

2Samuel 16:15–17:14

“The Overruling Providence of the Prayer-Answering God”

Listen to this devotional at bit.ly/210707fw (or scan QR code)



What is going on with all these shocking twists? Pastor leads his family in today's "Hopewell @Home" passage. 2Samuel 16:15–17:14 prepares us for the first serial reading in public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these twenty-three verses of holy Scripture, we learn that even through the horrific twists of wicked men and surprising turns of foolish men, Yahweh's sovereign providence is ruling and overruling in response to our prayers according to His perfect will.

Wednesday, July 7, 2021 • Read 2Samuel 16:15–17:14

Questions from the Scripture text: To whom does the Scripture now turn its attention in v15? Who is with him? To where does he come? Who is with him? Who else now comes to him in v16? What is Hushai called? What does he say? What two questions does Absalom ask about this in v17? How does Hushai answer in v18? Whom does Hushai mean? Whom does Hushai plan to serve, but in whose presence (v19)? Whom does Absalom immediately address in v20? For what does he ask? What does Ahithophel say to do (v21)? How will this make a complete break and force people to choose sides? What does Absalom do in fulfillment of 12:11–12 (v22)? What kind of track record did Ahithophel's advice have (v23)? What advice does Ahithophel now volunteer in 17:1—how many men does he need to do what? What effect does he say this will have (v2)? Whom would he need to strike down? Whom would he bring back (v3)? What result does he say this will have on all the people? What did Absalom think of the advice (v4)? Who else liked it? Whom does Absalom decide to ask as well (v5)? What advantage does Absalom give him (v6)? What surprising unpopular opinion does he give (v7)? What picture does he paint of David's and his men's state of mind (v8)? Why might they think Hushai has the inside info on this? Where does he say they are sure to be (v9)? What does he say they will be able to do at first? And what would people say? And what effect would this have (v10)? Whom does Hushai say to gather (v11)? Whom does he say to go in person (i.e. and get the glory)? What does he say the battle be like (v12)? How many would they strike down? But what might David do (v13)? And what would such a large force with Absalom do in that case? What do Absalom and all the men of Israel say to this (v14)? Why did they come to this conclusion?

The scene shifts back from David to Absalom, just in time for his arrival in Jerusalem and the note that “Ahithophel was with him” (16:15). In the middle of the passage, we read the comment, “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” (16:23). This was the guy to make chief of staff when putting together the royal cabinet. He never missed his mark.

But it is at the end of the passage that we learn what is happening all this time: “For Yahweh had purposed to defeat the good advice of Ahithophel, to the intent that Yahweh might bring disaster on Absalom” (17:14).

So, it's interesting to note how wicked (but effective) Ahithophel's advice (and Absalom's willing compliance) is in 16:21–22. And how much closer to the truth Ahithophel's “weary David” of 17:2 is than Hushai's “enraged David” of 17:8. And how odd it is that after the universally applauded counsel of never-miss Ahithophel (v4), Ahithophel unilaterally calls for a second opinion (v5), and even gives him the advantage of knowing the competition's counsel (v6).

All of that is interesting, but it's not the main point. The main point is that David had prayed (cf. 15:31), and Yahweh had already been answering (15:32).

17:14 is more of an answer than David wanted. We're going to find that it's very difficult for David to deal with Absalom's disaster. It's Hushai's advice that gets him there in person (end of v11). Between that and the warning at the end of v9 that Absalom could take a PR hit at the end of v9, the vain usurper was sure to join team-Hushai. At that point, all that remains is a hair-snagging mule-ride (18:9) and three spears through the heart (18:14). But David's going to have such a hard time of it that it'll threaten the entire kingdom (19:7).

But it's Yahweh's answer. And it's the answer through which Christ would ultimately come into the world as the Son of David. Sin wreaks havoc along the way (cf. 12:11–12), but sovereign grace has planned that way through the manger, to the cross, up from the grave, beyond the heavens and onto the throne of glory.

How glad we ought to be that our redeeming God rules and overrules in every providence! Whether it's inexplicable royal requests for second opinions, or second opinions that come back with a stage four diagnosis, our God knows what He is doing. And what He is doing is glorifying Christ as the everlasting King and Redeemer of all who call upon His Name.

We pray, and He hears and answers—according to His perfect wisdom and goodness.

For what seemingly impossible thing have you prayed? What will God's answer accomplish?

Suggested songs: ARP46 “God Is Our Refuge” or TPH256 “God Moves in a Mysterious Way”

For more Hopewell @Home devotionals, please visit bit.ly/harpcHAH

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

Second Samuel 16 beginning in verse 15 and going through chapter 17 and verse 14. These are the words of God. Meanwhile Absalom and all the people the men of Israel. Came to Jerusalem into Hit the Fellow was with him. So it was when Vichai the architect David's friend came to Absalom.

The Hush I said to Absalom long lived the king. Long live the king. So Absalom said to Husheye. Is this your loyalty to your friend? Why did you not go with your friend? And Hush I said to have some no but whom Yahweh and his people. And this people and all the men of Israel Jews his I will be and with him.

I will 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 will I be in your presence? And Hush I said to have sorry then Absol

said they hit the film. Give advice as to what we should do and hit the fell send the apps on go into your father's concubines and he has left to keep the house and all Israel will hear that you are a poor by your father and then the hands of all who are with you will be strong.

So they pitched a tent for absome on the top of the house and absolent into his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel. Now the advice of a hit the fell which he gave in those days was if one had inquired of the oracle of God. So was all the advice of epithel birth with David and with Absol.

Moreover hit the felt said to have some now let me choose 12,000 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. Now, we'll strike only the king and then I will bring back all the people to you.

When all return except the man him, you see all the people will be at peace. The same please dabslam and all the elders of Israel. Then Absalom said now call. Hush I the architect also. Let us hear what he says to and when Hush I came to have some absolute spoken saying I hit the fellow has spoken in this manner, so we do is he says If not speak up.

So this I said to have some. Advice that a hypothal has given is not good at this time. Force of you know your father and his men. 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.

You will not camp with the people surely by now. He has hidden in some pit or some other place and it will be when some of them are overthrown at the first whoever hears it will say there's a slaughter among the people who follow Absalom. And even he who is valued his heart is like the heart of a lion will melt completely for all Israel knows that your father is a mighty man those who are with him are valiant men.

Therefore I advise that all Israel be fully gathered to you from Dan to bear shiva like the sand that is by the sea for a multitude and that you go to the battle in person. So we will come upon him in someplace 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 hasn't drawn into a city than all Israel sobring ropes to the city. We will pull it into the river until there is not one small stone found there. So Absalom and all the men of Israel said the advice of Hush by the architect is better than the advice of Phil.

Four. Yahweh had purpose. To defeat the good advice of a hippop. To the intent. That Yahweh might bring disaster. On absence.

So far. The reading of God's inspired and inherent word. First we have the interaction with Hush I will remember when we met Hushai we met Hussai coming up the other side of the Mount of Olives because David had been praying as he went up the west side that God would turn the Council of a hitofel into foolishness.

He gets to the top of the Mount of Olives where he's going to worship and behold there is Hashai the architect David's friend David's friend David's friend and he continues to be called he's called who's called David's friend once at the end of Chapter 15, he's called David's friend three times in this chapter on two three, yet just the three.

The Holy Spirit calls him David's friend directly in verse 16. Absalom calls him David's French twice in verse 17, but Absalom is so arrogant. That the truth when he says whom Yahweh has chosen and whom all Israel have anointed.

Is he anointed or chosen? No. You always and this people and all the men of Israel shoes okay, so anyway, so I have some things that has to be him. Because this is absolute day and of course he thinks the Lord has given him this victory, so now he is avenged his sister and David David had the kingdom taken away because he wasn't a good king like Absalom could be so if I tells the truth and if you pay attention even to the careful wording of a statements, you see very clearly he means long-lived David and I'm gonna serve David in your presence.

Just as I served him in his presence so will I be in your presidency says very some of the this is a beautiful section for seeing some righteous truths that's one righteous truth, and then next week when the servant girl is sitting on top of the well that she has disguised.

And Jonathan and a hemis the priests sons are inside the well and absence men come and they say where did Jonathan and him as go and she said well they've gone over the water reservoir, but they don't know that she's sitting on a well because they're not from there another wonderful right to the truth as she's sitting on top of them on top of the well.

They're on top of the water that's in the well anyway, so the you know, it's very interesting what I says it's very interesting. That the wickedness of man comes in the providence of God. What absolute what a hit the fall council does extremely wicked and Absalom is extremely wicked to have done it with the

ten concubines do that concubines and all of Israel is extremely wicked.

To have observed it. And yet it comes as fulfillment of God's curse upon David. In Second Samuel 12 when he said you did it in secret but it'll be done in the side of all Israel, I think around verse 11 verse 12. So he says thus says Yahweh, I'll raise up adversity against you from your own house.

I'll take your wives from before your eyes and give them to your neighbor he shall lie with your eyes and the side of this son for you did it secretly but I will do this thing before all Israel before the sun. And we must remember we live in a wicked world and yet God rules and overrules justly.

There is recourse. The only recourse those women have or anybody who has been sending instant anyway from the smallest to the greatest and some people have been sinned against very greatly. Is that the Lord Jesus has atoned for our sin and the hell that we deserve that is infinitely worse than anything that we will endure in this life no matter how much we endure in this life.

Jesus has endured and across for all those who believe in him.

So the provenance of God is in control of that and the problems of God is in control of the of the situation as a whole in response to David's prayer remember David had prayed. Turned the council of a hippop into foolishness. Now David got more than he bargained for.

Because we come to the end of the passage and the rest of the passage is explained. By the end of verse 14 for Yahweh had purpose to defeat the good advice of hell so far so good as far as David had prayed. To the intent that ye offlane might bring disaster.

On Absalom. Now David didn't want to bring disaster enough that's part of how the judgment of God has proceeded against him. He ought to have executed ammon and then after Absalom had murdered Amin he ought to have executed or had executed absolutely. As a matter of justice as a king.

And even when Absalom does die. David is going to be so sad that Absalom is dead that all the men who won the victory in battle for him are going to are going to feel as if they had lost the battle and Joe had warns David that if he doesn't shape up and stop grieving ever absolutely things are going to be worse for him then then they had ever been before.

So sometimes we pray for God to do something. And we're not ready for how the answer is going to come.

The Lord didn't just want to frustrate the advice of a hatha fellow so wicked man. God's providence that turns on a hippop and giving a hippop over to his sins so that he goes home and commits suicide and next week's passage, that is just and righteous. But hit the fell for all his wickedness was highly effective very skilled.

We must be careful. There are people who are very good at what they do a hit the fell never missed. He was right so continuously that the scripture tells us the words of a hit of all were like the Oracle of God whatever he said to do you knew that was how to win.

And so it's very interesting. That. After a hippophile gives his advice Absalom instead of saying alright, let's go do that, what does he do? He says well, let's ask the architect do just in case. And we know why doesn't make any sense. Yeah false told you what to do, he just do that.

But the reason the reason absolute that was. Because Yahweh wanted. Had purpose to defeat the good advice of a fell to the intent that you always might bring disaster on absolutely. So he says, let's ask her shy to push. I hears what a hit the fell said he says aha.

Hit the falseta hit the fellow should go with twelve thousand men.

I know Absalom is this vein guy who used to get all these men to run before him and ride on a donkey like a like a king who has his annual way how heavy my hair got this year festival. Just you know what it hit, you know what epsilon and.

Yeah, he understands that. Though. I absoluten's done everything so far was very cowardly now these secret conspiracies and getting other people to do all the work so he says you sure that your guys can take David and the mighty men sure is a little smarter than she may right cursing and casting stones at the mighty men push eyes, like I'm not sure that's a great idea.

And then and then he uses a key word he says, you know, if David's in this pit and the mighty men are ready and there's an ambush and they take out a few of of your guys they're gonna say there's been a slaughter among the people who follow Absalom.

You're really want your first thing is as king to have some of your people defeated so that everyone in the land finds out that following. Absalom is not a good idea you don't want the name Absalom to be

spoken that way, of course, you know vein epsilon who is so vein that he thought which I was talking about him when he was a long-lived king.

And that's all you can see him thinking yeah. I don't want them saying that he's here's what you do. Also in this fantastical story of how they're going to collect them from Dan de Beersheba Dan is the northernmost city and all Israel Bersheba is the southernmost city and all Israel and hush eyes reason, of course for gathering them all is going to take a few days to get them from that far away.

We'll give David some escape time. Eddy but as Absalom hears the story, you can see the wheels turning an absence minor. Oh yes a vast army. Like the sand on the seashore how they will sing about that and generations to come and then the clincher and you absolutely at the front.

Absolutely, yes with me at the front and then and then you know, if if David's in the city, you know, they're not just gonna like take down the walls, we're gonna take every stone of the city and, Drag it all the way to the sea. Yeah, he's painting a picture of for absolutely enticing to be the greatest being ever.

I'll be aware of flattery. My dear children. Even well-meaning flattery, although I'm not sure this was so well meaningful much life. Beware of flattery. There are people who use flattery to manipulate you and even when other people are giving you genuine compliments. The devil wants to use that flattery to manipulate you.

To stir up your pride. To divert your thinking from what is right what does God want? What does God say to what can get me more compliments like this one?

Beware flattery the flattery was designed to destroy Absalom and add some had set himself up for it. He invited her size advice and he gave him the advantage. He didn't say what do you counsel? He said this is what a hifa fell has said. Now, what do you cancel?

So watch out for flattery and for pride. And for cold calculating wickedness like a hippo. Those are the kinds of things. That God providentially permits to destroy people.

God grant that you and I would not be destroyed and that we would be confident that he's ruling an overruling in his provenance all the time. No, she is. And then when you and I pray for something. Like David prayed. Frost, you know, turn the council of a hit the fell into foolishness.

And God's answer includes a lot more pain than we had bargained for. Let us submit ourselves to the wisdom of God. And rejoice to know that he is answering already when we ask. And whatever his answer is if it's different than what we had asked is better. Do you think God answered?

David's prayer by destroying Absalom. Because it was worse than what David had asked for because it was better than what it David had asked for. Because it was better. Sometimes we asked the Lord to do things and we've got it partially right but he is going to do according to his perfect will not our partially right prayer.

Let's pray.

Father we thank you for your word, we thank you for the time that you gave us as a family to study it together. Pray that you had help us to be truthful, thank you for sustaining. Hush I so that. Even in such a dangerous situation. By your spirit he was able to do that, which is pleasing unto you.

Who pray that you would guard us from taking the advice of the wicked.

And be they ever so clever. He'll pray that you would guard us from listening to flattery.

When we pray that you would give us hearts that gladly submit to whatever your providence decides. Make us confident that you're hearing us we ask. And confident that your answer. Will be whatever is best. Even if it's something that we would not have asked for if we had known the pain that would come with it.

Help us to humble ourselves under your hand and to trust you. Yes these things in Jesus name. Amen.