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2SAMUEL 17: 1 Moreover Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Let me now choose twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David tonight."

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Ahithophel counsels Absalom to pursue his father with twelve thousand men, 2Sam 17:1-4. Hushai gives a different counsel, and is followed, 2Sam 17:5-14. Hushai informs Zadok and Abiathar; and they send word to David, 2Sam 17:15-21. David and his men go beyond Jordan, 2Sam 17:22. Ahithophel, finding his counsel slighted, goes home, sets his house in order, and hangs himself, 2Sam 17:23. David moves to Mahanaim; and Absalom follows him over Jordan, 2Sam 17:24-26. Several friends meet David at Mahanaim with refreshments and provisions, 2Sam 17:27-29.

#### Verse 1

Let me now choose out twelve thousand men - Had this counsel been followed, David and his little troop would soon have been destroyed; nothing but the miraculous interposition of God could have saved them. Twelve thousand chosen troops coming against him, in his totally unprepared state, would have soon settled the business of the kingdom. Ahithophel well saw that, this advice neglected, all was lost.

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2SAMUEL 17: 2 I will come on him while he is weary and exhausted, and will make him afraid. All the people who are with him shall flee. I will strike the king only;

2SAMUEL 17: 3 and I will bring back all the people to you. The man whom you seek is as if all returned. All the people shall be in peace."

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#### Verse 3

The man whom thou seekest is as if all returned - Only secure David, and all Israel will be on thy side. He is the soul of the whole; destroy him, and all the rest will submit.

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2SAMUEL 17: 4 The saying pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel.

2SAMUEL 17: 5 Then Absalom said, "Now call Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear likewise what he says."

2SAMUEL 17: 6 When Hushai had come to Absalom, Absalom spoke to him, saying, "Ahithophel has spoken like this. Shall we do what he says? If not, speak up."

2SAMUEL 17: 7 Hushai said to Absalom, "The counsel that Ahithophel has given this time is not good."

2SAMUEL 17: 8 Hushai said moreover, "You know your father and his men, that they are mighty men, and they are fierce in their minds, like a bear robbed of her cubs in the field. Your father is a man of war, and will not lodge with the people."

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## Verse 8

As a bear robbed of her whelps - All wild beasts are very furious when robbed of their young; but we have some remarkable instances of the maternal affection of the bear in such circumstances; see one at the end of the chapter.

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2SAMUEL 17: 9 Behold, he is now hidden in some pit, or in some other place. It will happen, when some of them have fallen at the first, that whoever hears it will say, 'There is a slaughter among the people who follow Absalom!'

2SAMUEL 17: 10 Even he who is valiant, whose heart is as the heart of a lion, will utterly melt; for all Israel knows that your father is a mighty man, and those who are with him are valiant men.

2SAMUEL 17: 11 But I counsel that all Israel be gathered together to you, from Dan even to Beersheba, as the sand that is by the sea for multitude; and that you go to battle in your own person.

2SAMUEL 17: 12 So shall we come on him in some place where he shall be found, and we will light on him as the dew falls on the ground; and of him and of all the men who are with him we will not leave so much as one.

2SAMUEL 17: 13 Moreover, if he be gone into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there isn't one small stone found there."

## Verse 13

Shall all Israel bring ropes to that city - The original word חבלים chabalim, which signifies ropes, and from which we have our word cable, may have some peculiarity of meaning here; for it is not likely that any city could be pulled down with ropes. The Chaldee, which should be best judge in this case, translates the original word by משרין mashreyan, towers: this gives an easy sense.

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2SAMUEL 17: 14 Absalom and all the men of Israel said, "The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel." For the LORD had ordained to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil on Absalom.

2SAMUEL 17: 15 Then Hushai said to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, "Ahithophel counseled Absalom and the elders of Israel that way; and I have counseled this way.

2SAMUEL 17: 16 Now therefore send quickly, and tell David, saying, 'Don't lodge this night at the fords of the wilderness, but by all means pass over; lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people who are with him.'"

2SAMUEL 17: 17 Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz were staying by En Rogel; and a female servant used to go and tell them; and they went and told king David. For they might not be seen to come into the city.

## Verse 17

En-rogel - The fullers' well; the place where they were accustomed to tread the clothes with their feet; hence the name עין ein, a well, and רגל regel, the foot, because of the treading above mentioned.

And a wench went and told them - The word wench occurs nowhere else in the Holy Scriptures: and, indeed, has no business here; as the Hebrew word שפחה shiphchah, should have been translated girl, maid, maid-servant. The word either comes from the Anglo-Saxon, a maid, or the Belgic wunch, desire, a thing wished for: multum enim ut plurimum Puellae a Juvenibus desiderantur, seu appetuntur. So Minsheu. Junius seems more willing to derive it from wince, to frisk, to be skittish, etc., for reasons sufficiently obvious, and which he gives at length. After all, it may as likely come from the Gothic wens or weins, a word frequently used in the gospels of the Codex Argenteus for wife. Coverdale's Bible, 1535, has damsell. Becke's Bible, 1549, has wenche. The same in Cardmarden's Bible, 1566; but it is maid in Barker's Bible, 1615. Wench is more of a Scotticism than maid or damsel; and King James probably restored it, as he is said to have done lad in Gen 21:12, and elsewhere. In every other place where the word occurs, our translators render it handmaid, bondmaid, maiden, womanservant, maidservant, and servant. Such is the latitude with which they translate the same Hebrew term in almost innumerable instances.

2SAMUEL 17: 18 But a boy saw them, and told Absalom. Then they both went away quickly, and came to the house of a man in Bahurim, who had a well in his court; and they went down there.

2SAMUEL 17: 19 The woman took and spread the covering over the well's mouth, and spread out bruised grain on it; and nothing was known.

2SAMUEL 17: 20 Absalom's servants came to the woman to the house; and they said, "Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?" The woman said to them, "They have gone over the brook of water." When they had sought and could not find them, they returned to Jerusalem.

2SAMUEL 17: 21 After they had departed, they came up out of the well, and went and told king David; and they said to David, "Arise and pass quickly over the water; for thus has Ahithophel counseled against you."

2SAMUEL 17: 22 Then David arose, and all the people who were with him, and they passed over the Jordan. By the morning light there lacked not one of them who had not gone over the Jordan.

2SAMUEL 17: 23 When Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his donkey, and arose, and went home, to his city, and set his house in order, and hanged himself; and he died, and was buried in the tomb of his father.

### Verse 23

Put his household in order - This self-murder could not be called lunacy, as every step to it was deliberate. He foresaw Absalom's ruin; and he did not choose to witness it, and share in the disgrace: and he could expect no mercy at the hands of David. He was a very bad man, and died an unprepared and accursed death.

2SAMUEL 17: 24 Then David came to Mahanaim. Absalom passed over the Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him.

2SAMUEL 17: 25 Absalom set Amasa over the army instead of Joab. Now Amasa was the son of a man, whose name was Ithra the Israelite, who went in to Abigail the daughter of Nahash, sister to Zeruah, Joab's mother.

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#### Verse 25

Amasa captain of the host - From the account in this verse, it appears that Joab and Amasa were sisters' children, and both nephews to David.

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2SAMUEL 17: 26 Israel and Absalom encamped in the land of Gilead.

2SAMUEL 17: 27 When David had come to Mahanaim, Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lodebar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim,

2SAMUEL 17: 28 brought beds, basins, earthen vessels, wheat, barley, meal, parched grain, beans, lentils, roasted grain,

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#### Verse 28

Brought beds - These no doubt consisted in skins of beasts, mats, carpets, and such like things.

Basins - ספוח sappoth. Probably wooden bowls, such as the Arabs still use to eat out of, and to knead their bread in.

Earthen vessels - כלי יוצר keley yotser. Probably clay vessels, baked in the sun. These were perhaps used for lifting water, and boiling those articles which required to be cooked.

Wheat, and barley, etc. - There is no direct mention of flesh-meat here; little was eaten in that country, and it would not keep. Whether the sheep mentioned were brought for their flesh or their milk. I cannot tell.

According to Mr. Jones, "the Moors of west Barbary use the flour of parched barley, which is the chief provision they make for their journeys, and often use it at home; and this they carry in a leathern satchel." These are ordinarily made of goat-skins. One of them now lies before me: it has been drawn off the animal before it was cut up; the places where the fore-legs, the tail, and the anus were, are elegantly closed, and have leathers thongs attached to them, by which it can be slung over the back of man, ass, or camel. The place of the neck is left open, with a running string to draw it up, purse-like, when necessary. The skin itself is tanned; and the upper side is curiously embroidered with red, black, blue, yellow, and flesh-coloured leather, in very curious and elegant forms and devices. Bags of this kind are used for carrying wine, water, milk, butter, grain, flour, clothes, and different articles of merchandise. This is, as I have before stated, the Scripture bottle. Mr. Jones farther says: "Travellers use zumeet, tumeet, and limereece. Zumeet is flour mixed with honey, butter, and spice; tumeet is flour done up with organ oil; and limereece is flour mixed with water for drink. This quenches the thirst much better than water alone; satisfies a hungry appetite; cools and refreshes tired and weary spirits; overcoming those ill effects which a hot sun and fatiguing journey might well occasion."

This flour might be made of grain or pulse of any kind: and probably may be that which we here term parched corn and parched pulse; and in the forms above mentioned was well calculated, according to Mr. Jones's account, for the people hungry, weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness. This was a timely supply for David and his men, and no doubt contributed much to the victory mentioned in the following chapter.

A Remarkable account of maternal affection in a she-bear: "In the year 1772, the Seahorse frigate and Carcass bomb, under the command of the Hon. Captain C. J. Phipps, afterwards Lord Mulgrave, were sent on a voyage of discovery to the north seas. In this expedition the late celebrated admiral Lord Nelson served as midshipman. While the Carcass lay locked in the ice, early one morning, the man at the masthead gave notice that three bears were making their way very fast over the frozen sea, and were directing their course towards the ship. They had no doubt been invited by the scent of some blubber of a seahorse that the crew had killed a few days before, which had been set on fire, and was burning on the ice at the time of their approach. They proved to be a she-bear and her two cubs, but the cubs were nearly as large as the dam. They ran eagerly to the fire, and drew out from the flames part of the flesh of the seahorse that remained unconsumed, and ate voraciously. The crew from the ship threw great lumps of flesh of the seahorse, which they had still left upon the ice, which the old bear fetched away singly, laid every lump before her cubs as she brought it, and dividing it, gave each a share, reserving but a small portion to herself. As she was fetching away the last piece, they levelled their muskets at the cubs, and shot them both dead; and in her retreat they wounded the dam, but not mortally. It would have drawn tears of pity from any but unfeeling minds, to have marked the affectionate concern expressed by this poor beast in the dying moments of her expiring young. Though she was sorely wounded, and could but just crawl to the place where they lay, she carried the lump of flesh she had fetched away, as she had done the others before, tore it in pieces and laid it down before them; and when she saw that they refused to eat, she laid her paws first upon one, and then upon the other, and endeavored to raise them up; all this while it was piteous to hear her moan. When she found she could not move them, she went off; and being at some distance, looked back and moaned. This not availing to entice them away, she returned, and smelling around them, began to lick their wounds. She went off a second time, as before; and having crawled a few paces, looked again behind her, and for some time stood moaning. But still her cubs not rising to follow her, she returned to them again, and with signs of inexpressible fondness went round one, and round the other, pawing them and moaning. Finding at last that they were cold and lifeless, she raised her head towards the ship, and growled a curse upon the murderers, which they returned with a volley of musket balls. She fell between her cubs, and died licking their wounds."

Had this animal got among the destroyers of her young, she would have soon shown what was implied in the chafed mind of a bear robbed of her whelps.

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2SAMUEL 17: 29 honey, butter, sheep, and cheese of the herd, for David, and for the people who were with him, to eat: for they said, "The people are hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness."

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