

# SECOND SAMUEL

## Chapter 16

### *David and Ziba*

When David had passed a little beyond the summit, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of donkeys saddled, bearing two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred bunches of raisins, a hundred of summer fruits, and a skin of wine. 2 And the king said to Ziba, “Why have you brought these?” Ziba answered, “The donkeys are for the king's household to ride on, the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat, and the wine for those who faint in the wilderness to drink.” 3 And the king said, “And where is your master's son?” Ziba said to the king, “Behold, he remains in Jerusalem, for he said, ‘Today the house of Israel will give me back the kingdom of my father.’” 4 Then the king said to Ziba, “Behold, all that belonged to Mephibosheth is now yours.” And Ziba said, “I pay homage; let me ever find favor in your sight, my lord the king.”

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

*Ziba.* See ch. 9. (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 son.* 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 When King David came to Bahurim, there came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera, and as he came he cursed continually. 6 And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David, and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left. 7 And Shimei said as he cursed, "Get out, get out, you man of blood, you worthless man! 8 The LORD has avenged on you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned, and the LORD has given the kingdom into the hand of your son Absalom. See, your evil is on you, for you are a man of blood." 9 Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and take off his head." 10 But the king said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? If he is cursing because the LORD has said to him, 'Curse David,' who then shall say, 'Why have you done so?'" 11 And David said to Abishai and to all his servants, "Behold, my own son seeks my life; how much more now may this Benjaminite! Leave him alone, and let him curse, for the LORD has told him to. 12 It may be that the LORD will look on the wrong done to me, and that the LORD will repay me with good for his cursing today." 13 So David and his men went on the road, while Shimei went along on the hillside opposite him and cursed as he went and threw stones at him and flung dust. 14 And the king, and all the people who were with him, arrived weary at the Jordan. And there he refreshed himself.

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

*house of Saul*. The clan of Matri (see 1Sa 10:21). (CSB)

*Gera*. His exact relation to Saul is unknown. (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)

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

**16:8** *blood of the household of Saul*. Shimei may be referring to the executions reported in 21:1–14, but the time of that event is uncertain. (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** *this dead dog*. An expression of absolute contempt. (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)

*the LORD has 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)

#### *Absalom Enters Jerusalem*

**15** Now Absalom and all the people, the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him. **16** And when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, came to Absalom, Hushai said to Absalom, “Long live the king! Long live the king!” **17** And Absalom said to Hushai, “Is this your loyalty to your friend? Why did you not go with your friend?” **18** And Hushai said to Absalom, “No, for whom the LORD and this people and all the men of Israel have chosen, his I will be, and with him I will remain. **19** And again, whom should I serve? Should it not be his son? As I have served your father, so I will serve you.” **20** Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, “Give your counsel. What shall we do?” **21** Ahithophel said to Absalom, “Go in to your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house, and all Israel will hear that you have made yourself a stench to your father, and the hands of all who are with you will be strengthened.” **22** So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof. And Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel. **23** Now in those days the counsel that Ahithophel gave was as if one consulted the word of God; so was all the counsel of Ahithophel esteemed, both by David and by Absalom.

**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** *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** *go into 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. (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** *went in to 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)