

# 2 Samuel 16 Commentary

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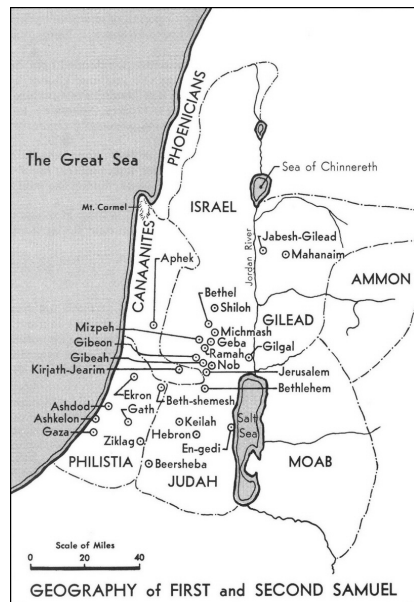
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Chart from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission  
[2 Samuel Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll

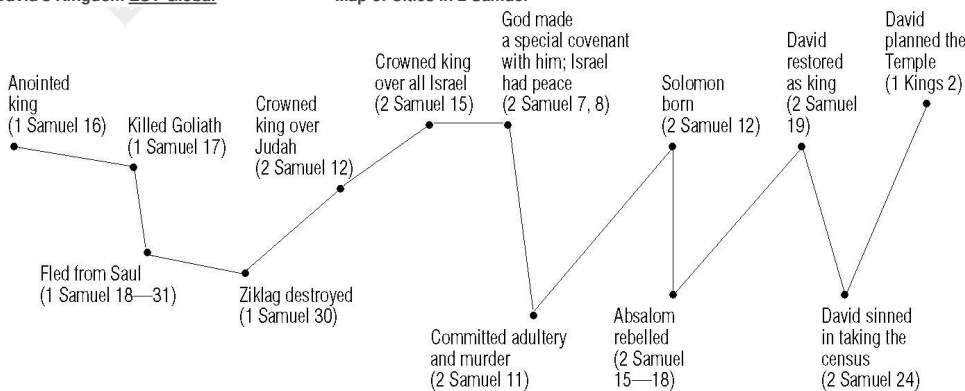
| TIMELINE OF THE BOOKS OF<br>SAMUEL, KINGS & CHRONICLES |          |                |       |                |                     |                       |                       |       |     |
|--|----------|----------------|-------|----------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------|-----|
| 1107   | 1011     |                |       |                | 971                 | 931                   | 853                   | 722   | 586 |
| 1 Samuel   | 2 Samuel |                |       |                | 1 Kings             | 1 Kings               | 2 Kings               |       |     |
| 31   | 1-4      | 5-10           | 11-20 | 21-24          | 1-11                | 12-22                 | 1-17                  | 18-25 |     |
| 1Chr<br>10   |          | 1 Chr<br>11-19 |       | 1 Chr<br>20-29 | 2 Chronicles<br>1-9 | 2 Chronicles<br>10-20 | 2 Chronicles<br>21-36 |       |     |

**Legend:** B.C. dates at top of timeline are approximate. Note that 931 BC marks the division of the Kingdom into Southern Tribes (Judah and Benjamin) and Ten Northern Tribes. To avoid confusion be aware that **after the division** of the Kingdom in 931 BC, the Southern Kingdom is most often designated in Scripture as "**Judah**" and the Northern Kingdom as "**Israel**." Finally, note that 1 Chronicles 1-9 is not identified on the timeline because these chapters are records of genealogy.



Map of David's Kingdom-ESV Global

Map of Cities in 2 Samuel



HIGHS AND LOWS OF DAVID'S LIFE  
Source: Life Application Study Bible (borrow)

**2 Samuel 16:1** Now when David had passed a little beyond the summit, behold, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him with a couple of saddled donkeys, and on them were two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred clusters of raisins, a hundred summer fruits, and a jug of wine.

- Now when David had passed a little beyond the summit 2Sa 15:30,32
- Ziba: 2Sa 9:2,9-12
- with a couple: 2Sa 17:27-29 19:32 1Sa 17:17,18 25:18 1Ch 12:40 Pr 18:16 29:4,5
- summer: Jer 40:10,12 Am 8:1 Mic 7:1
- a jug: 1Sa 10:3 16:20
- [2 Samuel 16 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passages:**

2 Samuel 9:2; 9-12+ Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was **Ziba**, and they called him to David; and the king said to him, "Are you **Ziba**?" And he said, "I am your servant." .... 9 Then the king called Saul's servant **Ziba** and said to him, "**All that belonged to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's grandson.** 10 "You and your sons and your servants shall cultivate the land for him, and you shall bring in the produce so that your master's grandson may have food; nevertheless Mephibosheth your master's grandson shall eat at my table regularly." Now **Ziba** had fifteen sons and twenty servants. 11 Then **Ziba** said to the king, "According to all that my lord the king commands his servant so your servant will do." So Mephibosheth ate at David's table as one of the king's sons. 12 Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Mica. And all who lived in the house of **Ziba** were **servants to Mephibosheth.**

**ZIBA SUPPLIES KING DAVID**

**Now when David had passed a little beyond the summit** (top of Mount of Olives), **behold, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him with a couple of saddled donkeys, and on them were two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred clusters of raisins, a hundred summer fruits, and a jug of wine** - So David is just barely out of Jerusalem when Ziba meets him. Ziba presents a generous gift to David with food (from Mephibosheth's farm!), but a good beginning does not make for a good beginning, and in this case might have been a good beginning by Ziba to hide his ulterior motives! As we soon see Ziba will accuse Mephibosheth of disloyalty which would be proved false in 2Sa 19:24-28+. He was clearly trying to commend himself in the eyes of David and thus the offering of food to the king.

Thomas Scott said, "Selfish men are often very generous in giving away the property of others for their own advantage." The supplies given as noted most likely come from Mephibosheth's property which Ziba was to manage. Ziba is buttering up the king to gain what he covets. He evidently has it all planned out.

**Utley** adds that Ziba was had been "a steward of Saul's properties. When David gave them to Mephibosheth this servant lost his special place. This apparently caused him to lie to David in order to have Saul's property restored to him. 2Sa 19:24-30 reveals Ziba as a manipulative liar (cf. 2Sa 16:3).

**TSK** on **summer fruits** - These were probably pumpkins, cucumbers, or water-melons; the two latter being extensively used in the East to refresh travellers in the burning heat of the summer.

**Walton - Mephibosheth's absence.** While David's immediate concern is the rebellion within his own household, this chapter reminds us that there is a deposed dynastic house (Saul's) lurking in the background and willing to capitalize on David's weakness to its own advantage. Ziba categorizes Mephibosheth with the disgruntled in a ostensibly successful attempt to curry favor with David. Ziba's accusation is sufficiently believable that David confiscated Mephibosheth's lands. The Sumerian code calls for an adopted son to forfeit land in cases where he has repudiated his legal obligations to the family that adopted him. David had always had the option to confiscate the lands belonging to his predecessor. Here he exercises that option but does not take them for the crown, instead giving them as a grant to a loyal servant (See page 345 [IVP Bible Background Commentary](#))

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**ZIBA** - zi'-ba (tsibha', tsibha' (2 Sam 16:4a), meaning unknown; Seiba): A former servant or probably dependent of Saul's house (2Sa 9:1ff), who was brought to David when the king inquired if there was not a member of Saul's family that he could show kindness to (compare David's oath to Jonathan in 1Sa 20:14 ff). **Ziba** tells David of Mephibosheth (Meribbaal), Jonathan's son, who is thereupon taken to the king from Lodebar, East of the Jordan, and given Saul's estate. **Ziba** is also bidden to till the land and bring in its produce, and "it shall be food for thy master's son," according to Masoretic Text in 2Sa 9:10b; but the Septuagint and Lucian have a better reading, "thy master's household." Mephibosheth himself is to eat at David's table. Ziba is to be assisted in this by his sons and servants; he had 15 sons and 20 servants (2Sa 9:10).

When David has to leave Jerusalem at the time of Absalom's revolt, Ziba (2 Sam 16:1-4) takes two asses for members of the king's household to ride on, and 200 loaves and 100 clusters of raisins as provisions for the youths. When asked where Mephibosheth is, he accuses his master of remaining behind purposely in hopes that his father's kingdom would be restored to him. David then confers upon Ziba his master's estate.

After Absalom's death, David sets out to return to Jerusalem from Mahanaim, East of Jordan. **Ziba** with his sons and servants, as we are told in a parenthesis in 2Sa 19:17,18a, by means of a ferry-boat goes backward and forward over Jordan, and thus enables the king's household to cross. But **Ziba has wrongly accused his master of treacherous lukewarmness toward David, for Mephibosheth meets the king on his return journey to Jerusalem (2Sa 19:24-30 with signs of grief.** When he is asked why he had not joined the king at the time of the latter's flight, he answers that **Ziba** deceived him, "for thy servant said to him, Saddle me (so read in 2Sa 19:26 with Septuagint and Syriac for Masoretic Text 'I will have saddled me') the ass." He then accuses Ziba of falsehood, and David divides the estate between the two, although Mephibosheth is quite willing that Ziba should retain the whole of it.

**2 Samuel 16:2 The king said to Ziba, "Why do you have these?" And Ziba said, "The donkeys are for the king's household to ride, and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat, and the wine, for whoever is faint in the wilderness to drink."**

- **Why do you have these:** Ge 21:29 33:8 Eze 37:18 2Sa 15:1 19:26 Jdg 5:10 10:4
- **for the young:** 1Sa 25:27
- **for whoever is faint :** 2Sa 15:23 17:29 Jdg 8:4,5 1Sa 14:28 Pr 31:6,7

## KING'S QUERY OF WHY THESE GIFTS?

The king said to Ziba, "Why do you have these?" - Was David suspicious or just being cordial?

And Ziba said, "The donkeys are for the king's household to ride, and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat, and the wine, for whoever is faint in the wilderness to drink - Ziba says he brings these things for transportation and nourishment.

TSK says "This is the eastern mode of speaking when presenting any thing to a great man: "This is for the slaves of the servants of your majesty;" when at the same time the presents are intended for the sovereign himself, and it is so understood."

2 Samuel 16:3 Then the king said, "And where is your master's son?" And Ziba said to the king, "Behold, he is staying in Jerusalem, for he said, 'Today the house of Israel will restore the kingdom of my father to me.'"

- **where is:** 2Sa 9:9,10 Ps 88:18 Mic 7:5
- **day:** 2Sa 19:24-30 Ex 20:16 De 19:18,19 Ps 15:3 101:5 Pr 1:19 21:28 1Ti 6:9,10 Jude 1:11
- [2 Samuel 16 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ZIBA'S FALSE ACCUSATION

Then the king said, "And where is your master's son?" - "Where is Mephibosheth?"

And Ziba said to the king, "**Behold**, he is staying in Jerusalem, for he said, 'Today the house of Israel will restore the kingdom of my father to me' - In other words he accuses Mephibosheth of saying 'Today the Israelites will give back my father Jonathan's kingdom to me!' But as we later learn Ziba is lying. The truth is that Ziba left Mephibosheth in Jerusalem to make it *look* as if Mephibosheth did not support David.

G Campbell Morgan rightly says that Ziba "was utterly despicable, and the more so because at the moment the sorrow he brought to the heart of David was his feeling that his kindness toward Mephibosheth was ill requited."

John Trapp says this was a "shameless and senseless slander, uttered by a false and faithless sycophant."

Related Resource:

- [Who was Mephibosheth? | GotQuestions.org](#)

2 Samuel 16:4 So the king said to Ziba, "**Behold**, all that belongs to Mephibosheth is yours." And Ziba said, "I prostrate myself; let me find favor in your sight, O my lord, the king!"

- **Behold:** 2Sa 14:10,11 Ex 23:8 De 19:15 Pr 18:13,17 19:2
- **I prostrate myself,** 2Sa 14:4,22
- [2 Samuel 16 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

Proverbs 14:15 The naive believes everything (**THIS WAS KING DAVID**), But the sensible man considers his steps.

Proverbs 21:6 The acquisition of treasures by a lying tongue (**ZIBA**) Is a fleeting vapor, the pursuit of death.

Proverbs 18:13 He who gives an answer before he hears (**AS DAVID DID HERE**), It is folly and shame to him.

## DAVID'S RASH DECISION

So the king said to Ziba, "**Behold, all that belongs to Mephibosheth is yours.**" Unfortunately Ziba's lie successfully deceived and ensnared David, who was clearly *not* thinking clearly at this point (no prayer, under considerable duress, exhausted), fails to check the facts, buys into Ziba's lie and released the possessions of Mephibosheth into the hands of the liar. Sadly he rewarded what he thought was Ziba's loyalty while punishing what he thought was Mephibosheth's disloyalty! The converse was true! Ziba had used this crisis to create a personal advantage. Despicable is too good of a word for him! Even though Mephibosheth is eventually proven innocent of Ziba's charges, sadly David never completely reverses his decision (see 2Sa 19:29).

**And Ziba said, "I prostrate (bow) myself; let me find favor in your sight, O my lord, the king-** NLT paraphrases it "Thank you, sir," Ziba replied. "I will always do whatever you want me to do." Ziba like the lying serpent he is, lies down on the ground convinced his wicked ruse has succeeded! Obviously he had never read (or believed) Nu 32:23+ that warns " behold, you have sinned against the LORD, and be sure your sin will find you out." Ziba's sin would

**2 Samuel 16:5 When King David came to Bahurim, behold, there came out from there a man of the family of the house of Saul whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera; he came out cursing continually as he came.**

- **Bahurim:** Jos 21:18, 1 Ch 6:60 a city of Benjamin, north of Jerusalem, and apparently not far from Olivet. 2Sa 16:14 3:16 17:18
- **whose name:** 2Sa 19:16-18 1Ki 2:8,9,36-44,45,46
- **cursing:** Ex 22:28 1Sa 17:43 Ps 69:26 109:16-19,28 Pr 26:2 Ec 10:20 Isa 8:21 Mt 5:11,12
- [2 Samuel 16 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Exodus 22:28 You shall not curse God, **nor curse a ruler of your people**

### SHIMEI CURSES KING DAVID

**When King David came to Bahurim** - This was a city of the territory of Benjamin, just on the "doorstep," north of Jerusalem, between Jerusalem and on the road leading up from the Jordan valley to Jerusalem and east of the Mount of Olives on the way to Jericho. And since Saul had been from the tribe of Benjamin, it would not be surprising to find in this city an enclave of loyalists.

**Wiersbe** points out that "It was at Bahurim that David's wife Michal said good-bye to her second husband as she was returned to David, and the man wept bitterly (2Sa 3:13-16). Now it was David who was weeping!"

**Behold, there came out from there a man of the family of the house of Saul whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera; he came out cursing continually as he came** Shimei resided in Bahurim and came out to pour forth vile abuse against David as the king's retinue was making their way down the eastern slopes of Olivet toward Jordan.

**Mattoon** - In cursing David, Shimei violates the Word of God. We are not to curse the ruler of the people (Exodus 22:28). In cursing a descendant of Abraham, he invites a curse upon himself and judgment (Genesis 12:3). ([Treasures from 2 Samuel](#))

**Spurgeon** - It is very hard to bear a cowardly attack. One is very apt to reply and use hard words to one who takes advantage of your position and deals you the coward's blow. Only the coward strikes a man when he is down."

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**SHIMEI** - A Benjamite of the house of Saul, who stoned and cursed David when he reached Bahurim in his flight from Jerusalem on the occasion of the rebellion of Absalom (2Sa 16:5-13). After the defeat of Absalom he "came cringing to the king, humbly suing for pardon, bringing with him a thousand of his Benjamite tribesmen, and representing that he was heartily sorry for his crime, and had hurried the first of all the house of Israel to offer homage to the king" (2Sa 19:16-23). David forgave him; but on his death-bed he gave Solomon special instructions regarding Shimei, of whose fidelity he seems to have been in doubt (1 Kings 2:8,9). He was put to death at the command of Solomon, because he had violated his word by leaving Jerusalem and going to Gath to recover two of his servants who had escaped (1Ki 2:36-46).

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#### 2 Samuel 16:5-12 Father Knows Best

Unlike David in 2 Samuel 16, we like to take revenge, silence our critics, insist on fairness, and set everything right. But David told

those who wanted to defend him: "Let [Shimei] alone, and let him curse; for so the Lord has ordered him" (v.11).

It seems to me that as the years go by, we grow—as David did—in the awareness of God's protective love. We become less concerned with what others say about us and more willing to give ourselves over to our Father. We learn humble submission to God's will.

We may, of course, ask our opponents to justify their charges, or we may meet them with steadfast denial if they charge us falsely. But when we have done all we can do, the only thing left is to wait patiently until God vindicates us.

In the meantime, it's good to look beyond the words of those who vilify us to the will of the One who loves us with infinite love. We need to say that whatever God permits is for His ultimate good in us or in others—even though our hearts break and we shed bitter tears.

You're in God's hands, no matter what others say about you. He sees your distress, and in time will repay you with good. Trust Him and abide in His love. —David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Each day we learn from yesterday  
Of God's great love and care;  
And every burden we must face  
He'll surely help us bear.  
—D. De Haan

### **It takes the storm to prove the real shelter**

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#### **2 Samuel 16:5-14 In God's Hands**

In 2 Samuel 16:5-14 we read of King David being cursed by Shimei. This happened while David was fleeing from his son Absalom, who wanted to kill him.

Unlike David, we often want to silence our critics, insist on fairness, and defend ourselves. But as we grow in our awareness of God's protective love, we become less concerned with what others say about us and more willing to entrust ourselves to our Father. Like David, we can say of each critic, "Let him alone, and let him curse" (2 Samuel 16:11). This is humble submission to God's will.

We may ask our opponents to justify their charges, or we may counter them with steadfast denial. Or, like David (v.12), we can wait patiently until God vindicates us.

It is good to look beyond those who oppose us and look to the One who loves us with infinite love. It is good to be able to believe that whatever God permits is for our ultimate good—good, though we're exposed to the curses of a Shimei; good, though our hearts break and we shed bitter tears.

You are in God's hands, no matter what others are saying about you. He has seen your distress, and in time He'll repay you for the cursing you have received. So trust Him and abide in His love. —David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

### **THINKING IT OVER**

Read 1 Peter 2:20-23. How did Jesus respond to words spoken against Him? What did He do and not do? In what situations can you follow His example?

**We can endure life's wrongs because we know that God will make all things right.**

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### **QUESTION - [Who was Shimei in the Bible?](#)**

**ANSWER** - There are a total of 18 men in the Bible with the name Shimei, all Israelites and all found in the Old Testament. Some Shimeis are simply mentioned by name in genealogies, some are called out for their sin of intermarriage with other cultures, and some are mentioned due to their relationship to other famous Bible characters (such as Saul, David, and Esther). You can find a few of them in the following passages: 2 Samuel 21:21; 1 Kings 1:8; 1 Chronicles 3:19; 4:26-27; 5:4; 6:29.....

**The other Shimei who stands out in the Bible is Shimei son of Gera, who was a part of King Saul's clan.** When King David was forced to flee from his son [Absalom](#), who coveted his father's throne, Shimei met the king along the way: "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. 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" (2 Samuel 16:5–6). Shimei blamed David for King Saul's death during a battle with the [Philistines](#). Saul had, in fact, fallen on his own sword to escape capture by the enemy (see 1 Chronicles 10:1–4); however, Shimei accused David of murder and announced that this was the reason Absalom was taking over the kingdom.

David's men wanted to kill Shimei then and there, but David, in his despair, believed the Lord had sent Shimei to curse him (2 Samuel 16:11–12), and he refused to allow his men to kill Shimei. David and his party resumed their journey, and Shimei continued to follow, cursing and throwing stones and dirt at them (1Sa 16:13).

Eventually, Absalom's rebellion was put down, Absalom was killed, and King David was restored to his throne. Shimei knew that he was now on shaky ground, so he gathered with him over a thousand Benjamites and went to meet David (2 Samuel 19:16–17). Falling on his face, Shimei apologized for his past behavior and begged the king not to hold it against him (2Sa 19:18–20). Again King David's men asked to kill Shimei, but again David refused and gave Shimei his oath that he would not kill him.

It seems that Shimei was a thoroughly despicable man, however, and that he persisted in his opposition to David. On his deathbed, David charged Solomon with the task of executing Shimei: "Do not consider him innocent. You are a man of wisdom; you will know what to do to him. Bring his gray head down to the grave in blood" (1 Kings 2:9). The only reason Shimei was still alive was that David was honoring his oath. Solomon showed Shimei mercy, giving him one final chance: as long as Shimei remained in Jerusalem, he would live (1Ki 2:36–37). Shimei agreed to the pact, but three years later he left the city. When King Solomon found out, he called for Shimei and told him, "You know in your heart all the wrong you did to my father David. Now the Lord will repay you for your wrongdoing" (verse 44). Shimei was then executed (1Ki 2:46). [GotQuestions.org](#) (Bolding added)

**2 Samuel 16:6 He threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David; and all the people and all the mighty men were at his right hand and at his left.**

- [2 Samuel 16 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### SHIMEI'S FOOLISH BRAVADO

**Bravado** is a bold manner or a show of boldness intended to impress or intimidate, in this case the latter.

**He threw** (pelted) **stones at David and at all the servants of King David; and all the people and all the mighty** ([gibbor](#); Lxx - [dunatos](#) - powerful) **men were at his right hand and at his left** - Shimei is not being brave but being a fool for throwing rocks at **mighty men** with swords!

**2 Samuel 16:7 Thus Shimei said when he cursed, "Get out, get out, you man of bloodshed, and worthless fellow!"**

- **you man of bloodshed**, 2Sa 3:37 2Sa 11:15-17 2Sa 12:9 Ps 5:6 Ps 51:14
- **and worthless fellow** Dt 13:13 1Sa 2:12 25:17 1Ki 21:10,13
- [2 Samuel 16 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### CURSING MAN OF BLOOD & BELIAL!

**Thus Shimei said when he cursed, "Get out, get out, you man of bloodshed, and worthless fellow** ([beliyyaal](#) - Lit - *Heb* "man of worthlessness") - He is telling David to leave the City of David! Talk about hubris! It's like Shimei is saying "[Good riddance](#)" which expresses relief at being free of a troublesome or unwanted person! Man of bloodshed in context refers to people of Saul's family David killed but could also allude to David's murder of Uriah (2Sa 11:15-17). Worthless fellow is literally man of Belial or man of worthlessness, in essence one who is good for nothing (base, even evil)!

**Swindoll** writes that "Shimei was your basic reprobate—the kind of person who kicks you while you're on your face, down and out. You're at the very ultimate, lowest pit and along comes a Shimei. Boom! Hits you below the belt. And when you squirm, he comes back with another blow." (Ibid)

**Mattoon** - The word "Belial" ([beliyyaal](#)) comes from two Hebrew words which mean "to become old & worn out" and "to profit or

gain." Shimei was saying to David that he was a worthless, worn out, good for nothing scoundrel. ([Treasures from 2 Samuel](#))

**The Living Bible paraphrases Shimei's shouting** - "Get out of here, you murderer, you scoundrel!" he shouted at David. "The Lord is paying you back for murdering King Saul and his family [that was a lie]; you stole his throne [another lie] and now the Lord has given it to your son Absalom [that's a third lie—the Lord never gave David's son the throne; Absalom took the throne]! At last you will taste some of your own medicine, you murderer!"

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**Worthless** (wicked, Belial)([01100](#)) [beliyyaal](#) from **beli** + **ya'al**: "not, without" and "to be of use, worth, or profit.") A worthless person, good for nothing to himself or others, and capable of nothing but mischief. Some feel that the word **Belial** can be traced to the false god Baal, and is also a term for yoke (they cast off the yoke of decency), and a term for entangling or injuring. The LXX renders it according to the context by the terms paranomos, anomia, and aphrōn, i.e. "lawless, lawlessness, witless." By the NT time, Belial had become synonymous with Satan (cf. 2 Cor. 6:15+). There is one use we would all do well to ponder and in the power of the Spirit affirm or declare (or pray) to be true in our life from time to time...

I will set no **worthless** ([beliyyaal](#)) thing before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not fasten ([dabaq](#)) its grip on me. (Psalm 101:3+) (MARK IT DOWN - WORTHLESS IMAGES CAN BE VERY "STICKY" IN YOUR MIND'S EYE! I AM SPEAKING ESPECIALLY TO YOU MEN AS YOU KNOW TO WHAT I AM REFERRING!)

**Beliyyaal** - 26v - **base(1), destruction(1), rascally(1), scoundrels\*(1), ungodliness(1), wicked(3), worthless(18), worthless one(1)**. Deut. 13:13; Deut. 15:9; Jdg. 19:22; Jdg. 20:13; 1 Sam. 1:16; 1 Sam. 2:12; 1 Sam. 10:27; 1 Sam. 25:17; 1 Sam. 25:25; 1 Sam. 30:22; 2 Sam. 16:7; 2 Sam. 20:1; 2 Sam. 22:5; 2 Sam. 23:6; 1 Ki. 21:10; 1 Ki. 21:13; 2 Chr. 13:7; Job 34:18; Ps. 18:4; Ps. 41:8; Ps. 101:3; Prov. 6:12; Prov. 16:27; Prov. 19:28; Nah. 1:11; Nah. 1:15

**2 Samuel 16:8 "The LORD has returned upon you all the bloodshed of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned; and the LORD has given the kingdom into the hand of your son Absalom. And behold, you are taken in your own evil, for you are a man of bloodshed!"**

- **returned**: Jdg 9:24,56,57 1Ki 2:32,33 Ac 28:4,5 Rev 16:6
- **the bloodshed**: 2Sa 1:16 3:28,29 4:8-12 Ps 3:2 4:2
- [2 Samuel 16 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **SHIMEI SAYS DAVID DESERVES WHAT IS HAPPENING**

**The LORD has returned upon you all the bloodshed of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned**- In saying **the LORD has returned upon you** Shimei in effect stands in the LORD'S place as judge of David's acts against Saul and his replacement of Saul as king. This is slander for the truth is that David had spared Saul's life several times and always honored Saul's position as the anointed king.

**and the LORD has given the kingdom into the hand of your son Absalom**- Shimei says this is David's retribution for his deeds.

**And behold, you are taken in your own evil, for you are a man of bloodshed**- In short, Shimei says David is ruined because he is a murderer. The NLT paraphrases it "At last you will taste some of your own medicine, you murderer!" To taste one's own medicine means that someone is sampling the same unpleasantness they have been dishing out to others.

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Guzik summarizes Shimei's assassination of David's character - 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.
- Shimei was *right* that the LORD had brought this upon David, but not for any of the reasons Shimei thought.

**2 Samuel 16:9 Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me**



- **Abishai:** 2Sa 3:30 1Sa 26:6-8
- **dead dog:** 2Sa 3:8 9:8 1Sa 24:14
- **curse:** Ex 22:28 Ac 23:5 1Pe 2:17
- **let me go:** 1Sa 26:6-11 Job 31:30,31 Jer 40:13-16
- [2 Samuel 16 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ABISHAI SEEKS TO AVENGE DAVID

Then **Abishai** the son of **Zeruiah** said to the king, "Why should this **dead dog** curse my lord the king? **Let me go over now and cut off his head** - **Abishai** was the brother of Joab (2Sa 2:18), David's commander in chief, and both were David's nephews by his sister **Zeruiah**. Abishai is saying that Shimei is a contemptible (despicable, detestable, hateful, reprehensible, deplorable, loathsome) person who should be separated from his head! Even after Shimei seems to repent Abishai still says "Should not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD'S anointed?" (2Sa 19:21)

**Wiersbe** - Abishai was only too willing to cross over and kill the man who was attacking the king, but David wouldn't allow it. Abishai had also wanted to kill Saul in the camp of Israel (1 Sam. 26:6-8), and he assisted his brother Joab in murdering Abner (2 Sam. 3:30), so David knew that his words were not to be treated lightly. ([Bible Exposition Commentary - Old Testament](#))

**Mattoon** quips "Abishai more or less is saying, "Let me put this guy on a crash diet and take ten pounds off his weight by chopping off his head!" ([Treasures from 2 Samuel](#))

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**ABISHAI** - ab'-i-shi, a-bi'-shi ('abhishai, in Ch 'abhshai; meaning is doubtful, probably "my father is Jesse," BDB): Son of Zeruiah, David's sister, and one of the three famous brothers, of whom Joab and Asahel were the other two (2 Sam 2:18). He was chief of the second group of three among David's "mighty men" (2 Sam 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 (1 Sam 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 (2 Sam 2:18,24). He was with and aided Joab in the cruel and indefensible murder of Abner, in revenge for their brother Asahel (2 Sam 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 (2 Sam 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 (2 Sam 16:8,9); and when the king returned victorious Abishai advised the rejection of Shimei's penitence, and his immediate execution (2 Sam 19:21). In the battle with Absalom's army at Mahanaim Abishai led one division of David's army, Joab and Ittai commanding the other two (2 Sam 18:2). With Joab he put down the revolt against David of Sheba, a man of Benjamin (2 Sam 20:6,10), at which Joab treacherously slew Amasa his cousin and rival, as he had likewise murdered Abner, Abishai no doubt being party to the crime. In a battle with the Philistines late in his life, David was faint, being now an old man, and was in danger of death at the hands of the Philistine giant Ishbi-benob when Abishai came to his rescue and killed the giant (2 Sam 21:17). In the list of David's heroes (2 Sam 23) Abishai's right to leadership of the "second three" is based upon his overthrowing three hundred men with his spear (2 Sam 23:18). He does not appear in the struggle of Adonijah against Solomon, in which Joab was the leader, and therefore is supposed to have died before that time.

He was an impetuous, courageous man, but less cunning than his more famous brother Joab, although just as cruel and relentless toward rival or foe. David understood and feared their hardness and cruelty. Abishai's best trait was his unswerving loyalty to his kinsman, David.

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**DEAD DOG** - The term Dog is mentioned in the Old and New Testaments and were used by the Hebrews as a watch for their houses (Isa. 56:10), or guarding their flocks (Job 30:1). There were also then packs of semi-wild dogs that wandered about devouring dead bodies and the offal of the streets (1Ki 14:11; 16:4; 21:19, 23; 22:38; Ps. 59:6, 14). The dog was considered an unclean animal, and thus terms like "**dog**," "**dog's head**," "**dead dog**," were terms of reproach or of humiliation (1Sa 24:14; 2Sa 3:8; 9:8; 16:9). Paul calls false apostles "dogs" (Phil. 3:2). Those who are shut out of the kingdom of heaven are also so designated (Rev 22:15). Persecutors are called "dogs" (Ps 22:16). Hazeel's words, "Thy servant which is but a dog" (2Ki 8:13), are spoken in mock humility = impossible that one so contemptible as he should attain to such power.

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**2 Samuel 16:10 But the king said, "What have I to do with you, O sons of Zeruiah? If he curses, and if the LORD has told him, 'Curse David,' then who shall say, 'Why have you done so?'"**

- **What have I to do with you:** 2Sa 3:39 19:22 1Ki 2:5 Mt 16:23 Lu 9:54-56 1Pe 2:23
- **If he curses** Ge 50:20 1Ki 22:21-23 2Ki 18:25 La 3:38,39 Joh 18:11
- **Who shall:** Job 9:12 Ec 8:4 Da 4:35 Ro 9:20
- [2 Samuel 16 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DAVID FORBIDS RETALIATION

**But the king said, "What have I to do with you, O sons of Zeruiah?"**- He seems to be "talking down" somewhat to Abishai referring to him by the title **sons of Zeruiah** and to be sure both sons (Joab and Abishai) were known to be a bit impetuous and unpredictable.

David frequently refers to the **sons of Zeruiah** (Joab and Abishai) which both have a built-in short fuse (cf 1Co 13:4+ "Love is patient" = [makrothumeo](#) which literally pictures a "long burn" or a LONG FUSE!), both with a chip on their shoulder, both always ready to fight or kill! Here are the 5 uses of "**sons of Zeruiah**" - 2 Sam. 2:18; 2 Sam. 3:39; 2 Sam. 16:10; 2 Sam. 19:22; 1 Chr. 2:16 (The singular phrase "son of Zeruiah" occurs 19x - 1 Sam. 26:6; 2 Sam. 2:13; 2 Sam. 8:16; 2 Sam. 14:1; 2 Sam. 16:9; 2 Sam. 18:2; 2 Sam. 19:21; 2 Sam. 21:17; 2 Sam. 23:18; 2 Sam. 23:37; 1 Ki. 1:7; 1 Ki. 2:5; 1 Ki. 2:22; 1 Chr. 11:6; 1 Chr. 11:39; 1 Chr. 18:12; 1 Chr. 18:15; 1 Chr. 26:28; 1 Chr. 27:24 (**THOUGHT** - One could probably do quite an interesting sermon using just these two phrases!)

**Guzik** - Ironically, if David were the kind of man Shimei said he was, Shimei would have been killed.

Doing injury puts you below your enemy; revenge may get you even with him; forgiving sets you above him."  
-- Benjamin Franklin

**If he curses, and if the LORD has told him, 'Curse David,' then who shall say, 'Why have you done so?'"**- In other words if Shimei is cursing David because the Lord told him to do so why should we question him or "Who am I to stop him?" David is not admitting he is guilty of Shimei's accusations but is simply recognizing that his own general sinfulness certainly qualified him to receive such a cursing. Therefore considering that this event could be the providential hand of God, David forbade retaliation.

See the related comments on forgiving the "Shimei's" who "curse" or "cast rocks" at you.

**2 Samuel 16:11 Then David said to Abishai and to all his servants, 'Behold, my son who came out from me seeks my life; how much more now this Benjamite? Let him alone and let him curse, for the LORD has told him.**

- **Behold:** 2Sa 12:11,12
- **came:** 2Sa 7:2 Ge 15:4
- **seeks:** 2Sa 17:1-4 2Ki 19:37 2Ch 32:21 Mt 10:21
- **the LORD:** Isa 10:5-7 Eze 14:9 20:25
- [2 Samuel 16 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

Romans 12:14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

Romans 12:17-21 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. 19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord. 20 "BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

## DAVID'S INTERPRETATION OF

## SHIMEI'S CURSING

**Then David said to Abishai and to all his servants, "Behold, my son who came out from me seeks my life; how much more now this Benjamite?"** - David is saying Shimei a Benjamite has more right to kill him than his own son Absalom. NLT paraphrases it "My own son is trying to kill me. Shouldn't this relative of Saul have even more reason to do so?"

**Let him alone and let him curse, for the LORD has told him**- David regarded Shimei's cursing as ordained by God, with the implication that God would ultimately avenge him as he explains in the next passage.

**Guzik** - David let Shimei speak because he put the "Shimei problem" in perspective....David knew that his real problem was Absalom, not Shimei, and he did not lose this perspective.

**Spurgeon** - "David could take this fellow's head off and that in a moment, and yet he said, 'Let him alone. Let him curse.' And this makes a splendid example. If *you can revenge yourself*, DON'T. If you could do it as easily as open your hand, keep it shut. If one bitter word could end the argument, ask for grace to spare that bitter word."

**Utley** - It is interesting that v. 10 expresses it as "if," while v. 11 expresses it as "for the Lord has told him." David simply did not know YHWH's will in this matter but trusted He would do the right and appropriate thing. We must remember that circumstances do not always reveal God's will.

**Walton** - David is not claiming to have been privy to a discussion between the Lord and Shimei, nor is he suggesting that Shimei has been the recipient of a prophetic oracle of some sort. The way that the Lord had "told" Shimei to curse David was through the events that had transpired. With David's own son driving him from the throne, it would be very easy to infer that David was suffering judgment at God's hands. All that is left to deduce is what the offense might have been that led to the punishment. David is simply acknowledging that Shimei is absolutely justified in thinking that God had cursed him and therefore cannot be blamed for wanting to jump on the bandwagon. Only a future vindication would free David to consider Shimei's acts to be in the category of treason rather than simply a voice recognizing the circumstances through which God is carrying out retribution (See page 345 [IVP Bible Background Commentary](#))

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**G Campbell Morgan** (borrow [Life applications from every chapter of the Bible](#)) - Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him. -2 Sam 16.11. Sorrows multiplied upon the head of David during these dark days. Ziba added to David's grief by traducing Mephibosheth, and suggesting that his kindness was ill-requited. It was all the more wicked in that it was untrue. Shimei struck at the king when he was in the dust. When Abishai would have taken speedy vengeance on him, David forbade him, and in these words showed how he was even then placing higher interpretations upon life than would have been possible to any man who was not, in the deepest of his life, in spite of all failure, a man after God's own heart. The action of Shimei was sinful, but David recognized the very hand of God in what he did, so far as his own soul was concerned. He received the cursing of this man as part of the discipline through which his God was bringing him. He expected that good would come out of it, as his next words reveal: "It may be that Jehovah will look on the wrong done unto me, and that Jehovah will requite me good for his cursing of me this day." This is a radiant illustration of the deep and inward peace given to any man who is living in fellow-ship with God is motive and desire. Such a man will receive all the sorrows which come to him as within the will of God for him, and therefore as intended ultimately to bring him good and not evil. This sense of Divine overruling will cleanse the spirit of all desire for revenge. He will pass on his way while curses and stones are showered upon him, realizing that they also are compelled under God, to minister to his perfecting, and the full realization of God's purposes for him.

**2 Samuel 16:12 "Perhaps the LORD will look on my affliction and return good to me instead of his cursing this day."**

- **Perhaps the LORD:** Ge 29:32,33 Ex 2:24,25 3:7,8 1Sa 1:11 Ps 25:18
- **return:** De 23:5 Isa 27:7 Mt 5:11,12 Ro 8:28 2Co 4:17 2Th 1:7 Heb 12:10 1Pe 4:12-19
- [2 Samuel 16 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DAVID LEAVES REPAYMENT WITH THE LORD

**Perhaps the LORD will look on my affliction and return good to me instead of his cursing this day**- David is saying that Yahweh might see his misery and repay him good for the cursing he is receiving.

**Guzik** - David let Shimei speak because he knew that God's hand was on the future as well as the present. David knew that if he did what was right in the present moment, God would take care of the future.

**Charles Swindoll** has a very practical comment on David's response this man's cursing and casting writing "Get the picture? It's an amazing study in self-control! (ED: COMPARE Gal 5:23+ AND 1Sa 16:13+!) David's at rock-bottom, and along comes Shimei who boots him. But instead of fighting back, David says, "The Lord's in it." He never got offended. He never took it personally. He didn't even yell! How in the world could he do that? **Soft heart and thick skin.** (ED: ENABLED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT! cf REACTING CONTROLLED BY THE SPIRIT OR BY THE DESIRES OF THE FLESH - Gal 5:16-17+) That's the ticket, plain and simple. Not sensitive skin, so delicate that the slightest pinprick will damage it, but really thick. Rhinoceros thick. So that you can get punched around and punched around. Let me tell you, if you hope to be used of God, you need that kind of skin. Count on it—Shimeis are out there by the dozens! The people who get the job done are those who are able to overlook all sorts of hurtful little comments people are going to make. When you walk through thorns, you have to have on heavy boots. You don't walk through thorns barefooted . . . at least not very far. If you are called into leadership, where you must deal with people, you have to be well-shod and armor-plated. If not, you're doomed to failure. **Now that doesn't mean a thickness toward God.** It means you have a protective coating against the slings and arrows of people like this Shimei. If you haven't already, it won't be long before you will meet up with a Shimei. It's only a matter of time. Such "reptiles" proliferate. And you'll have to decide: Am I going to be offended or not? Am I big enough to forgive . . . or will I reduce myself to his size and sling rocks back?" (borrow [David A Man of Passion & Destiny](#))

**2 Samuel 16:13 So David and his men went on the way; and Shimei went along on the hillside parallel with him and as he went he cursed and cast stones and threw dust at him.**

- **cursed:** 2Sa 16:5,6
- **threw dust:** Heb. dusted him with dust, Ac 23:23
- [2 Samuel 16 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### WHAT A SCENE: SHIMEI CASTING CURSES & DUST!

**So David and his men went on the way; and Shimei went along on the hillside parallel with him and as he went he cursed and cast stones and threw dust at him** - Shimei is now emboldened that David has responded with force, and so continues his cursing and his casting.

**Mattoon** - This incident reveals that David has come a long way. He has learned to see God's hand when hurt. Years earlier he was abused by a fool named Nabal who treated him rudely and very offensively. David wanted to kill Nabal, but here he leaves Shimei alone. (see David's anger in 1Sa 25:22+) ([Treasures from 2 Samuel](#))

**TSK** - It was an ancient custom, in those warm and arid countries, to lay the dust before a person of distinction, by sprinkling the ground with water. Dr. Pococke and the consul were treated with this respect when they entered Cairo. The same custom is alluded to in the well-known fable of Phedrus, in which a slave is represented going before Augustus and officiously laying the dust. **To throw dust in the air** while a person was passing was therefore an act of great disrespect; to do so before a sovereign prince, an indecent outrage. But it is probable that Shimei meant more than disrespect and outrage to this afflicted king. Sir John Chardin informs us, that in the East, in general, those who demand justice against a criminal throw dust upon him, signifying that he ought to be put in the grave: and hence the common imprecation among the Turks and Persians, "Be covered with earth," or, "Earth be upon thy head."

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**DUST** - dust (aphar; koniortos, chous): Small particles of earth. The word has several figurative and symbolic meanings: (1) Dust being the material out of which God is said to have formed man (Gen 2:7), it became a symbol of man's frailty (Ps 103:14, "For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust"; compare Gen 18:27; Job 4:19, etc.), and of his mortality (Gen 3:19, Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return"; compare Job 34:15; Ps 104:29; Eccl 3:20; 12:7, etc.) Hence, it is used figuratively for the grave (Ps 22:15,29; 30:9; Dan 12:2). (2) Such actions as to lie in the dust, to lick the dust, to sprinkle dust on the head, are symbols expressive of deep humiliation, abasement or lamentation (e.g. Job 2:12; 42:6, Ps 72:9; Isa 2:10; 47:1; 49:23; Lam 2:10; 3:29; Ezek 27:30; Mic 7:17; Rev 18:19). Hence, such expressions as "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust," i.e. out of their state of lowliness (1 Sam 2:8; Ps 113:7). (3) **Throwing dust was an act expressive of execration.** Thus, Shimei "cursed" David and "threw stones at him, and cast dust," literally, "dusted (him) with dust" (2 Sam 16:13). So the crowd which Paul addressed at Jerusalem manifested their wrath against him by tossing about their garments and casting dust into the air (Acts 22:23). (4) Shaking the dust off one's feet against anyone (Mt 10:14; Mk 6:11; Lk 9:5; 10:11; Acts 13:51) is symbolic of renunciation, as we would say "washing one's hands of him," an intimation that all further intercourse was at an end. It was practiced by the Pharisees on passing from Gentile to Jewish soil, it being a rabbinical doctrine that the dust of a heathen land defiles. (5) It is also used figuratively for an innumerable multitude

(e.g. Gen 13:16; 28:14; Job 27:16; Ps 78:27). (6) The expression "Yahweh will make the rain of thy land powder and dust" (Dt 28:24) means the dust in consequence of the drought shall fall down instead of rain on the dry ground. In Judea and vicinity during a sirocco, the air becomes filled with sand and dust, which are blown down by the wind with great violence.

## 2 Samuel 16:14 The king and all the people who were with him arrived weary and he refreshed himself there.

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

NET 2 Samuel 16:14 The king and all the people who were with him arrived exhausted at their destination, where David refreshed himself.

CSB 2 Samuel 16:14 Finally, the king and all the people with him arrived exhausted, so they rested there.

ESV 2 Samuel 16:14 And the king, and all the people who were with him, arrived weary at the Jordan. And there he refreshed himself.

NIV 2 Samuel 16:14 The king and all the people with him arrived at their destination exhausted. And there he refreshed himself.

NLT 2 Samuel 16:14 The king and all who were with him grew weary along the way, so they rested when they reached the Jordan River.

NRS 2 Samuel 16:14 The king and all the people who were with him arrived weary at the Jordan; and there he refreshed himself.

NJB 2 Samuel 16:14 The king and all the people who were with him arrived exhausted at . . . . . and there they drew breath.

NAB 2 Samuel 16:14 The king and all the soldiers with him arrived at the Jordan tired out, and stopped there for a rest.

YLT 2 Samuel 16:14 And the king cometh in, and all the people who are with him, wearied, and they are refreshed there.

GWN 2 Samuel 16:14 The king and all the people with him finally arrived at their destination and rested there.

- **there:** 2Sa 16:5
- [2 Samuel 16 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### KING'S RETINUE ARRIVES AT RIVER

**The king and all the people who were with him arrived weary** ([ayeph](#); Lxx -[ekluo](#)) **and he refreshed** ([naphash](#); Lxx -[anapsucho](#)) **himself there** - After a trip of some 50 miles, fleeing for their lives, David and all the people were exhausted and in need of rest at the River Jordan. Weary means David was faint and physically tired, recalling that he is not as young as he used to be (he is somewhere north of age 60). The Septuagint translates [ayeph](#) with the verb [ekluo](#) (perfect tense describes this as David's state at this time) which means in the passive voice means that David had become so tired and weary as to give out and possibly even to faint from exhaustion.

**G Campbell Morgan** - "As we thus follow David through these days of humiliation and shame...we nevertheless understand more perfectly that he was indeed a man after God's own heart.....This is a radiant illustration of the deep and inward peace given to any man who is living in fellowship with God in motive and desire."

**MacArthur** - The patience and restraint of David on this occasion was amazingly different than his violent reaction to the slanderous words of Nabal (1Sa 25:2ff.). On that occasion, he was eager to kill the man until placated by the wisdom of Abigail. He was a broken man at this later time and knew that while the rancor of Shimei was uncalled for, his accusations were true. He was penitent. (Borrow [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**Guzik** - In his book *A Tale of Three Kings*, Gene Edwards (Borrow [A tale of three kings : a study in brokenness](#)) put these words into the mouth of David: "The throne is not mine. Not to have, not to take, not to protect, and not to keep. The throne is the LORD's." It was that kind of heart that kept David on-track through such a difficult time and enabled him to even be **refreshed**.

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**Weary** (05889) **ayeph** for **iph** = to be exhausted) means faint, physically tired, usually used of people. Esau was **famished** from working in the fields that he sold his birthright to Jacob for some lentils (Ge. 25:29, 30). Because the people of Israel were **faint** from travel in the wilderness (Deut. 25:18), the Amalekites were able to attack their rear ranks. Gideon's 300 men were exhausted, but still pursued their Midianite enemies (Judg. 8:4f). When King David fled from Absalom, he and his men became **weary** and stopped to refresh themselves (2 Sam. 16:14; 17:29). Eliphaz accused Job of refusing to give aid to those who were **weary** (Job 22:7). In Proverbs 25:25, a **weary** soul is refreshed by cold water. The adjective also may refer to a weary animal (Isa. 46:1). Figuratively, when the adjective modifies the word "land," it refers to its dry condition. David likened his longing for the Lord to one being thirsty in the desert (Ps. 63:1); "My soul longs for You like a parched land" (Ps. 143:6). A godly man will be like "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Isa. 32:2, NKJV). Prophetically, when the Lord regathers his people in the kingdom, "No one will be weary or stumble among them" (Isa. 5:27, NKJV); also, the Lord will satisfy the weary soul (Jer. 31:25). In the meanwhile, the Lord had promised his people rest for the weary, but they refused it (Isa. 28:12), and those who fight against Israel will be weary (Isa. 29:8).

**Refreshed** (05314) (**naphash** from **nepheš** - soul, living being) refers to a renewal of energy in mind and body and applies to persons and work animals (Ex. 23:12; 2 Sam. 16:14). It is used figuratively of the Lord resting after creation, ceasing from His labor (Ex. 31:17) **Gilbrant** - **Nāphash**, which means "to be refreshed," is widely attested in Semitic languages. All three uses of this verb in the Hebrew Bible are in reference to being refreshed (Exo. 23:12; 31:17; 2 Sam. 16:14). The first two concern the Sabbath. The third concerns the time after an exhausting journey. However, all three instances concern times of rest when people have a chance to "catch their breath" (probably the original use of the verb) and be refreshed after a period of expending energy. Exodus 31:17 has God being "refreshed" after ceasing from his work of creation on the seventh day. This does not suggest that God has lungs and needs to catch his breath. Instead, it demonstrates that the verb could be used in a general, even figurative, sense to mean a lapse between one kind of activity and another.

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**F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily - 2 Samuel 16:14** The king and all the people came weary, and refreshed themselves there.

A Great weariness falls often on our souls. We are wearied because of the greatness of our way, and inclined to say there is no hope. Memory tires us, perpetually casting up the record of past unfaithfulness and transgression. The bitter way of the natural consequences of sin is toilsome and difficult to the feet. We faint before the averted eye of former friends and the pitiless criticism of foes. Longings for a vanished past, for life and love, for purity and peace, grind heavily in the soul. Our King has known something of human weariness, though not from all the sources that cause it in His subjects.

But amid the presence of our weariness the voice of God may be heard saying, "This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing." There is rest for weary souls beneath the shadow of the cross, in the sight of which the burden rolls away. There is rest and refreshment as we sit in the banqueting house of Christ's manifested and realized affection. There is refreshment as we eat of His flesh and drink of His blood; as we yield our will to His; as we sit with Him in heavenly places. We assuredly find Him to be "a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Isaiah 32:2).

There is no hill Difficulty without its arbor; no desert without its oasis; no sultry heat without its shadow of a great rock; no weariness without its pillow; no intolerable sorrow without its solace; no weariness without its refreshment; no failure of man without a very present help in God.

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**2 Samuel 16:15 Then Absalom and all the people, the men of Israel, entered Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him.**

- **Absalom:** 2Sa 15:37
- [2 Samuel 16 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### SCENE SWITCHES TO SON ENTERING JERUSALEM

**Then** - Marks progressive, in this case David out and Absalom in to the City of David.

**Absalom and all the people, the men of Israel** (NLT = "all the army of Israel"), **entered Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him** - David's rebellious son and treacherous counselor take control of the city of David.

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**QUESTION - [Who was Ahithophel in the Bible?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Ahithophel was originally the counselor of [King David](#), but he later betrayed David, aiding [Absalom](#) in his rebellion to overthrow David's kingship. Ahithophel was well-known for his advice, so much so that "Absalom followed Ahithophel's advice, just as David had done. For every word Ahithophel spoke seemed as wise as though it had come directly from the mouth of God" (2 Samuel 16:23, NLT). Ahithophel had the gift of wisdom.

After Absalom captured Jerusalem, Ahithophel's first piece of advice to him was that he sleep with all his father's concubines—in a public manner—so as to become a "stench in your father's nostrils," and to strengthen his following (2 Samuel 16:21–22). In those days, taking possession of a king's [concubines](#) was a declaration of one's right to the throne. This fulfilled God's word to David after his adultery with Bathsheba: "This is what the Lord says: 'Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight. You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel'" (2 Samuel 12:11–12). Absalom followed the advice of Ahithophel and performed this wicked act on the top of the palace roof for all Israel to see (2 Samuel 16:22).

When Absalom began his rebellion, King David knew that Ahithophel's advice would be dangerous in the hands of his son. During his escape up the Mount of Olives, David prayed to the Lord that Ahithophel's counsel would be turned into foolishness (2 Samuel 15:31). In answer to David's prayer, when David reached the summit of the Mount of Olives, he met Hushai the Arkite. David sent Hushai back to Absalom in Jerusalem as a secret agent to frustrate the advice of Ahithophel (2 Samuel 15:32–37). In Jerusalem Hushai pledged his loyalty to Absalom but began to give advice to work to David's benefit (2 Samuel 17:14).

Absalom asked his counsellors what next step he should take. Ahithophel said to pursue David immediately with an army of twelve thousand men and "attack him while he is weary and weak" (2 Samuel 17:1). Hushai, however, counselled Absalom to delay the attack, form a larger force, and totally annihilate David and his men (2Sa 17:7–13). Absalom chose to follow the advice of Hushai and reject Ahithophel's counsel. This was of God, since "the Lord had determined to frustrate the good advice of Ahithophel in order to bring disaster on Absalom" (2Sa 17:14).

When Absalom rejected his advice, Ahithophel's pride was injured, and "he put his house in order and then hanged himself" (2 Samuel 17:23). In following Hushai's advice, Absalom was defeated and received the punishment due his rebellion (2 Samuel 18:6–15).

Because of Ahithophel's betrayal of David, many scholars see him as a type of [Judas Iscariot](#). Just as David's counselor betrayed him, so also did Jesus' disciple Judas betray Him. Similarities between Ahithophel and Judas include the following:

- they both were trusted friends who betrayed their friend (2 Samuel 15:31; Matthew 26:14–16).
- they both sided with the enemy to plot their king's death (2 Samuel 17:1–4; Luke 22:2–6).
- they both hanged themselves once the betrayal was complete (2 Samuel 17:23; Matthew 27:5).

In Psalm 41:9 David laments, "Even my close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared my bread, has turned against me." This is, most immediately, a reference to the treachery of Ahithophel. But it is also a prophetic reference to Judas, as Jesus points out in John 13:18, where He quotes Psalm 41:9. Like Judas, Ahithophel will forever be remembered as a traitor. [GotQuestions.org](#)

**2 Samuel 16:16 Now it came about when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, came to Absalom, that Hushai said to Absalom, "Long live the king! Long live the king!"**

- **Long live the king:** Heb. let the king live, 1Sa 10:24 1Ki 1:25,34 2Ki 11:12 Da 2:4 5:10 6:6,21 Mt 21:9
- [2 Samuel 16 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

2 Samuel 15:33-37+ - **(HUSHAI DAVID'S SPY)** David said to him, "If you pass over with me, then you will be a burden to me. 34 "But if you return to the city, and say to Absalom, 'I will be your servant, O king; as I have been your father's servant in time past, so I will now be your servant,' **then you can thwart the counsel of Ahithophel for me.** 35 "Are not Zadok and Abiathar the priests with you there? So it shall be that whatever you hear from the king's house, you shall report to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. 36 "Behold their two sons are with them there, Ahimaaz, Zadok's son and Jonathan, Abiathar's son; and by them you shall send me everything that you hear." 37 So Hushai, David's friend, came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem.

**DAVID'S SPY**

## SNEAKS IN

**Now it came about when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, came to Absalom, that Hushai said to Absalom-** Hushai was David's man on the inside and as the story unfolds would be asked by Absalom for his counsel, which was deliberately misleading and not as good as Ahithophel's counsel. Hushai then warned David of Absalom's impending attack (2Sa 17:15-21, 22+) . It is also notable that in his counsel to Absalom, he told him that he should lead out in battle (2Sa 17:11+), whereas David's men gave him the exact opposite advice, to stay put! This put Absalom in harm's way while David remained safe in **Mahanaim** east of the Jordan.

**"Long live the king! Long live the king!"** This was an affirmation of a long and successful reign and was like a pledge of loyalty! Unfortunately the new king would not live long. Exactly how long we cannot state with certainty from the text. Absalom should have asked Hushai, to which king are you referring, to me or to David? Hushai would have had to lie!

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### QUESTION - [Who was Hushai in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - Hushai first appears in the Bible in 2 Samuel 15:32 as part of the story of [Absalom's](#) coup and [David's](#) departure from Jerusalem. Absalom, David's son, had started a rebellion against his father and "stole the hearts of the people of Israel" (2Sa 15:6). David and his officials in Jerusalem fled the city for fear of their lives (2Sa 15:14). They climbed the Mount of Olives, "weeping as they went" (2Sa 15:30). Then, "when David arrived at the summit, where people used to worship God, Hushai the Arkite was there to meet him, his robe torn and dust on his head" (2Sa 15:32).

The tearing of one's robe was an ancient way of showing mourning, grief, and loss. The dust on Hushai's head added to the expression of grief. It was a day of tragedy, and Hushai mourned on behalf of his king and his nation. Hushai is described as "the king's friend" in 1Ch 27:33ESV).

When Hushai met David on [Mt. Olivet](#), the king had an idea. David told Hushai to return to Jerusalem and to work against Absalom on David's behalf. David gave Hushai the words to say to Absalom: "Your Majesty, I will be your servant; I was your father's servant in the past, but now I will be your servant" (2 Samuel 15:34). If Hushai could ingratiate himself, then he could sabotage Absalom's plans.

The ploy to use Hushai as a secret agent was necessary because Ahithophel, one of David's respected counselors, had defected and joined forces with Absalom (2 Samuel 15:31). Ahithophel had double-crossed his king and was giving David's son advice on how to defeat David. When David heard this news, he prayed that God would "turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness" (2Sa 15:31). Hushai was the instrument of God through which that prayer would be answered.

Hushai obeyed David's order and returned to Jerusalem, arriving there just as Absalom was entering the city (2 Samuel 15:37). Unbeknownst to Absalom, other men loyal to David were also in the city: the priests Zadok and Abiathar were there to act as spies, and the priests' sons, Ahimaaz and Jonathan, would relay the intel the priests gathered to David (2Sa 15:35-36).

When Hushai met Absalom in the capital city, Hushai greeted him with "Long live the king! Long live the king!" (2 Samuel 16:16). Absalom was suspicious at first: "This is the love you show your friend [David]? If he's your friend, why didn't you go with him?" he asked (2Sa 16:17). Hushai responded by pouring on the praise, calling Absalom "the one chosen by the Lord, by these people, and by all the men of Israel" (2Sa 16:18). Then he told Absalom what David had instructed him to say: "Just as I served your father, so I will serve you" (2Sa 16:19). Absalom was satisfied that Hushai meant what he said.

Later, as Absalom was considering the best strategy to defeat his father, he asked the advice of both Ahithophel and Hushai. Ahithophel said, "Choose twelve thousand men and set out tonight in pursuit of David. I would attack him while he is weary and weak. I would strike him with terror, and then all the people with him will flee. I would strike down only the king and bring all the people back to you" (2Sa 17:1-3). This was actually a sound strategy, but then Hushai was given a chance to thwart the plan.

Hushai presented a different strategy meant to frustrate the wisdom of Ahithophel (see 2Sa 15:34). Hushai said that Absalom needed a bigger force to deal with David and his desperate men. Also, Absalom should not focus on killing David but on wiping out David's entire army: "Let all Israel . . . be gathered to you, with you yourself leading them into battle. Then we will attack him wherever he may be found. . . . Neither he nor any of his men will be left alive" (2 Samuel 17:11-12).

Hushai also reminded Absalom that David was well acquainted with the lay of the land and that he was an expert in avoiding capture. If Absalom were to come at him, per Ahithophel's counsel, David would escape. That would place David in a position to strike first, causing Absalom's men to lose heart (2 Samuel 17:7-10).

After hearing both plans, Absalom and his advisors believed that Hushai's counsel was better than Ahithophel's (2 Samuel 17:14). Hushai's advice certainly was better—better for David! Hushai's advice was meant to cause Absalom to delay deploying his army. That delay would provide David the opportunity to strategize and prepare. God was in all of this. Absalom chose the advice of



Hushai because "the Lord had determined to frustrate the good advice of Ahithophel in order to bring disaster on Absalom" (2Sa 17:14).

Ahithophel did not take rejection well. "When Ahithophel saw that his advice had not been followed, he saddled his donkey and set out for his house in his hometown. He put his house in order and then hanged himself" (2 Samuel 17:23). Meanwhile, Hushai sent word of the battle plan to David through the priestly spies. Hushai's advice to David was, "Do not spend the night at the fords in the wilderness; cross over without fail" (2 Samuel 17:16).

The battle between the forces of David and Absalom took place "in the forest of Ephraim" (2 Samuel 18:6). The forces of Absalom were routed, and the battle "spread out over the whole countryside" (2Sa 18:8). Absalom himself was killed by Joab, one of David's commanders (2 Samuel 18:14). The coup was ended.

Through Hushai, God answered David's prayer and preserved David's throne. Absalom made his choices, but God was sovereign all the while. "We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps" (Proverbs 16:9NLT). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

## 2 Samuel 16:17 Absalom said to Hushai, "Is this your loyalty to your friend? Why did you not go with your friend?"

- **Is this:** Dt 32:6
- **Why did you not go:** 2Sa 15:32-37 19:25 Pr 17:17 18:24
- [2 Samuel 16 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### ABSALOM GENTLY INTERROGATES HUSHAI

**Absalom said to Hushai, "Is this your loyalty to your friend?"** - Absalom begins to fall for Hushai's hustle asking him why he was not loyal to his friend David/

**Why did you not go with your friend** - His second question is why he did not leave Jerusalem with David? In fact he did leave Jerusalem with David and had Absalom done some investigative work, he likely would have discovered this fact.

## 2 Samuel 16:18 Then Hushai said to Absalom, "No! For whom the LORD, this people, and all the men of Israel have chosen, his I will be, and with him I will remain.

- 2Sa 5:1-3 1Sa 16:13
- [2 Samuel 16 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### HUSHAI REASONABLE REPLY TO WHY STAY

**Then Hushai said to Absalom, "No! For whom the LORD, this people, and all the men of Israel have chosen, his I will be, and with him I will remain** - Hushai cleverly phrases his answer implying that he was staying because Absalom was clearly God's choice and the people's choice to be the next king of Israel which the grounds for his decision to remain in Jerusalem. NLT paraphrases it "I'm here because I work for the man who is chosen by the LORD and by Israel."

## 2 Samuel 16:19 "Besides, whom should I serve? Should I not serve in the presence of his son? As I have served in your father's presence, so I will be in your presence."

- **should I not serve:** 2Sa 15:34 1Sa 28:2 29:8 Ps 55:21 Ga 2:13
- [2 Samuel 16 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### HUSHAI REELS ABSALOM IN WITH LOGICAL QUESTIONS

**Besides, whom should I serve? Should I not serve in the presence of his son? As I have served in your father's presence,**

**so I will be in your presence** - Hushai continues his logical, reasonable answer to Absalom. Hushai reminds me of a fisherman who has a great lure/bait which he throws out, immediately sees the cork beginning to bob up and down and begins to reel in his catch into the boat! As we see in the next verse, the "big fish" is in Hushai's boat!

**2 Samuel 16:20 Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, "Give your advice. What shall we do?"**

- **Give your advice** Ex 1:10 Ps 2:2 37:12,13 Pr 21:30 Isa 8:10 29:15 Mt 27:1 Ac 4:23-28
- [2 Samuel 16 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## HUSHAI'S STORY SUCCESSFUL!

**Then** - Marks progression in the narrative. Possibly Ahithophel was present when Absalom interviewed Hushai, but in any event he bypasses Hushai for now to hear from his other counselor.

**Absalom said to Ahithophel, "Give your advice. What shall we do?"** - Absalom has the throne now, so he wants to know what his next strategic move should be. Ahithophel once the close counselor of David will now show how evil he has become in his betrayal.

**Guzik** - 2 Samuel 11:3 tells us that Bathsheba's father was Eliam, one of David's mighty men (2 Samuel 23:34). This also means that her grandfather was Ahithophel (according to 2 Samuel 23:34). 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.

**2 Samuel 16:21 Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Go in to your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house; then all Israel will hear that you have made yourself odious to your father. The hands of all who are with you will also be strengthened."**

- **Go in:** Ge 6:4 38:16
- **to your:** 2Sa 12:11 15:16 20:3 Ge 35:22 Lev 18:8 20:11 1Ki 2:17,22 1Co 5:1
- **made yourself odious:** Ge 34:30 1Sa 13:4
- **father:** Ge 49:3,4
- **will:** 1Sa 27:12
- **the hands:** 2Sa 2:7 Zec 8:13
- [2 Samuel 16 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SEX AND THE CITY

There is a popular television show call "Sex and the City," and that title is apropos for this passage, which one might even entitle "Sex in the City of David."

**Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Go in to your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house-** David had left his concubines in the palace, clearly indicating that he thought he would be returning. Concubines were like second string wives so to speak and they had limited inheritance rights. Unfortunately, it was a bad mistake to leave them and scheming Ahithophel jumped at this chance to embarrass the king in front of all Israel. Remember that Ahithophel was Bathsheba's grandfather and presumably felt like he had an ax to grind with David because he had defiled his granddaughter. Sins have a way of catching up with us! Obviously **Go in to** indicates that Absalom is to have sexual relations with them. This was sinful, but secularly wise counsel for in the ancient world, the appropriation of the royal harem demonstrated possession of the throne. Thus Absalom's monarchy would be solidified by this move.

**MacArthur** - In the Near East, possession of the harem came with the throne. (Borrow [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**Mattoon** - Ahithophel says, "Have sexual relations with David's concubines." His counsel is off track because he is off track. He is not in line with the Lord. ([Treasures from 2 Samuel](#))

**Then** - This is normally a time sensitive word marking progression, but in this context it functions more like a term of conclusion.

**All Israel will hear that you have made yourself odious to your father-** Note the phrase **all Israel will hear** indicating that this

scandalous news will spread like wildfire throughout the land, even from Dan to Beersheba! Everyone who hears this will now be fully convinced that Absalom has insulted his father beyond all hope of reconciliation.

**The hands of all who are with you will also be strengthened** - Their support of Absalom would be strengthened. When all Israel realizes that Absalom has irrevocably made himself an enemy of his father, they will throw their full support behind Absalom as king.

**Utley** - Ahithophel's initial advice was designed to (1) confirm Absalom as the new king (i.e., having sex with David's concubines in public view, v. 22), which was predicted in 2 Sam. 12:11-12 and (2) publicly show his separation from his father David (i.e., "have made yourself odious to your father") thereby encouraging his supporters that he could not be reconciled with his father David

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**Walton** has two discussions of sex with concubines - Ishbosheth asks Abner **Why did you sleep with my father's concubine?** (2Sa 3:7). In the ancient Near East, a household often included a primary wife and one or more subordinate wives or concubines, the latter being defined as women by whom a man might father children but who brought no dowry into the relationship and thus did not enjoy the status of full wife. (On the possibility of elevating a concubine to the status of wife, according to Middle Assyrian law for example, see K. R. Nemet-Nejat, [Daily life in ancient Mesopotamia \[borrow\]](#), p136. Cf. also J. N. Postgate, *Early Mesopotamia: Society and Economy at the Dawn of History*, p149, on concubines of "intermediate status" at Mari.) While monogamy may have been the (flexible) norm among common folk in the ancient Near East, (Nemet-Nejat, [Daily life](#)) polygamy was common among the powerful, especially kings (on polygamy in the ancient Near East generally, see comments on 1 Sam. 1:2; for the beginnings of David's harem, see comment on 1Sa 25:39). **A king's wives and concubines reflected his power and position, often involving political alliances through marriage.** Thus for an outsider to sleep with one of these women was, among other things, a direct assault on the king's status and position. (For specific examples of and details regarding royal harems in the ancient Near East and in the Bible, see Marsman, *Women in Ugarit and Israel*, 371–81; cf. R. de Vaux, *borrow [Ancient Israel](#) vol 1, 1:115–17 [Ancient Israel - volume 2](#)*) In the Bible, to sleep with a royal wife or concubine was tantamount to usurping the throne (2 Sam. 16:21–22), and merely to ask to marry a concubine of a deceased king was considered treason (see esp. 1 Kings 2:22). In the present episode, the narrator does not state explicitly whether Abner had slept with Saul's concubine Rizpah, but he does state that "Abner had been strengthening his own position in the house of Saul" (2Sa 3:6), perhaps aggravating Ish-Bosheth's suspicions. Abner's incensed response in 3:8 to Ish-Bosheth's charge—unless he is simply feigning indignation—suggests that he is innocent of the specific charge. (Bergen - borrow [1 & 2 Samuel - New American Commentary](#)) (See page 325 [IVP Bible Background Commentary](#))

**Lie with your father's concubines** (2Sa 16:21). In the ancient Near East a king's wives and concubines were regarded as indicative of his power and position (see comment above on 2Sa 3:7). Their acquisition often involved diplomacy or conquest. For an outsider to sleep with a member of the royal harem, therefore, was a direct affront to the monarch and tantamount to usurpation. The Assyrian king Sennacherib boasts of divesting King Hezekiah of his "daughters, concubines," and much else besides; he did much the same to Merodach-Baladan of Babylon, entering his palace, taking charge of "the property and goods (laid up) therein," including "his wife, his harem," and so forth. Ahithophel knows whereof he speaks when he says that Absalom's lying with his father's concubines will make him "a stench in your father's nostrils." (See page 345 [IVP Bible Background Commentary](#))

**2 Samuel 16:22 So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof, and Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.**

- **on the roof:** 2Sa 11:2
- **went in:** 2Sa 12:11,12 15:16 20:3 Nu 25:6 Isa 3:9 Jer 3:3 8:12 Eze 24:7 Php 3:19
- [2 Samuel 16 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

2 Samuel 12:11-12+ "Thus says the LORD, **Behold**, I will raise up evil against you from your own household; **I will even take your wives before your eyes and give them to your companion, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight.** 12 'Indeed you did it secretly, but **I will do this thing before all Israel, and under the sun.**' (NOTE THE "I WILL'S" - GOD WILL ORCHESTRATE THIS BUT NOTE HE USES A MAN'S COUNSEL - GOD'S PART/MAN'S PART).

2 Samuel 3:7+ Now Saul had a concubine whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah; and Ish-bosheth said to Abner, "Why have you gone in to my father's concubine?"

**ABSALOM BECOMES A STENCH  
IN HIS FATHER'S EYES**

**So** - For this reason, to follow up on Ahithophel's counsel.

**They pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof, and Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel** - This presumably was the same roof from which David had first lusted for Bathsheba, so that the curse of 2Sa. 12:11-12+ was coming full circle! This is a form of OT "pornography" because clearly all Israel who saw Absalom go into the tent would use their fallen imaginations to visualize what was happening inside and in plain **sight!** Evil but wise counsel! This would surely eliminate any possibility of reconciliation with David.

Of course the reader of 2 Samuel immediately recognizes that this sordid scene fulfills Nathan's prophecy in 2 Samuel 12:11-12+ and also signaled to all Jerusalem that Absalom was taking over all the prerogatives of the king (2 Samuel 3:6-11).

**Mattoon** - In the East, the successor to the throne claimed the rights to the throne by appropriating the harem of the king. The harem was guarded more than riches. To intrude upon the privacy of the harem was unpardonable and punishable by death. A tent was set up on the rooftop of the palace, the same roof where David viewed Bathsheba. David is reaping God's judgment. Nathan warned this would happen (2 Samuel 12:11, 12). The concubines would not be guiltless even though they protest. Their fate is revealed in 2 Samuel 20:3 ([Treasures from 2 Samuel](#))

**2 Samuel 16:23 The advice of Ahithophel, which he gave in those days, was as if one inquired of the word of God; so was all the advice of Ahithophel regarded by both David and Absalom.**

- **as if one inquired** Nu 27:21 1Sa 30:8 Ps 28:2 1Pe 4:11
- **inquired of the word of God**, Ps 19:7
- **all the advice**: 2Sa 17:14,23 Job 5:12 28:28 Jer 4:22 8:9 Mt 11:25 Lu 16:8 Ro 1:22 1Co 3:19,20 Jas 3:13-18
- **both David and Absalom**: 2Sa 15:12 Ec 10:1
- [2 Samuel 16 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

2 Samuel 15:31+ Now someone told David, saying, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." And David said, "**O LORD, I pray, make the counsel of Ahithophel foolishness.**" (Note that Ahithophel means something like "Brother of Foolishness.")

### AHITHOPHEL'S ADVICE LIKE GETTING ANSWER FROM GOD

Note that the Counsel of Ahithophel will continue in 2Sa 17:1-4.

**The advice of Ahithophel, which he gave in those days, was as if one inquired of the word of God; so was all the advice of Ahithophel regarded by both David and Absalom** - It is like saying his advice was almost like a prophet's message. Ahithophel's advice was highly prized (as thought it came from the Lord) and the first advice to Absalom was overtly sinful but successful, not to mention that it fulfilled Nathan's prophecy (2Sa 12:11-12+). Since God is sovereign and His Word is always perfectly fulfilled, one cannot help but suggest that in some way God allowed Ahithophel to have this sinful thought. This is mysterious because clearly God is not the author sin. And recall that David had prayed Ahithophel's counsel be made foolish, and Absalom's sinning in full view might be considered foolish, although the real answer to that prayer comes in 2Sa 17:14+.

It is a bit ironic that this description of Ahithophel's counsel like the word of God followed some of the more evil, sinful, sordid advice in the Old Testament!

**TSK** on Ahithophel's counsel like an **oracle of God** - The first counsel of this sagacious but wicked man to Absalom was more like an oracle of Satan, both for subtlety and atrocity. He advised the shameless measure just detailed, in order to establish Absalom, and to preclude the possibility of a reconciliation with David. The wives of a conquered king were always the property of the conqueror; and in possessing these he appeared to possess the right to the kingdom.

[Believer's Study Bible](#) - Ahithophel, the opportunist, made friendship a matter of personal prosperity. First David and then Absalom viewed him as a wise counselor, trusting his word as if it were an oracle of God. David's prayer (2Sa 15:31) eventually was answered by God (2Sa 17:14) when Ahithophel's counsel was rejected and Ahithophel took his own life (2Sa 17:23). Typical of the result of this charlatan's advice was Absalom's public affair with the concubines of David (2Sa 16:21).

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## When You Want Revenge

Do not avenge yourselves . . . for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. —Romans 12:19

Today's Scripture: 2 Samuel 16:23-17:23

A person intent on revenge is likely to do something he will later regret. Or, if he never acts, he will gradually become bitter, hateful, and very unhappy.

Ahithophel is a prime example. He had been a close advisor and companion to King David. But he joined Absalom when the young man decided to oust his father from the throne.

Why? It is probable that Bathsheba, the young woman King David had taken advantage of, was Ahithophel's granddaughter (2 Sam. 11:3; 23:34). If so, he had a right to be angry with the king! Vengeful feelings grew strong within him. When the opportunity came, he rushed to Absalom and told him how to take over the throne. Absalom, though, rejected his counsel. In despair, Ahithophel committed suicide (2Sa 17:23).

It could have been so different. If only Ahithophel had talked to God about his anger and then spoken to David. He would have heard the king's sorrow over his sin (Ps. 32; 51). He could have forgiven David and remained his friend. He could have shown us how to handle anger.

Let's learn from his negative example to reject the idea of revenge and instead take the path of loving confrontation and ready forgiveness. By: Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

### THINKING IT OVER

When do feelings of revenge rise within you?

What good results have come out of a bad situation that you handled properly? (Mt. 18:15-35).

**Revenge takes you down to the level of your offender.**