

Bearing the Good News

David's Prophetic Picture

Let us begin by examining II Samuel 18:19-32. This passage details how news of the outcome of the war was delivered to David. The peculiar aspect of this story is that although Joab planned on sending a Cushite to herald the news, Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, wanted to do it. The story unfolds as Ahimaaz begs for permission to do this task. The first interesting point I'd like to make concerns the usage of the word *news/tidings*. This word occurs in II Samuel 18:19, 20, 26 and 31. In each occurrence, the word *news/tidings* is a translation of the Hebrew verbal root בָּשַׂר (basar), which means to bear news, bear tidings, publish, preach, and show forth. II Samuel 18:26 and 31 specifically states that the news was good news. At this point, please notice the location of the words new/tidings. It seems that the word is mentioned twice in the first half of our passage and twice in the second half. Also, notice that II Samuel 18:19 mentions "how the LORD has *avenged him of his enemies*," whereas II Samuel 18:32b states, "May *the enemies of my lord the king...be like that young man!*" These two verses are the first and last verses of this passage we're investigating. These are subtle clues that we may have happened upon another small chiasmic structure within our main chiasmic structure! The chiasmic structure is below.

- A) II Samuel 18:19b—"Let me run now and take the news to the king, how *the LORD has avenged him of his enemies*."
- B) II Samuel 18:20b-21—"But today you shall take no *news, because the king's son is dead*." Then Joab said to the Cushite, "*Go*, tell the king what you have seen." So *the Cushite bowed himself to Joab and ran*.
- C) II Samuel 18:22b-23—"Why will you run, my son, *since you have no news ready?*"; So *he said to him, "Run."*
- D) II Samuel 18:25—Then *the watchman cried out and told the king*. And the king said, "If he is alone, *there is news in his mouth*."
- E) II Samuel 18:26b—And *the king said*, "He also *brings good news*."
- F) *II Samuel 18:27a—So the watchman said, "I think the running of the first is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok."*
- E) II Samuel 18:27b—And *the king said*, "He is a good man, and *comes with good news*."
- D) II Samuel 18:28—So *Ahimaaz called out* and said *to the king*, "*All is well!*"

C') II Samuel 18:29b-30—“...I saw a great tumult, but *I did not know what it was about.*”; And *the king said*, “Turn aside and *stand here.*”

B') II Samuel 18:31—Just then *the Cushite came*, and the Cushite said, “There is *good news*...the LORD *has avenged you this day of all those who rose against you.*”

A') II Samuel 18:32b—“*May the enemies of my lord the king*, and all who rise against you to do harm, *be like that young man!*”

Once again, we have been treated to another beautiful chiasmic structure! They literally fill every page of the Scriptures. While analyzing the chiasmic structure we see that each element in the two halves of the story is thematically connected to its partner by sharing similar words and/or themes. Let's begin a closer analysis of the chiasmic structure by comparing elements B and B'. Note how element B states that the king's son Absalom is dead. This passage is thematically connected to B', where it states that Absalom has been killed (There is good news...the LORD has avenged you this day of all those who rose against you)! In other words, elements B and B' teach us that *Absalom's death is actually the good news!*

Most of the other thematic connections are pretty straightforward. Our central axis pertains to Ahimaaz's stride. We know that the central axis is usually the most important element or the reversal point of the structure. In this instance, the central axis is not functioning as the turning point of the story; therefore, we should assume that it is an important point in the story. But why? Why would Ahimaaz's stride be significant to this story? I believe it is the central axis because Adonai is trying to get us to thematically connect this story to a great prophecy concerning the Messiah.

Another reading of II Samuel 18:28a makes a tremendous thematic connection. According to the Artscroll Tanakh,⁵⁵ Ahimaaz called out the word *peace* to King David.

So Ahimaaz called out and said to the king, “Peace!”

The word *peace* is what triggered the connection. Can you think of how this story concerning the bearing of good news is thematically connected to a great prophecy of scripture? If not, here's a hint—remember Ahimaaz's stride. This passage (II Samuel 18:19-32) is thematically connected to the great prophecy of Isaiah 52:7-10 (NKJV)!

How beautiful upon the mountains are *the feet of him who brings good news*, who *proclaims peace*, who *brings glad tidings* of good things, who *proclaims salvation*, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns!” *Your watchmen shall lift up their voices*, with their voices they shall sing together; for they shall see eye to eye when the LORD brings back Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, you waste places of Jerusalem! For the LORD has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem. *The LORD has made bare His holy arm* in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of *the earth shall see the salvation of our God.*

This is such a fascinating thematic connection. In many ways, II Samuel 18:19-32 is a fulfillment of Isaiah 52:7-10! Let's see how many ways these two passages are thematically connected. Here is the Artscroll Tanakh translation of these passages.

¹⁹Ahimaaz son of Zadok said, "I shall run and tell the king the news—that HASHEM has granted him justice from his enemies!" ²⁰But Joab told him, "You should not be the bearer of news today. You can bring news another day; but do not bring news today, for the king's son is dead." ²¹Joab then said to the Cushite, "Go tell the king what you have seen"; and the Cushite prostrated himself to Joab and ran off. ²²Ahimaaz son of Zadok continued to persist, and said to Joab, "Whatever happens—please let me also run after the Cushite." But Joab said, "Why should you run, my son? This news will not provide any [benefit] for you." ²³"Whatever happens—let me run!" So he said to him, "Run." Ahimaaz ran by the route of the plain and overtook the Cushite. ²⁴David was sitting between the two gates [of the city]. The **lookout** went up to the roof of the gate, to the wall; **he raised his eyes and looked**—and behold, a man running alone! ²⁵**The lookout called out** and told the king. The king said, "if he is alone, there is news in his mouth," and he kept drawing closer. ²⁶Then the lookout saw another man running; the lookout called out to the gatekeeper and said, "Behold, [another] man is running alone!" The king said, "This man is also **a herald!**" ²⁷The lookout said, "I recognize **the first one's stride as the stride** of Ahimaaz son of Zadok." And the king said, "He is a good man; he is coming with **good news.**" ²⁸Ahimaaz called out and said to the king, "**Peace!**"... (II Samuel 18:19-28)

⁷How pleasant are the **footsteps** of the **herald** upon the mountains **announcing peace, heralding good tidings (good news), announcing salvation**, saying unto Zion, 'Your God has reigned!' ⁸**The voice of your lookouts, they raise their voice**, they sing glad song in unison; **with their own eyes they will see** that HASHEM returns to Zion. ⁹Burst out, sing glad song in unison, O ruins of Jerusalem, for HASHEM will have comforted His people; He will have redeemed Jerusalem. ¹⁰HASHEM has bared His holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; all ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God (Isaiah 52:7-10)!

- ◆ Isaiah 52:7 uses the phrase, "How pleasant are **the footsteps** of the herald." Thus, there is an emphasis upon the feet of someone bearing news. This is thematically connected to II Samuel 18:27a where David's watchman stated, "I recognize **the first one's stride as the stride** of Ahimaaz son of Zadok." Note how both passages place a special emphasis on the feet.
- ◆ Isaiah 52:7 states, "How pleasant are the footsteps of **the herald** upon the mountains..." This is thematically connected to II Samuel 18:26 where David's lookout stated, "The king said, "This man is also **a herald!**"
- ◆ Isaiah 52:7 states that the herald is heralding **good news**. II Samuel 18:19-32 uses the word *news* four times, two of which involve the phrase **good news**.

- ◆ Isaiah 52:7 states that the herald is *announcing, “Peace!”* In II Samuel 18:28, *Ahimaaz called out, “Peace!”* Notice how the NKJV (as well as most other English translations) translate the Hebrew word שָׁלוֹם (peace) as *all is well*. Once again, we see that they are trying to help us with the translation. However, as I’ve stated before, the translators often obscure thematic connections to other passages when they try to “smooth out the Hebrew.” It is the word *peace* in II Samuel 18:28 that caused me to connect it to the prophecy of Isaiah 52. If I had stayed with the English translations, I may not have seen the connection as readily.⁵⁶
- ◆ Isaiah 52:8 states, “The voice of your *lookouts, they raise their voice...*” This is thematically connected to II Samuel 18:24-25 which involves *King David’s lookout*. Notice how Isaiah 52:8 states that the lookouts *raise their voice*. This verse perfectly describes the actions of David’s lookout in II Samuel 18:25-26 who *called out* concerning the runners as they approached.
- ◆ Lastly, notice how Isaiah 52:8 states that “*with their own eyes they [the lookouts] will see* that HASHEM returns to Zion.” This is thematically connected to II Samuel 18:24 where it states that David’s lookout, “*raised his eyes and looked.*” Although he saw something different than the lookout of Isaiah 52:8, the connection is clear that the lookouts will see something with their eyes.

All of these thematic connections are intentional. It’s not enough to find the thematic connections. We must ask why the connections exist and try to provide a sound answer for their occurrence. I believe these passages are thematically connected so extensively because Adonai eagerly wants us to see that the story in II Samuel 18:19-32 is a thematic fulfillment⁵⁷ of Isaiah