

## Exegetical Notes – 2 Samuel 18:21-33

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### 2 Samuel 18:21-33

(For more information about Absalom, David's son and Israel's Crown Prince after Amnon's murder and his rebellion against King David, read 2 Samuel 13:1–18:20 and the exegetical notes prepared for those passages.)

#### Verses 21-23

*<sup>21</sup> Then Joab said to a Cushite, “Go, tell the king what you have seen.” The Cushite bowed down before Joab and ran off.*

*<sup>22</sup> Ahimaaz son of Zadok again said to Joab, “Come what may, please let me run behind the Cushite.”*

*But Joab replied, “My son, why do you want to go? You don’t have any news that will bring you a reward.”*

*<sup>23</sup> He said, “Come what may, I want to run.”*

*So Joab said, “Run!” Then Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain and outran the Cushite.*

- Ahimaaz, the son of the High Priest, wanted to carry the news of Absalom's death and David's victory to David (see verse 20). But Joab, the commander of David's army didn't want to allow him to do so. Joab was afraid that David would react badly to the news of Absalom's death and that David might harm, rather than reward, the messenger who brought the news to him. Joab sent a Cushite, an Egyptian slave, to carry the news to David, not someone as important as Ahimaaz.
- But Ahimaaz insisted that he wanted to carry the news to David. So Joab gave Ahimaaz permission to go to the king. Ahimaaz took a different route to the king and so reached David before the Cushite.

#### Verses 24-27

*<sup>24</sup> While David was sitting between the inner and outer gates, the watchman went up to the roof of the gateway by the wall. As he looked out, he*

*saw a man running alone. <sup>25</sup> The watchman called out to the king and reported it.*

*The king said, "If he is alone, he must have good news." And the runner came closer and closer.*

*<sup>26</sup> Then the watchman saw another runner, and he called down to the gatekeeper, "Look, another man running alone!"*

*The king said, "He must be bringing good news, too."*

*<sup>27</sup> The watchman said, "It seems to me that the first one runs like Ahimaaz son of Zadok."*

*"He's a good man," the king said. "He comes with good news."*

- David was sitting in the city gate awaiting news of the battle. The watchman on the wall above David saw a runner approaching and told David. Since there was only one man coming and not a group of soldiers escaping defeat, David assumed the approaching messenger carried good news.
- Then the watchman saw a second runner and told David what he saw. Again, David assumed that the news was good because only one additional runner approached.
- The watchman recognized the first runner as Ahimaaz and reported what he saw to the king. Again, David assumed that the news would be good.

### **Verse 28**

*<sup>28</sup> Then Ahimaaz called out to the king, "All is well!" He bowed down before the king with his face to the ground and said, "Praise be to the LORD your God! He has delivered up those who lifted their hands against my lord the king."*

- Ahimaaz delivered the news of victory to David.

### **Verse 29**

*<sup>29</sup> The king asked, "Is the young man Absalom safe?"*

*Ahimaaz answered, "I saw great confusion just as Joab was about to send the king's servant and me, your servant, but I don't know what it was."*

- David wanted to know what had happened to Absalom. Ahimaaz said that he did not know what happened to Absalom. Most likely, he avoided or evaded answering the question because he did not want to tell the king that Absalom was dead.

### **Verses 30-32**

*The king said, "Stand aside and wait here." So he stepped aside and stood there.*

***31 Then the Cushite arrived and said, “My lord the king, hear the good news! The LORD has vindicated you today by delivering you from the hand of all who rose up against you.”***

***32 The king asked the Cushite, “Is the young man Absalom safe?” The Cushite replied, “May the enemies of my lord the king and all who rise up to harm you be like that young man.”***

- The king told Ahimaaz to wait. The Cushite arrived and delivered the news of victory to the king.
- When David asked the Cushite about Absalom, the Cushite told him that Absalom was dead.

### **Verse 33**

***33 The king was shaken. He went up to the room over the gateway and wept. As he went, he said: “O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you—O Absalom, my son, my son!”***

- When David heard that Absalom was dead, the news of Absalom's death overwhelmed him. He said that he wished he had died instead of his rebellious son. In his sorrow, David does not rejoice in the victory God granted him. In fact, he calls the good thing God has done bad.

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