

AHITHOPHEL'S COUNSEL (2 Samuel 15-17)

(Note: A shorter version of this play)

Parts: **Narrator**
 King David
 Servant
 Hushai
 Ahithophel
 Absalom, Absalom's men
 Zadok
 Abiathar
 Jonathan
 Ahimaaz
 maidservant, boy, woman at well

SCENE 1 Ahithophel Goes to Absalom

Narrator:

Then Absalom sent spies through the tribes of Israel, saying, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then you shall say, 'Absalom reigns in Hebron!'"

Then Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his city, from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy grew strong, for the people who were with Absalom continually increased in number.

Then someone told David.

Servant:

"My Lord, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom."

David:

"O Yehowah, I pray, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness!"

SCENE 2 David Sends Hushai to Confound Ahithophel's Counsel**Narrator:**

And it came to pass, when David had come to the top of the Mount of Olives, where he worshipped God, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his robe torn, and earth on his head.

David:

"If you go on with me, then you will be a burden to me. But if you return to the city, and say to Absalom, 'I will be your servant, O king; just as I have been your father's servant previously, so I will now also be your servant,' then you may defeat the counsel of Ahithophel for me. And do you not have Zadok and Abiathar the priests with you there? Therefore it will be that whatever you hear from the king's house, you shall tell to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. Indeed, they have there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz Zadok's son, and Jonathan Abiathar's son; and by them you shall send me everything you hear."

Narrator:

So Hushai, David's friend, went into the city... And Absalom, and all the people, the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel was with him.

SCENE 3 Hushai Accepted by Absalom**Hushai (greeting Absalom):**

"Long live the king! Long live the king!"

Absalom:

"Is this your loyalty toward your friend? Why did you not go with your friend?"

Hushai:

"No, but whom Yehowah, and this people, and all the men of Israel, choose, his I will be, and with him will I remain." 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 I will be in your presence."

SCENE 4 Absalom Takes Counsel**Narrator:**

Now the counsel of Ahithophel, which he gave in those days, was as if one had inquired at the oracle of Yehowah. So was all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom.

Ahithophel *(to Absalom):*

"Now let me choose twelve thousand men and I will arise and pursue David tonight. 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. Then I will bring back all the people to you. When all return except the man whom you seek, then all the people will be at peace."

Absalom:

"Now call Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear what he says too."

(Hushai comes)

"Ahithophel has spoken in this manner. Shall we do as he says? If not, speak up."

Hushai:

"The counsel that Ahithophel has given is not good at this time. For 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. 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.' 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. Therefore I counsel 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. 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. 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."

Absalom *(to his men):*

"What do you think? Which counsel shall we follow?"

Absalom's men:

"The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel."

Narrator:

For Yehowah had purposed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that Yehowah might bring disaster on Absalom.

SCENE 5 Hushai Sends Message to David

Hushai *(to Zadok and Abiathar):*

"Thus and so Ahithophel counseled Absalom and the elders of Israel, and thus and so I have counseled. 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.' "

(Zadok and Abiathar instruct a maidservant)

Narrator:

Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz had stayed at En Rogel, for they dared not be seen coming into the city. And a maidservant came and told them Hushai's message....

(Maidservant enters, talks secretly with Jonathan and Ahimaaz.)

Nevertheless a lad saw them, and told Absalom.

(A boy observes and runs off to tell 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. 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.

Absalom's men (*searching the house, address woman*):

"Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?"

Woman:

"They have gone over the water brook."

Narrator:

And when they had searched and could not find them, they returned to Jerusalem.... Now it came to pass, after they had departed, that Jonathan and Ahimaaz came up out of the well. And they went and told King David.

David (*greeting Ahimaaz and Jonathan*):

"What news, Ahimaaz and Jonathan?"

Ahimaaz:

"My Lord, Arise and cross over the water quickly. For thus has Ahithophel counseled against you."

SCENE 6 David Escapes, Ahithophel Dies

Narrator:

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....

Now when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his 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.

(The End)