

2 Samuel 16
March 10, 2024

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: How would you describe today's culture of respect toward leadership? [Let people engage]

Transition: David experienced disrespect from Absalom and Shimei, one of Saul's relatives. We see Absalom who has betrayed David to get the throne. And we Shimei, who spent his time cursing David as he and he entourage were fleeing Jerusalem. Shimei kept throwing stones and dirt at David. We see Ziba showing disrespect toward David by misrepresenting Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, when David asks about him. We already saw David's counselor, Ahithophel, betray David by joining Absalom. So we are basically reading a continuing story about the dynamics of power, treachery, and loyalty.

But in spite of this very difficult situation, it's HOW David responded to it that is quite admirable. I think we can learn from him! Let's read the text.

BOOK:

David and Ziba

16 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."

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.

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.

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: What did you most like about this passage? What resonated with you? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you least like about this passage? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you find in this passage that you didn’t understand? [Let people engage]

Q: What do we learn about Jesus in this passage? [Let people engage]

LOOK:

Today, our Lord Jesus is despised and rejected of men, just as was David during the rebellion. It takes courage for men and women today to remain loyal to the King, but we can be sure that God will reward such loyalty when Jesus returns.

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament (2 Sam 16)*. Victor Books.

B. David's enemies (chap. 16).

Times of rebellion are times of revelation; you see what people really believe and where they stand. Ziba lied to David about Mephibosheth (see 19:24–30) and David was too quick to pass judgment. Shimei was related to Saul's family and openly showed his hatred for David. David's patience under this trial was wonderful; he knew the Lord would avenge him at the right time. Abishai wanted to cut off the man's head (see Luke 9:54 and 1 Peter 2:23), but David stopped him. David was being disgraced not only in the wilderness, but also back in his own palace. For Ahithophel had counseled Absalom to take David's concubines for himself and thus openly break with his father. This was a fulfillment of the prophecy in 12:11–12.

Today, our Lord Jesus is despised and rejected of men, just as was David during the rebellion. It takes courage for men and women today to remain loyal to the King, but we can be sure that God will reward such loyalty when Jesus returns.

Merrill, E. H. (1985). *2 Samuel*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 1, pp. 471-472)* Wheaton, IL: Victor Books

2. ABSALOM'S SOLIDIFICATION OF POWER (CHAP. 16)

David's forced flight from Jerusalem not only put his own kingship in jeopardy, but it also opened the door to further contention for the throne between the dynasties of Saul and David. Absalom was apparently in the process of seizing power in Jerusalem but this by no means implied that he could also gain control over the Northern tribes. In fact the shakeup in David's own family began to revive hope among the Saulites that they might be able to recover the kingdom for themselves.

16:1–4. This is first evident in the reaction of Saul's grandson **Mephibosheth** to David's withdrawal. While **the king** was heading east across the Judean hills, he was met by Mephibosheth's servant **Ziba** who, out of gratitude to David for his past kindness toward him (chap. 9), now provided the fugitive king **donkeys** and provisions for the journey. But **Ziba** also brought **David** the sad news that **Mephibosheth** had turned against the king, hoping that in the midst of the turmoil occasioned by the revolution he might be able to retrieve Saul's old throne (16:3; but cf. 19:24–30). David then stripped from Mephibosheth the generous pension he had given him earlier and bequeathed it all to **Ziba** (cf. 9:7, 13).

16:5–14. David next encountered **Shimei**, another relative of Saul, who greeted the fleeing monarch and his officials at **Bahurim** (east of the Mount of Olives) with curses and physical abuse, pelting them **with stones**. He taunted **David** with the observation that since he was **a man of blood** God was now avenging the death **of Saul** and his family by driving David from power. This was untrue, of course, for David had not raised his hand against Saul, whom he regarded as the anointed of the Lord, but had taken every measure to deal graciously with Saul's survivors. Shimei's real complaint, as is evident from his own admission, was that David sat on the throne of Saul (**Saul, in whose place you have reigned**).

Abishai, David's bodyguard and nephew, begged the king to let him decapitate Shimei (whom Abishai called a **dead dog**, i.e., worthless and despised; cf. 9:8). But **David** forbade him to do so, observing that it might well be that Shimei cursed as an instrument of God Himself. If Absalom, David's own **son**, was **trying to** kill him, why should the cursing of Shimei be of concern? God would someday vindicate, but for now there must be no recompense for Shimei's evil conduct. **Shimei** continued his **cursing**, stone-throwing, and dirt-tossing as David **continued on the road** to his **destination**.

16:15–23. **Meanwhile Absalom** arrived in **Jerusalem** and was immediately met by **Hushai**, a friend of David who was pretending to be loyal to Absalom. His mission as contradictor to the counsel of **Ahithophel**, Absalom's chief adviser, would be implemented later. When **Absalom** asked **Ahithophel** what he should **do**, his adviser told him to **lie with his father's concubines**, an evidence of his succession (cf. 3:6–7), advice which **Absalom** quickly followed. The words of counsel which **Ahithophel** gave were given credence as though they came directly from **God**, so highly regarded was his wisdom. Hushai's assignment would be difficult indeed.

Mathews, K. A. (1998). The Historical Books. In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), Holman Concise Bible Commentary (p. 129). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

David's Anguish in Flight (16:1–23). The dark shadow of Saul again was cast over David as he fled his kingdom. Ziba, Saul's servant and manager of Mephibosheth's estate, maliciously defamed Mephibosheth to better himself (see 19:24–28). David granted the lands of Saul to Ziba. Shimei, a member of Saul's family, cursed David, calling him a "man of blood." This charge probably reflected the enmity many harbored against David. It may refer to David's turning members of Saul's family over to the Gibeonites for execution (chap. 21). Shimei attributed David's pain to the Lord's retribution. David perceived that Shimei's curse, though not altogether just, was part of God's chastening for his sin. David repelled Abishai's ambition to kill Saul's kinsman. David believed that God's vengeance or mercies alone would decide his and Shimei's fates.

Meanwhile, Hushai arrived in Jerusalem to win Absalom's favor. Absalom, not yet ready to trust Hushai, turned to Ahithophel for advice. He counseled Absalom to announce his takeover by the symbolic gesture of publicly sleeping with David's concubines (see 1 Kgs. 2:17–25). Absalom's incestuous act thus fulfilled Nathan's prophecy. The narrator compared the political adeptness of Ahithophel to the word of God revealed to the prophets.

Tatum, S. L. (1972). 2 Samuel. In H. F. Paschall & H. H. Hobbs (Eds.), The Teacher's Bible Commentary (pp. 188-189). Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers.

David Flees; Absalom Enters Jerusalem (2 Sam. 16:1–23)

The passage—As David was leaving Jerusalem, he crossed the brook Kidron and went across the Mount of Olives. A little past the summit he met Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth. He had two asses saddled and some provisions. He claimed to want to help David by providing these things for his journey. He also claimed that Mephibosheth had remained in Jerusalem and hoped to take advantage of the confusion to make himself king and thus reestablish the throne of Saul. David rewarded Ziba by giving him all of the property that belonged to Mephibosheth.

Ziba's story appears to be false. Read 2 Samuel 19:25–27 for Mephibosheth's version of what happened. He gave an understandable explanation and accused Ziba of lying. After David

had heard both stories, not knowing which to believe, he divided the property in dispute equally between the two men.

Shimei, a relative of Saul, followed David along as he fled from Jerusalem and cursed him continually. He threw stones and dirt at him. David's servant, Abishai, wanted to cut off his head for these insults, but David would not consent. He left vengeance to the Lord.

As Absalom entered Jerusalem, he found Hushai there. He could not know whether to trust him or not. He asked where his loyalty lay. Hushai claimed he would be loyal to Absalom, the new king, but we know he was a spy for David.

Ahithophel was Absalom's advisor. He had gone with him to Hebron and returned with him to Jerusalem. He suggested that Absalom take possession of his father's concubines. This would be an open sign that Absalom despised his father and that no one should hesitate to follow him and fear he would compromise with David. The break between father and son was complete. The tent of the concubines was pitched on the roof of the palace and Israel's moral shame was public. David's sin bore still more bitter consequences.

Special points—Absalom followed the advice of Ahithophel in taking possession of David's concubines. Ahithophel was the grandfather of Bathsheba. Could he have been seeking revenge for what David did to her? Absalom was committing the same kind of immorality as that for which he had killed his half-brother, Amnon. Was it from the same rooftop where David's sin began? It may well have been.

The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (2 Samuel 16). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

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