SECOND SAMUEL

Chapter 16

*David and Ziba*

**When David had gone a short distance beyond the summit, there was Ziba, the steward of Mephibosheth, waiting to meet him. He had a string of donkeys saddled and loaded with two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred cakes of raisins, a hundred cakes of figs and a skin of wine. 2 The king asked Ziba, “Why have you brought these?” Ziba answered, “The donkeys are for the king’s household to ride on, the bread and fruit are for the men to eat, and the wine is to refresh those who become exhausted in the desert.” 3 The king then asked, “Where is your master’s grandson?” Ziba said to him, “He is staying in Jerusalem, because he thinks, ‘Today the house of Israel will give me back my grandfather’s kingdom.’ ” 4 Then the king said to Ziba, “All that belonged to Mephibosheth is now yours.” “I humbly bow,” Ziba said. “May I find favor in your eyes, my lord the king.”**

**16:1** *the summit*. Of the Mount of Olives. (TLSB)

*Ziba.* See ch. 9. (CSB)

*Mephibosheth.* See note on 4:4. (CSB)

*a hundred*. An assumed amount. Archaeologists have discovered that ancient writers often did not include exact units of measure. (TLSB)

**16:2** *Ziba answered.* Since David assumed control of Saul’s estate (9:7–10), Ziba, always the opportunist, seeks to profit from the political crisis. (CSB)

**16:3** *your master’s grandson.* Mephibosheth (see 9:3, 9). (CSB)

Upon David’s return to Jerusalem, Mephibosheth denied this accusation (19:24–28). Because he was lame in both legs, it would have been difficult for him to leave Jerusalem. Furthermore, there was no reason to suppose that Absalom would give the kingdom to the household of Saul. By supporting David and bearing false witness against his master, Ziba probably hoped to free himself from Mephibosheth and take possession of his master’s lands. Or, perhaps with pious but misguided zeal, he hoped to serve David’s house instead of Saul’s. David believed Ziba at this time. Cf 19:29. (TLSB)

**16:4** *I pay homage*. Apparently, this reverence was just lip service. (TLSB)

*All that belonged to Mephibosheth is now yours.* Because the revolt was so widespread and loyalties so uncertain, David was quick to assume the worst. (CSB)

**16:1–4** Ziba provides for King David in his need. Yet he does so at his master’s expense. David may be too hasty in handing over Mephibosheth’s inheritance. It is tempting to speak falsely of others to gain personal advantage. Today, we are also too easily led to make quick judgments, especially especially when they agree with our expectations. The Lord, however, looks at the heart and is not fooled. His providence meets all our needs of body and soul, “out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness” in us (SC, First Article, p xxxvi). • Keep us, Lord, from false testimony. Thank You for all Your benefits through Jesus Christ. Amen. (TLSB)

*Shimei Curses David*

**5 As King David approached Bahurim, a man from the same clan as Saul’s family came out from there. His name was Shimei son of Gera, and he cursed as he came out. 6 He pelted David and all the king’s officials with stones, though all the troops and the special guard were on David’s right and left. 7 As he cursed, Shimei said, “Get out, get out, you man of blood, you scoundrel! 8 The Lord has repaid you for all the blood you shed in the household of Saul, in whose place you have reigned. The Lord has handed the kingdom over to your son Absalom. You have come to ruin because you are a man of blood!” 9 Then Abishai son of Zeruiah said to the king, “Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and cut off his head.” 10 But the king said, “What do you and I have in common, you sons of Zeruiah? If he is cursing because the Lord said to him, ‘Curse David,’ who can ask, ‘Why do you do this?’ ” 11 David then said to Abishai and all his officials, “My son, who is of my own flesh, is trying to take my life. How much more, then, this Benjamite! Leave him alone; let him curse, for the Lord has told him to. 12 It may be that the Lord will see my distress and repay me with good for the cursing I am receiving today.” 13 So David and his men continued along the road while Shimei was going along the hillside opposite him, cursing as he went and throwing stones at him and showering him with dirt. 14 The king and all the people with him arrived at their destination exhausted. And there he refreshed himself.**

**16:5** *Bahurim.* On the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives (see note on 3:16). (CSB)

*same clan as Saul’s family.* The clan of Matri (see 1Sa 10:21). (CSB)

*Gera.* His exact relation to Saul is unknown (see note on 1Ki 2:8). (CSB)

*cursed continually*. Contrary to the Law, which forbids the cursing of the ruler (Ex 22:28). (TLSB)

**16:6** *he threw stones*. Symbolizing that David should be stoned for murder (Lv 24:17–21) (TLSB)

*troops and special guard.* The Kerethites, Pelethites and 600 Gittites (see 15:18). (CSB)

*right* … *left*. Bodyguards surrounded David. (TLSB)

**16:7** *scoundrel.* See note on Dt 13:13. (CSB)

**16:8** *blood you shed in the household of Saul.* Shimei may be referring to the executions reported in 21:1–14, but the time of that event is uncertain (see note on 21:1). (CSB)

David was not responsible for the death of Saul or his sons (ch 1; 9:1–13). Shimei, however, may have held him responsible for the bloodshed that ravaged that house. Cf 3:1; 3:26–4:12; 21:1–9. (TLSB)

*your evil is on you* … *man of blood*. Though not accountable for the blood of Saul’s house, David was responsible for the death of Uriah the Hittite. Absalom’s rebellion was part of the Lord’s judgment upon him for that bloodshed (12:7–11). (TLSB)

**16:9** *Abishai.* See note on 1Sa 26:6. (CSB)

*this dead dog.* An expression of absolute contempt (see note on 9:8). (CSB)

Nothing but a nuisance with a foul odor. Similar curse is found in Canaanite literature. (TLSB)

**16:10** *What have I to do with you*. Rhetorical question expresses difference in attitude between David and Abishai. Cf 3:39. (TLSB)

*If … because the Lord said to him, ‘Curse David.’* David leaves open the possibility that God has seen fit to terminate his rule—the verdict is not yet in (see 15:26). For David’s later actions regarding Shimei see 19:18–23; 1Ki 2:8–9. (CSB)

**16:11** *let him curse*. David saw this as a consequence of his sin. Cf 12:9–14; Lm 3:37–39. (TLSB)

*the Lord* *has told him to*. Either God commanded this, similar to how He spoke to the prophets, or He simply allowed this to happen in His providence. Either way, David saw the Lord’s hand in this cursing. Bern: “You ought, after the example of holy David, not so much to be angry with those people who have caused you such great sufferings, although they are your own servants, as to know that you ought to humble yourself under the mighty hand of God” (*SLSB*, pp 85–86). (TLSB)

**16:12** *wrong*. Chem: “It was a sin … a curse that had to be avenged.… Certain sins are at the same time both sins and punishment for sins” (*LTh* 1:198). (TLSB)

**16:13** *on the road*. C 20 mi long, descending c 3,700 ft to the Jordan River. (TLSB)

**16:5–14** David recognizes Shimei’s cursing as the Lord’s justice. He spares Shimei from death, accepts the divine judgment, and entrusts himself to God’s mercy in faith. The curses of God’s Law are the righteous wrath and judgment of the Lord against our sin, for which we “deserve nothing but punishment” (SC, Fifth Petition, p xxxviii). Yet, Christ Jesus has borne the curse and judgment of God in our stead. For His sake, we are spared the punishment we deserve. • Dear Father in heaven, deal with us not according to the severity of Your judgment but according to Your mercy. Amen. (TLSB)

*The Advice of Hushai and Ahithophel*

**15 Meanwhile, Absalom and all the men of Israel came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel was with him. 16 Then Hushai the Arkite, David’s friend, went to Absalom and said to him, “Long live the king! Long live the king!” 17 Absalom asked Hushai, “Is this the love you show your friend? Why didn’t you go with your friend?” 18 Hushai said to Absalom, “No, the one chosen by the Lord, by these people, and by all the men of Israel—his I will be, and I will remain with him. 19 Furthermore, whom should I serve? Should I not serve the son? Just as I served your father, so I will serve you.” 20 Absalom said to Ahithophel, “Give us your advice. What should we do?” 21 Ahithophel answered, “Lie with your father’s concubines whom he left to take care of the palace. Then all Israel will hear that you have made yourself a stench in your father’s nostrils, and the hands of everyone with you will be strengthened.” 22 So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof, and he lay with his father’s concubines in the sight of all Israel. 23 Now in those days the advice Ahithophel gave was like that of one who inquires of God. That was how both David and Absalom regarded all of Ahithophel’s advice.**

**16:15** *Ahithophel.* See note on 15:12. (CSB)

**16:16–19** Hushai was both theologically astute and a brilliant strategist. With one stroke, he affirms his loyalty in relation to the Lord and the people of Israel, thereby providing a compelling explanation for his departure from David and offering what will be taken as flattery of Absalom. But there is a double meaning here—Hushai was actually affirming King David, whom both the Lord and the people of Judah and Israel had anointed. (TLSB)

**16:16** *Hushai the Arkite, David’s friend.* See notes on 15:32, 37. (CSB)

*Long live the king!* Double meaning. While appearing to support Absalom, he really was praying for success for David. (TLSB)

**16:18** *the Lord* *and this people* … *have chosen*. In, with, and under the political process, governing authorities are chosen and appointed by God and have their authority from Him (Rm 13:1–2); they have no authority unless it has been given to them from above (Jn 19:11). Also, Israelite leaders exercised political authority. (TLSB)

**16:19** By offering his service to Absalom, Hushai continued to serve David. (TLSB)

**16:21** *Lie with your father’s concubines.* This would signify Absalom’s assumption of royal power; it would also be a definitive and irreversible declaration of the break between father and son (see notes on 3:7; 12:8; 1Ki 2:22). (CSB)

To fornicate with the royal harem to show he had taken the king’s place. Cf 1Ki 2:13–25; Dt 22:30; 27:20. Although the Lord brought this judgment on David (12:9–11), Absalom was still accountable for his own sins (cf Mt 26:24). (TLSB)

*a stench to your father*. No reconciliation between Absalom and David would be possible. (TLSB)

*strengthened*. Absalom’s bold-faced sin would give his supporters confidence that he had successfully put himself in his father’s place. (TLSB)

**16:22** *he lay with his father’s concubines.* A fulfillment of Nathan’s prophecy (12:11–12). For additional significance see note on v. 21. (CSB)

**16:15–23** David’s sin is repaid in kind. The evil adultery he committed with Bathsheba is punished by his son’s adultery with his harem. Sadly, some sins lead to more sins and involve other people in a web of evil. God will not let this go unpunished (Gal 6:7). Yet, God is ever working to save us from our sin. For our sake, the Lord Himself suffered the abandonment and betrayal of His friends and the public humiliation of the cross so we would be justified by His grace. • Lord Jesus, friend of sinners, ever faithful in the face of our unfaithfulness, do not hold our sins against us, but save us from our foolishness. Amen. (TLSB)