

# David and Absalom: Two Paths to the Throne

## The Making of a King: Part 24

### 2 Samuel 18

Absalom's revolt has finally come to a head. Absalom has stolen the throne from his father David and has spent the last couple chapters trying to hunt him down and kill him. Fortunately for David, he's had a man on the inside the entire time in the form of Hushai. Hushai has not only kept David informed on Absalom's plans, but he was also able to successfully undermine a man who was once an incredibly wise counselor in Ahithophel.

As we enter this chapter, David and his men are preparing for what will be their final battle against Absalom and his forces. We must remember that Absalom likely has a much greater force than David, as the Bible tells us he had stolen the hearts of the people. Nonetheless, David was preparing for a battle he hoped he'd never have to face: one against his own son. But as the preparations are being made, David's soldiers make an interesting request of him.

**Discussion Question: Read verses 2-4. David was an experienced and successful soldier who likely would have been a great asset in battle. What does it say about the kind of leader David was by the way that his men sought to protect him? What does this show us about how those under David's leadership felt about him?**

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**Follow-Up Question: Read verse 5. What instructions did David give to his generals even in the midst of a life-threatening conflict? What did these instructions reveal about David?**

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David's men insist he stay back for his own protection, being willing to sacrifice his prowess on the battlefield for his own safety. David's men marched for him, even when he wasn't on the battlefield with them. This was an amazing testimony to David's ability as a leader. Luckily for David, the way the Bible describes it, he wasn't even needed in the battle. The Bible describes a scene where David's forces completely overtook Absalom's armies.

**Discussion Question: Read verses 6-8. Compare and contrast David's path to becoming king vs Absalom's path to the throne. What did these paths reveal about each man's personality and character? Do you think these traits affected how those under their leadership handled themselves on the battlefield?**

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Once it became clear that the battle was in hand, an unfortunate and tragic scene takes place. Absalom, while riding on his mule, gets his hair caught in a tree, trapping him in a very vulnerable state. One of David's soldiers finds him and reports it to his commander, Joab, thinking it will be celebrated that they can bring Absalom back home peacefully. But unfortunately, Joab makes a mistake he's made before and takes matter into his own hands. Joab not only kills Absalom but brings other into the disobedient act as well.

**Discussion Question: Read verses 10-17 detailing Joab's actions against Absalom. How did Joab, in his well-meaning zeal for his king, actually commit a terrible act of open disrespect? Is it possible for us to do the same thing to God, even if our intentions are good?**

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**For Personal Reflection: What is the biggest lesson you personally learned from this lesson? Write it out below.**

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