

A Study of 2 Samuel 16

I. Outline.

1. Ziba the steward of Saul and family, waited for David and had gifts for him—when asked Ziba told David Mephibosheth stayed in Jerusalem to have the kingdom restored to himself—David believes Ziba’s report and gives to him Mephibosheth’s property (1-4; cf., 2 Sam 19.24-30).
2. Shimei curses David (5-8).
3. Abishai is ready to defend David’s honor by killing Shimei, but David prefers to allow him to speak and thinks the Lord may be sending the message through Shimei (9-14).
4. Hushai, David’s friend, tells Absalom in Jerusalem he will serve him (15-19).
5. Ahithophel, David’s former counsellor, gives his first advice to Absalom and the design of it—if followed—is to show all that there will be no reconciliation between David and Absalom and it would fulfill Nathan’s prophecy (20-23; cf., 12.11). Ahithophel’s counsel is described in verse 23.

II. Summary.

So this chapter tells us more about David’s escape out of Jerusalem and Absalom’s entry into Jerusalem. There is so much on David’s mind as he hurries out of the city that he does not have time to question whether the statements made by Ziba about Mephibosheth are truthful. He makes a rash decision to give to Ziba Mephibosheth’s property, perhaps to repay him for the gifts he brought for David’s escape. David has been humbled by the judgment of God upon him for his sins and he thinks that all of the present disaster, including being cursed by Shimei, could possibly be from the Lord (v. 10). As David had requested, Hushai presents himself to Absalom pretending to change his loyalty to the new ruler. Ahithophel advises Absalom to lie with David’s concubines to signal the irreconcilable differences between himself and his father. Ahithophel believes that this will cause more people to recognize the reality of the situation and will make Absalom’s rule more complete among the people. The fact that David saw the need to send Hushai to cause the counsel of Ahithophel to become foolishness is better understood when we read verse 23.

III. Chronology/Lists/Links.

BIBLE PERIOD: The Period of the United Kingdom.

*If you are not familiar with the **15 Bible Periods**, please click here: <https://tinyurl.com/wl79hp7>*

You can read an excellent article on Chronology from Wayne Jackson here:

<https://tinyurl.com/wylvljh>

LISTS:

Characters in the chapter:

- **Ziba...** A servant of Saul (2 Sa. 9:2) who introduced Mephibosheth to David when he desired to honour Jonathan’s memory. When Mephibosheth was given a place at court, Ziba was appointed steward of Saul’s estates bestowed on Mephibosheth (2 Sa. 9). When David was driven out by Absalom’s rebellion Ziba brought him food and also falsely accused Mephibosheth of deserting the king. David accepted his story, did not ascertain the other side, and gave the property to Ziba (2 Sa. 16:1–4). On David’s return, Ziba hastened to meet

him (2 Sa. 19:7), but later his treachery was revealed. David, in a difficult position, divided the property between them, and Mephibosheth was seemingly content (2 Sa. 19:24–30)¹.

- **Shimei...** man who met David at Bahurim as he was fleeing from Absalom, and in bitter and cowardly fashion cursed and attacked the hard-pressed king. Apparently David's flight to the Jordan led through a narrow ravine, on one side of which or on the ridge above, stood Shimei in safety as he cast stones at David and his men, cursing as he threw (16.5-6). His hatred of David who had displaced his royal kinsman Saul had smoldered long in his mean heart; and now the flame bursts out, as the aged and apparently helpless king flees before his own son. Shimei seizes the long-coveted opportunity to pour out the acid hate of his heart. But when David's faithful companions would cross the ravine to make quick work of Shimea, the noble king forbade them with these remarkable words: 2 Samuel 16:11-12 *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. —ISBE.*
- **Abishai...** Son of Zeruah, David's sister, and one of the three famous brothers, of whom Joab and Asahel were the other two (2Sa 2:18). He was chief of the second group of three among David's "mighty men" (2Sa 23:18). He first appears with David, who was in the Wilderness of Ziph, to escape Saul. When David called for a volunteer to go down into Saul's camp by night, Abishai responded, and counseled the killing of Saul when they came upon the sleeping king (1Sa 26:6-9). In the skirmish between the men of Ishbosheth and the men of David at Gibeon, in which Asahel was killed by Abner, Abishai was present (2Sa 2:18, 2Sa 2:24). He was with and aided Joab in the cruel and indefensible murder of Abner, in revenge for their brother Asahel (2Sa 3:30). In David's campaign against the allied Ammonites and Syrians, Abishai led the attack upon the Ammonites, while Joab met the Syrians; the battle was a great victory for Israel (2Sa 10:10-14). He was always faithful to David, and remained with him, as he fled from Absalom. When Shimei, of the house of Saul, cursed the fleeing king, Abishai characteristically wished to kill him at once (2Sa 16:8, 2Sa 16:9); and when the king returned victorious Abishai advised the rejection of Shimei's penitence, and his immediate execution (2Sa 19:21). —ISBE.

LINKS: *These links are to the writings of men and not to inspired Scripture, thus care and caution in weighing the conclusions is always wise. Some might not be online links, but listing of material commonly available in books and publications.*

- "Does Mephibosheth Betray David?," by Rob Alspaugh: <https://tinyurl.com/rhw9b4a>
- Burton Coffman on 2 Samuel 16: <https://tinyurl.com/uubtr87>
- David Guzik on 2 Samuel 16: <https://tinyurl.com/yxxnd7ld>
- Adam Clarke on 2 Samuel 16: <https://tinyurl.com/qqvlulj>

¹ J. G. G. Norman, "[Ziba](#)," ed. D. R. W. Wood et al., *New Bible Dictionary* (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 1270.

IV. Some thoughts on the text.

1. **Ziba the steward of Saul and family, waited for David and had gifts for him—when asked Ziba told David Mephibosheth stayed in Jerusalem to have the kingdom restored to himself—David believes Ziba’s report and gives to him Mephibosheth’s property (1-4; cf., 2 Sam 19.24-30).** It seems fairly obvious that Ziba has concocted a plan and perhaps even is counting on David doing the very thing he does do in response to the kindness. When we read and study 19.24-30, it seems Mephibosheth’s account makes better sense and is likely the truth of the matter regarding why Mephibosheth was not with Ziba. David may have been wiser to delay the reward to Ziba until he had time to investigate more carefully, but David’s mind was cluttered with the immediate disaster of Absalom claiming the throne and coming to Jerusalem. Maybe even for great men it is challenging to think clearly in such settings.
2. **Shimei curses David (5-8).** Verse 6 lets us know that David was in no real danger from Shimei. His mighty men were at his side and quite capable of removing Shimei from being any kind of threat at all to the king. However, David is taking in all of these happenings as a possible judgment from God because of his sins of chapter 11. David as a younger man was brave enough to fight against the giant, Goliath; yet, he is not stupid enough to fight against God. COME OUT (v. 7)—Or rather, GO OUT, as the Hebrew properly means. The idea is of being gone from the kingdom [Benson]. Shimei was totally WRONG in the charges he is hurling at David in verse 8. Saul brought on his own punishment from God. David was a warrior, but he had treated Saul’s family well, partly due to the respect he had for God’s anointed, and partly because of the covenant he had made with Jonathan.
3. **Abishai is ready to defend David’s honor by killing Shimei, but David prefers to allow him to speak and things the Lord may be sending the message through Shimei (9-14).** David’s main thoughts on this humbling trip out of Jerusalem must have only lightly been related to what he was hearing from Shimei. His thoughts, I feel confident, were centered on his son Absalom and the mistake he is making and the end that might come from the rebellion he has begun. Also, he is likely wondering if the Lord is eventually going to bless him to be able to return to Jerusalem as king.
4. **Hushai, David’s friend, tells Absalom in Jerusalem he will serve him (15-19).** The friends of David were a great blessing to him all of his life—he had the kinds of friends who would risk their own lives to honor the least significant request David might make. He had to have made powerful impressions for good on the minds of many people. Here, one of them, Hushai is endangering his own life pretty much as a spy for David. He will seek to give the kind of advice that sounds real and genuine and wise, but that will end up in disaster for Absalom. He will send messages to David as he finds out how Absalom plans to attack.
5. **Ahithophel, David’s former counsellor, gives his first advice to Absalom and the design of it—if followed—is to show all that there will be no reconciliation between David and Absalom and it would fulfill Nathan’s prophecy (20-23; cf., 12.11). Ahithophel’s counsel is described in verse 23.** Absalom had been able to gain control of the throne and the city of Jerusalem with no bloodshed. His thoughts now will be toward strengthening himself in the position he has worked so hard to attain. Ahithophel had served David well and Absalom is wise to seed advice from him. Ahithophel’s wisdom was widely known in Israel and Absalom knows that.

V. Lessons & Applications.

1. Sometimes reading ahead in Scripture will be helpful in interpreting the Bible text. When David is allowed to return to Jerusalem, he finds Mephibosheth. 2 Samuel 19:24-30 *And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace. (25) And it came to pass, when he was come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto him, Wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth? (26) And he answered, My lord, O king, my servant deceived me: for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king; because thy servant is lame. (27) And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but my lord the king is as an angel of God: do therefore what is good in thine eyes. (28) For all of my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king: yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table. What right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the king? (29) And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land. (30) And Mephibosheth said unto the king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house.* The description here of Mephibosheth does not fit the words David had been told earlier by Ziba.
2. From what Shimei cried out to David, it is obvious that he was unaware of the ways that David had protected and cared for the family of Saul. He had an entirely inaccurate view of who David was and how he had treated Saul. It is so easy to judge others and since no man has the ability to know the thoughts of another person, it often leads to false ideas and conclusions. And yet, strong emotions and feelings are stirred even in the absence of the true picture. How dangerous it is to seek to define the thoughts of others!
3. K&D point out the meaning of WHAT HAVE I TO DO WITH YOU of verse 10. It signifies that **a person did not wish to have anything in common with the feelings and views of another** (cf., 1 Kings 17.18; Joshua 22.24). David was speaking of his nephews when he made the statement. He separated himself from the idea of having no understanding at all of the rage of Shimei. For one thing David thought they could be words directed TO HIM from God; for another, evidently he grieved along with Shimei because Jonathan was his best friend. There could be times when we are in the company of someone whose words are so radically different from our own thoughts that we might remember David's expression here.
4. David thought of God Almighty as a God who rewards the faithful (v. 12). That is a true and accurate conception of the God of the Bible, the God of the Universe. How sad it is that so many people have no accurate way of thinking about our God! That idea ought to motivate a Christian to study more and more about what God reveals about Himself in Scripture, and to speak more and more about what he learns to others!
5. It is interesting that the depraved and prideful mind of Absalom could only envision the statement LONG LIVE THE KING uttered by Hushai to be speaking of himself (v. 17); actually, in reality Hushai was helping to carry out the will of the Lord to have Absalom defeated and David, his friend, to come back to the throne.

VI. Questions.

True or False

- 01. ____ David had an Archite as a friend.
- 02. ____ Hushai indicated he would serve Absalom the same way he had served David.
- 03. ____ Abishai was willing to behead someone throwing stones.
- 04. ____ As David fled Jerusalem, he had no mighty men to fight with/for him.
- 05. ____ Mephibosheth left Jerusalem with David.

I Found it in Verse(s)

- 06. ____ Someone cast dust.
- 07. ____ Absalom instructed to do something so people would know he was ABHORED of his father.
- 08. ____ Passing the top of the hill.
- 09. ____ David is called a bloody man.
- 10. ____ Absalom asks a question about kindness.

Short Answer

- 11. Two questions David asks Ziba.

- 12. Between Hushai and Ahithophel, which gave advice to Absalom first?

- 13. What did David think the Lord might do to/for him as a result of Shimei’s cursing?

- 14. The instruction Shimei shouted twice as he cursed David.

- 15. Who came with Absalom to Jerusalem?

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: _____

Answers will be found on next week’s handout

ANSWERS to 2 Samuel 15 Questions... **01**—False, 7; **02**—True, 10; **03**—False, 17; **04**—False, 25; **05**—True, 37; **06**—34-37; **07**—28; **08**—18; **09**—14; **10**—6; **11**—beside the way of the gate, 2; **12**—concubines, 16; **13**—Cherethites, Pelethites, Gittites, 18; **14**—Art not thou a seer?, 27; **15**—Jerusalem, 37.

VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle. The words may be backwards, diagonal, upside down, etc. See if you can find them all. The more you use the words of the Bible, the greater blessed you will be! You might be surprised at how much this little exercise will help you retain important truths. THANK YOU for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. -DRL 5.82Wx6.32H

G H I T F H S L G W H E N
 Z K P G F T C O M E N C C
 I R A W L H A N D N K P U
 B F R U I T M F A T H E R
 A D H O U S E D H P S O S
 B H D H U S H A I I E P E
 S I T K W U H V T P R L R
 A S H I M E I I H R V E V
 L R E N S W L D O E A B E
 O A N G A D L K P S N E H
 M E P H I B O S H E T H W
 A L O R D F R I E N D O K
 A M C O U N S E L C F L B
 U T H I H U N D R E D D W

ABSALOM	AHITHOPHEL	BEHOLD	CAME	COME
COUNSEL	CURSE	DAVID	FATHER	FRIEND
FRUIT	HAND	HILL	HOUSE	HUNDRED
HUSHAI	ISRAEL	KING	LORD	MEPHIBOSHETH
PEOPLE	PRESENCE	SAID	SERVANT	SERVE
SHIMEI	THEN	WENT	WHEN	ZIBA

VIII. Crossword Puzzle.

2 Samuel 16 (KJV): From Your Friends at Maple Hill Church of Christ
 3960 Scale RD, Benton, KY 42025 <http://maplehillchurchofchrist.blog>

<u>ACROSS</u>	<u>DOWN</u>
04) Describes the king and his people leaving Jerusalem.	01) Certain advice is like inquiring at the ____ of God.
07) Hushai would do this with Absalom.	02) The son of Gera.
08) David was called a man of ____.	03) Word describes Shimei's tribe.
10) Ziba was his servant.	05) Shimei was throwing them.
11) Adverb describing the beseeching Ziba was doing.	06) Mother of Abishai.
12) Hushai argued he should serve in the ____ of David's son.	09) Advisor to both David and Absalom.
13) R-Word alledgedly used by Mephibosheth explaining his absence.	10) Shimei said David was taken in it.