

STUDIES IN SAMUEL

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 16

- Vv. 1-14 *The people divided.* David had many fast friends who supported his cause. He also found that division came into such houses as that of Mephibosheth. Ziba came to David saying that Mephibosheth had stayed behind hoping that the people would champion his claim for the throne. Ziba himself wanted to support David. On the road out of Jerusalem David was cursed by a man named Shimei who called David "a bloody man" (v. 8). This man was supporting the house of Saul as the regal family.
- Vv. 15-23 *Absalom ruling in Jerusalem.* Absalom took over all the reins of government. He claimed David's concubines as his own household and showed to all of Israel that the break between him and his father was complete and final. His faithful counselor in this conspiracy was Ahithophel.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. "*The Lord will look on mine affliction*" (v. 12). This was David's belief. He trusted that it would be so that the Lord would see what was happening to him and would requite him good for the cursing which he was receiving at the hands of some of his people. It is enough for the Christian to trust God to heal his hurts.
2. *There is a true oracle of God.* Absalom's people followed Ahithophel as if he were God's true spokesman. His counsel was good over all, but it was not the counsel of God. Hushai was thwarting a man who was usurping the throne.

SECOND SAMUEL

3. *False prophets arise in every age and multitudes follow them as if they were the oracle of God. Only one could say, "I am the way, the truth and the light" (John 14:6).*

2. The Role of Absalom in Jerusalem, 16:1-23.

The People Divided. 16:1-14

And when David was a little past the top of the hill, behold, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred loaves of bread, and a hundred bunches of raisins, and a hundred summer fruits, and a bottle of wine.

2 And the king said unto Ziba, What meanest thou by these? And Ziba said, The asses *be* for the king's household to ride on; and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat; and the wine, that such as be faint in the wilderness may drink.

3 And the king said, And where *is* thy master's son? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem: for he said, Today shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father.

4 Then said the king to Ziba, Behold, thine *are* all that *pertained* unto Mephibosheth. And Ziba said, I humbly beseech thee *that* I may find grace in thy sight, my lord, O king.

5 And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name *was* Shimei, the son of Gera: he came forth, and cursed still as he came.

6 And he cast 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 thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial:

8 The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, behold, thou *art taken* in thy mischief, because thou *art* a bloody man.

9 Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head.

10 And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?

11 And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now *may this* Benjamite *do it*? let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him.

12 It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day.

13 And as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along on the hill's side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust.

14 And the king, and all the people, that *were* with him, came weary, and refreshed themselves there.

1. *Why did Ziba come to David?* 16:1

Ziba came to bring provisions for David and his men. He also gave a report on Mephibosheth. Ziba may have misrepresented Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth later came before David in the same submissive manner he manifested when David first befriended him (II Samuel 19:24). On the other hand, Mephibosheth may have felt that he could step into the breach between David and Absalom and usurp the throne in the name of his father Saul, Israel's first king. His tribe had been honored by having Israel's

first king selected from her ranks. Abner had championed their claim by putting Ishbosheth on the throne in Mahan-ain. Sheba led a revolt of Benjaminites against David later (II Samuel 20:1), indicating there was some opposition to David and Judah. If this feeling were strong enough, Mephibosheth may have had some hope of becoming a king.

2. *What reward did David give to Ziba? 16:4*

Since David was convinced that Mephibosheth was turning against him, he gave everything that belonged to Mephibosheth to Ziba. Ziba was grateful for this, and asked that he might find favor in David's sight. What Ziba brought was a substantial gift, inasmuch as there were 200 loaves of bread, 100 bunches of raisins, 100 bunches of summer fruits, and wine for such as might become faint in the wilderness. He also provided a couple of asses on which David might ride. David rewarded Ziba at this time, but later he was not sure that he had told him the truth. He divided Mephibosheth's inheritance between him and Ziba at that time (II Samuel 19:29).

3. *Where was Bahurim? 16:5*

Bahurim was a spot near the road which ran from Jerusalem to Jericho. Ruins in the *Wady Ruwaby* have been identified as this spot. The name signifies "a young man's village." Shimei was a native of this town which indicated that it belonged to the tribe of Benjamin. His father was named Gera, a name that was quite common in Benjamin, and probably stemmed from the root "ger" which means, "a sojourner." Being of this background Shimei was a champion of the house of Saul and happy to see any kind of misfortune come to David, since he viewed him as one who had usurped Saul's throne.

4. *What epithet did he hurl at David? 16:7*

Shimei called David a bloody man and a man of Belial. The latter term was a common epithet used to describe a

shameful and worthless fellow. It was the equivalent of calling him a son of Satan. His hatred for David was deep.

5. *What caused Shimei's hatred for David? 16:8*

Shimei blamed David for the demise of the house of Saul. Such a misconstruing of the facts demonstrates why David was so careful to prevent his being linked directly in any way to the death of Saul. Even though David had slain the Amalekite who brought him word of Saul's death, and killed the two assassins of Ish-bosheth, some of the people still thought that David was responsible for the fall of the house of Saul. Shimei viewed David as reigning where a son of Saul ought to be reigning. Shimei believed that God had brought a just penalty on David, and delivered the kingdom into the hands of Absalom, his son, as a punishment for David's having taken over the throne from Saul. In other words, Shimei was saying that it was good enough for David that he was driven out from Jerusalem.

6. *What was Abishai's proposal? 16:9*

Abishai called Shimei a "dead dog." He thought it terrible that he was cursing his king. He proposed to go over and behead the man. Such a proposal was typical of Abishai's spirit. It was Abishai who had suggested killing Saul as he lay sleeping as he and David slipped into his camp (I Samuel 26:8). Abishai had also been involved in killing Abner at Hebron (II Samuel 3:30).

7. *Why did David stop Abishai? 16:10*

Once again, David said that the sons of Zeruah were too hard for him. This is the same thing he had said when Joab and Abishai had killed Abner (II Samuel 3:39). David felt that Joab and Abishai, the sons of Zeruah, David's sister, were too anxious to put people to death. He stopped them from killing Shimei because he felt that God had a hand in the situation. David said that Absalom his own son, had turned against him, and he was not surprised that a man from the tribe of Benjamin would

curse him. David believed that if injustices were being done to him in such matters as Shimei's cursing, then God would see that justice was done. He believed that God would repay him with good things for all the evil things which were befalling him.

8. *Why did Shimei throw dust on David? 16:13*

Shimei was in a position above David, as the trail wound along the descent down into the Jordan valley. He threw stones at David with some expectation of injuring him, but the main emphasis of his actions was not to inflict bodily injury, as much as to heap imprecations and shame on David. His dusting him with dust could hardly injure him, but it would be a nuisance and a sign of contempt on the part of Shimei. No mention is made of the place where they stopped, but it is conjectured by many that they stopped in the edge of the Jordan valley. One of the Greek manuscripts has the phrase, "along the Jordan."

Absalom Ruling in Jerusalem. 16:15-23

15 And Absalom, and all the people the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him.

16 And it came to pass, when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, was come unto Absalom, that Hushai said unto Absalom, God save the king, God save the king.

17 And Absalom said to Hushai, *Is this thy kindness to thy friend? why wentest thou not with thy friend?*

18 And Hushai said unto Absalom, Nay; but whom the Lord, and this people, and all the men of Israel, choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide.

19 And again, whom should I serve? *should* I not *serve* in the presence of his son? as I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence.

20 Then said Absalom to Ahithophel, Give counsel among you what we shall do.

21 And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the

house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father: then shall the hands of all that *are* with thee be strong.

22 So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house; and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.

23 And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counseled in those days *was* as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God: so *was* all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom.

9. *How was Hushai able to dissuade Absalom? 16:15*

Hushai spoke in an ambiguous, flattering manner. He flattered Absalom even when he told the truth. It was a wise thing to do under the circumstances. Such counsel aimed at making an impossible breach between Ahithophel and Absalom and between Absalom and David. Hushai showed that he was in earnest. His speech indicates that he must have been very convincing.

10. *What was Ahithophel's advice? 16:20*

Ahithophel advised Absalom to make a complete break with his father. A sign of this was Absalom's spreading a tent on the roof of the palace, and going into his father's concubines in the open view of the men of Israel. Such action would signify Absalom was taking over everything that belonged to his father the king. His action would be abhorred by David, his father, and it would encourage those who were backing him, because they would believe that he would stop at nothing to make the rebellion complete.

11. *Why was Ahithophel's counsel like an oracle of God? 16:23*

As Absalom followed the advice of Ahithophel his cause prospered; Joshua had gone to the high priest, Eleazar, for advice. David had inquired concerning the will of God from Abiathar when he came to him in the wilder-

SECOND SAMUEL

ness (I Samuel 23:6). These men were God's appointed counselors for the kings, and leaders of Israel. Ahithophel stood in this position with Absalom. Since Ahithophel was very deeply involved in the rebellion, he did his best to give right advice and counsel.

CHAPTER 16 IN REVIEW

1. Who brought asses to David? _____
2. Whose servant was he? _____
3. Why did he say his master stayed behind? _____
4. Who cursed David as he left Jerusalem? _____
5. Who proposed beheading the man? _____
6. Did David accept the proposal? _____
7. Who cried "God save the king" to Absalom? _____
8. Who proposed that Absalom take David's concubines? _____
9. What kind of shelter was erected for the concubines? _____
10. Where was the shelter erected? _____