man Absalom safe?" And Ahimaaz said, "I saw a great multitude *at the time* of Joab's sending the king's servant and your servant, and I did not know what was there." ³⁰ And the king said, "Turn aside, stand still here." And he turned aside, and stood. ³¹ And behold, Hushai came up, and said to the king, "Let my lord the king hear the good news, for the Lord has avenged you this day upon all them that rose up against you." ³² And the king said to Hushai, "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" And Hushai said, "Let the enemies of my lord the king, and all whosoever have risen up against him for evil, be as that young man."

³³ And the king was troubled, and went to the chamber over the gate, and wept. And thus he said as he went, "My son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! I *pray* God I had died for you, *even I had died* for you, Absalom, my son, my son!"