

## DETERMINED TO RUN

Without the modern communication technologies of internet, television, telephone, telegraph, or radio, ancient peoples (especially the wealthy and royalty) often employed fleet-footed persons to transmit messages swiftly. These communication specialists, called runners, were used in areas where roads were impassable or unsafe and other means of transportation were not available. A story about two such runners is found in 2 Samuel, chapter 18. Here, Joab, the commander of King David's army, employs a Cushite runner to go to Jerusalem and take news to David about the defeat and death of his rebellious son, Absalom. Another runner, Ahimaaz, son of Zadok, begs Joab to allow him to run also and take this news to David. It seems that certain men carried only good news and others carried disheartening messages (verse 20).<sup>1</sup>

Because Ahimaaz was a bearer of good tidings, Joab did not permit him to carry this message about the death of Absalom. Determined to carry the news to David, Ahimaaz pleads once more with Joab, "Come what may, let me also run after the Cushite." And Joab replied, "Why will you run, my son, seeing that you will have no reward for the news?" But Ahimaaz said, "Come what may, I will run." So Joab told him, "Run." Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and he outran the Cushite (verses 22-23).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>D. F. Payne comments, "Joab preferred to send a slave as a messenger, rather than Ahimaaz, in case David reacted violently to the news of Absalom's death. Moreover, a dark-skinned Cushite (i.e., Ethiopian) would have been a messenger of ill omen. This passage is superb literature, intensely dramatic, and so patently derives from an eyewitness that some have deduced that Ahimaaz was the author (and thus probably the author of chapters 9-20 also). "1 and 2 Samuel," *The New Bible Commentary*, Third Edition, edited by D. Guthrie and J. A. Motyer (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970), 310.

<sup>2</sup>Scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version (2001).

It is interesting to note the determination of Ahimaaz. As concerning the Christian life, its duties and obligations, we need to have the willpower to say, “Come what may, I will run.” Too often we allow small and unimportant “problems” to hinder us from coming to the great banquet that the Lord has prepared for us (see Luke 14.15-24). But these same “problems” do not affect other obligations. Is our zeal misplaced? We can learn from the determination that Ahimaaz had in his duty and commitment to the King. “Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith” (Hebrews 12.2).