

2Samuel 16:1 ¶ 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 an hundred bunches of raisins, and an hundred of summer fruits, and a bottle of wine.

2Samuel 16:2 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.

2Samuel 16:3 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, To day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father.

2Samuel 16:4 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.

The narrative continues as David and his entourage cross the top of the Mount of Olives and begin their descent on the other side on their way to the wilderness. At this point Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, met David. Ziba was actually Saul's servant that now served Saul's grandson. He had brought with him a couple of asses that were saddled and were carrying 200 loaves of bread, 100 bunches of raisins, 100 summer fruits and a bottle of wine. JFB notes that this "bottle" of wine was "a large goatskin vessel. Its size made the supply of wine proportioned to the rest of his present."

King David asked Ziba why he had come. Ziba told him that the asses were for the king's family to ride on, the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat, and the wine to revive those that became faint on the journey to the wilderness.

David then asked him where Mephibosheth was. Ziba told him that he had stayed in Jerusalem thinking that the people of Israel might choose to make him their king. David's response to this news was to give him all that now belonged to Mephibosheth, and Ziba gratefully expressed his desire to always be in David's favor.

We will find out in chapter 19 that Ziba was not a trustworthy servant; as with most, he is watching out for self.

I liked Clarke's observation: "This conduct of David was very rash; he spoiled an honorable man to reward a villain, not giving himself time to look into the circumstances of the case. But David was in heavy afflictions, and these sometimes make even a wise man mad. Nothing should be done rashly; he who is in the habit of obeying the first impulse of his passions or feelings, will seldom do a right action, and never keep a clear conscience."

I am reminded of a quote heard in more recent times about not wasting a good crisis. Ziba was no different than the politicians of our day; he was ready to use this crisis in David's life to his own benefit. At least he wasn't the one creating the crisis in the first place. I believe that there are those in high places of government today that do just that.

2Samuel 16:5 ¶ 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.

2Samuel 16:6 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.

2Samuel 16:7 And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial:

2Samuel 16:8 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.

Along the way David and his entourage came to Bahurim, a town on the north side of the road leading from Jerusalem to Jericho according to Eerdmans Dictionary. It seems that Shimei, son of Gera, of the house of Saul lived in that area and came out to curse David and throw stones at him and his servants. He was pretty brazen to do so in light of the mighty men surrounding David.

Shimei cursed David as a man with much blood on his hands and a wicked, ungodly man. He declared that it was the LORD's judgment to take the kingdom from David and give it to his son since he had taken the kingdom from Saul's family. He basically said that David was reaping what he had sowed.

It seems that there were still some of the tribe of Benjamin that resented the fact that the LORD had given the kingdom to David.

I liked David Guzik's observation regarding Shimei's reasoning: "A quick look at the outward appearance of things seemed to confirm Shimei's analysis, but Shimei was wrong. None of this came upon David because of what he did to Saul or Saul's family.

- Shimei was wrong because David actually treated Saul and his family with great love and graciousness.
- Shimei was wrong because David was not a bloodthirsty man. It is true that he was a man of war, but not a bloodthirsty man.
- Shimei was wrong because David did not bring Saul and his family to ruin - Saul himself brought the family to ruin."

2Samuel 16:9 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.

2Samuel 16:10 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?

2Samuel 16:11 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.

2Samuel 16:12 It may be that the LORD will look on mine affliction, and that the LORD will requite me good for his cursing this day.

Abishai, son of Zeruah, David's nephew asked David's permission to kill Shimei for showing the king such disrespect. Abishai and his brother Joab were always ready to act rashly and were hard for David to control. David explained that if it was the LORD that had put it into Shimei's heart to curse David, they had no right to act against him. He went on to explain that Absalom, his own son, desired to kill him; so why marvel that this man cursed him. David still held out hope that he would find favor with God.

I liked the ESV translation of verse 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."*

I think David's response was tempered by the shame and memory of his past sins before the LORD, especially concerning Uriah and Bathsheba.

Again I liked the observation made by Clarke: "Often the Scripture attributes to God what he only permits to be done; or what in the course of his providence he does not hinder. David, however, considers all this as being permitted of God for his chastisement and humiliation."

2Samuel 16:13 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.

Since he had incurred no reaction from David's men, Shimei was emboldened to follow the entourage for a while and continue his tirade against David as they passed by his home.

2Samuel 16:14 And the king, and all the people that *were* with him, came weary, and refreshed themselves there.

"There" seems to be referencing the town of Bahurim. It is noted that the king and his entourage refreshed themselves there before continuing their journey.

2Samuel 16:15 ¶ And Absalom, and all the people the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him.

2Samuel 16:16 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.

2Samuel 16:17 And Absalom said to Hushai, *Is this thy kindness to thy friend? why wentest thou not with thy friend?*

2Samuel 16:18 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.

2Samuel 16:19 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.

Meanwhile, Absalom and the men of Israel following him came to Jerusalem accompanied by the traitorous Ahithophel. Hushai the Archite, David's friend, greeted Absalom with a statement implying his loyalty—"God save the king." Notice that Hushai's statement was to save "the king," not Absalom.

Absalom was a bit suspicious and asked why Hushai had not gone with "his friend." Hushai responded by declaring his allegiance to the one whom the LORD, the people and the men of Israel chose as king. As David had instructed him, he assured Absalom that he would serve him as faithfully as he had served his father.

2Samuel 16:20 Then said Absalom to Ahithophel, Give counsel among you what we shall do.

2Samuel 16:21 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.

2Samuel 16:22 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.

Absalom must have decided to believe Hushai and turned to Ahithophel for advice as to what to do next. Ahithophel told him to publicly take his father's concubines as his own. This would provide strong testimony to the people that Absalom had completely broken fellowship with his father and would serve to strengthen his position as king.

According to Ahithophel's advice, a tent was erected on the roof of the palace. The people could then witness the fact that Absalom had taken his father's concubines as his own.

I liked two of Guzik's comments on this section:

- "This shows the power of bitterness. Ahithophel was willing to see these women abused, Absalom grievously sin, and the kingdom of Israel suffer greatly - all simply to satisfy his bitter longing for revenge.
- This disgraceful incident also shows that God kept His promise to David: *I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of the sun. For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun* (2 Samuel 12:11-12)."

2Samuel 16:23 And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counselled in those days, was as if a man had enquired at the oracle of God: so was all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom.

The counsel of Ahithophel was so respected that it was as if God had told him what to say. This was true of his service with both David and Absalom. We know, however, that though God allowed it and even used it as a consequence of

David's sin; He would never have given such counsel through Ahithophel. Adultery was and is not acceptable in the eyes of the LORD. Though God often uses evil men to accomplish His judgment, He still holds them accountable for the sin in their hearts that prompt such actions. He never causes a person to go against his own will.

It is one of the most amazing truths about our God that He knows all before it ever comes to pass and works His will accordingly.

*Isaiah 46:9–10 “Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, **Declaring** the end from the beginning, **and from ancient times the things that are not yet done**, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:”*

*Isaiah 48:1–7 “Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the LORD, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness. For they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel; The LORD of hosts is his name. **I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed them; I did them suddenly, and they came to pass. Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass; I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee: lest thou shouldst say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them. Thou hast heard, see all this; and will not ye declare it? I have shewed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them. They are created now, and not from the beginning; even before the day when thou heardest them not; lest thou shouldst say, Behold, I knew them.**”*