

David's Departure From Jerusalem

2 Samuel 16

Lesson Outline

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A. Absalom's Inquiry: 2 Samuel 16:15-19

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Defeated King

2 Samuel 16:1-4

David Deceived: 2 Samuel 16:1-4

Ziba's Approach

In his retreat David crossed over the top of the hill, then ran into Ziba who was approaching with rations. Ziba was loaded down with 200 loaves of bread, 100 bunches of raisins, 100 summer fruits (apples, apricots, pears, plums, figs etc.), and one bottle of wine. This large surplus belonged to Mephibosheth.

David quickly questioned Ziba's purpose. With his son stealing the throne and his trusted counselor a traitor, David had a right to be suspicious. Ziba offered everything to David and the people. This proved to be a generous gift at an opportune time (Proverbs 18:16). Because of the events that unfolded, the people were hungry. The food provided nourishment as well as encouragement (Philippians 4:19). But all was not as it seemed to be. Ziba appeared liberal in his giving but the items were not his to offer. Like many looking for an advantage, he deceptively gave away that which did not belong to him. As will be seen, his kind demeanor was more about gaining than giving. We are reminded that appearances are often deceiving (John 7:24). It is best to consider more than what is said when making a decision.

Ziba's Allegations

David asked about Mephibosheth, perhaps believing the generous gift came from him. He was told Mephibosheth remained in Jerusalem. Had that been all, David may have believed it was because of his inability to leave. However Ziba explained that Mephibosheth remained in hopes of taking over the kingdom. Here David made two mistakes.

1. *He believed Mephibosheth was a traitor* – thinking the worst of Mephibosheth he took away his estate. It was a rash and poor decision.
2. *He believed Ziba was loyal* – thinking he was a friend he gave him Mephibosheth's estate.

David was deceived (2 Samuel 19:24-30). He accepted Ziba's report without considering Mephibosheth's side of the story. He believed that which was unbelievable. Mephibosheth had never displayed ambition of any kind, had no physical abilities to lead a rebellion, and was without an army or following. David terribly misjudged a friend (Proverbs 17:17). As for Ziba, he was not content being the overseer of the land, he wanted to be owner (Exodus 20:17). His covetous heart cared less whom was king so long as he possessed the estate. Like many ambitious people today, he took advantage of the situation for his personal benefit. As believers we are not to covet the world's riches but seek what the LORD has to offer (Matthew 16:33; 1 Corinthians 12:31).

David Disgraced: 2 Samuel 16:5-14

David Confronted

David arrived in Bahurim, a small village located on the northeast side of the Mount of Olives before reaching the Jordan. Shimei, a relative of Saul, went out in the fields to meet David as he went towards the city. He cursed David, then began to cast stones at him. Angered, he foolishly challenged David to come out from behind his escort.

1. *He called David a bloody man* – implying David was a murderer.
2. *He called David a son of Belial* – implying David was evil and received what he deserved (2 Corinthians 6:15).
3. *He accused David of stealing the throne from Saul* – implying David was guilty of slaying those in Saul's house.

Shimei believed David reaped what he had sown. However the accusations were unfounded. David was innocent of Saul's death having spared him twice. He was also without guilt concerning the deaths of Jonathan and Ishbosheth. On top of this it was his son that ousted David not Saul's family. Looking for any reason to insult David, Shimei twisted the facts to fit his case. Unfortunately, this practice is common today amongst journalists.

David Chastened

Upset at Shimei's conduct towards the king, Abishai requested permission to deal with him. The veteran soldier was willing and ready to defend God's anointed king. David refrained Abishai from dealing with Shimei.

David took the opportunity to remind Abishai, and others, of the big picture. Shimei could offend David no more than what Absalom had already done. The words of a stranger were nothing compared to the deceptive actions of his son. Also, Shimei could harm him no more than Absalom

could. One bitter man was unable to make the troubles Absalom's army could produce. David wisely put the situation perspective. He also recognized the LORD'S involvement, believing God would work the difficulty out for His good (Romans 8:28). Shimei may not have been entirely correct but there was some truth to his comments. David was not guilty of Saul's blood, but Uriah's. In his mind and heart David knew he was being chastised, so he endured what came upon him. The embittered Shimei continued to curse and throw stones as they continued on. It appears that David's troubles had driven all ambition and revenge from his heart (Romans 12:19). Trials often open our eyes to what is important in life. They remind us of our inabilities so we seek the LORD'S strength (Psalm 34:6, 17).

Desolate Kingdom

2 Samuel 16:15-23

Absalom's Inquiry: 2 Samuel 16:15-19

Hushai Addressed

Absalom, joined by his followers, went to Jerusalem eager to assume the throne he chased David from. His entrance into the city was probably a great display, seeing how he loved attention (2 Samuel 15:1). Many men of Israel accompanied him, including the wise counselor Ahithophel. It is all too easy for the wicked to find others to join them in their misery. At this point Absalom appeared to have the advantage over David, however, the LORD would work all things out in His time (Proverbs 29:16).

Hushai, who remained to assist David, approached Absalom with respect. He proclaimed, God save the king. Notice he did not credit Absalom as king. Hushai may have referred to David, knowing Absalom's pride would lead him to assume the words were of him (Proverbs 26:5). Surprised, Absalom immediately asked why Hushai was not with David. Evidently they were good friends and Absalom did not expect him to forsake David. It is interesting that Absalom referred to David as Hushai's friend, not as the king or his father.

Hushai Answered

Hushai provided an intriguing response. It appears to have double meaning, so Absalom would hear what he wanted while Hushai remained innocent of lying.

1. *He followed whomever the LORD chose* – referring to David or implying Absalom was chosen to lead.
2. *He followed whomever the people chose* – referring to David or implying Absalom was the favorite in the land.
3. *He followed whomever the men of Israel chose* – referring to David or implying Absalom was enabled to lead.

It must be pointed out that Hushai never proclaimed Absalom as his king or claimed to be done with David. His words were ambiguous and could have been applied to both men. He merely suggested he would continue to serve in his position, no matter who was king (Matthew 10:16). Apparently this answer pleased the egotistical Absalom. Thrilled to have David's friend side with him, his pride blinded him to reality. Apparently he never thought David's good friend might cause trouble (Proverbs 17:24).

Absalom's Indecency: 2 Samuel 16:20-23

Improper Counsel

Absalom had taken the kingdom but had no idea what to do with it. He sat in the throne as king but was unable to act like a king. This brash man knew how to take the throne but not how to lead the nation, so he looked to others for assistance. He is an example of incompetence in office. The people adored him for his appearance not for his abilities (2 Samuel 14:25). Absalom looked to Ahithophel who gave him personal advice. Neither sought the LORD. They were doomed to failure (Proverbs 3:7, 12:15). With the LORD'S direction it is possible to accomplish great things but without the LORD it is a struggle at best (Proverbs 3:5-6; Philippians 4:13).

Ahithophel advised Absalom to be indecent with the king's concubines, the ten that remained to care for the palace (2 Samuel 15:16). This was sin against God (Leviticus 20:11; 1 Corinthians 5:1). This terrible deed would imply Absalom was in complete control over David's kingdom. It would also throw down the gauntlet making it all but impossible for Absalom and David to reconcile. Ahithophel believed it would strengthen Absalom's followers. Perhaps some were hesitant to follow completely fearing David and Absalom would reconcile. If this occurred, they may have been viewed as traitors against David and his family. Ahithophel offered foolish advice that would produce more problems. Be careful, wise men may give terrible counsel (Psalm 118:8). Another thought; if David had one wife this would not have been an issue. Once again we are reminded that we will reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7-8).

Immoral Conduct

Absalom heard the advice and took it a step further. The counsel called for all to hear but Absalom sinned for all to see. His sin was bold and open like the Sodomites before their destruction (Genesis 13:13; 2 Peter 2:6). Apparently nobody thought to stop him.

Ahithophel's counsel was highly respected. His words were wise and many believed they were similar to God's word. Of course, this was their opinion. Ahithophel's abilities were greatly exaggerated. Beware of elevating man's wisdom (Colossians 2:8). There is only one God and He has no equal (Ephesians 4:6; 1 Timothy 2:5). Ahithophel reminds us of most wise men.

1. *They often despise the ways of God* – advising immorality.
2. *They often make foolish personal decisions* – following a young inexperienced Absalom.

Absalom was offered bad advice and foolishly heeded it. He found out the wisest of men are still men.