

## David on the Run – 2 Samuel 16 & 17

### Introduction:

Many parents have had to deal with difficult children, but few would have to deal with children who are seeking to rob them of their power, possessions and life. David has many children, and we read very little about his interaction with them. Sadly we only hear about what went wrong, like Tamar's rape, and Absalom's rebellion.

It is easy to blame the parents when children turn bad. It happens all the time in our society. Though there certainly are parents who have negatively influenced their children due to neglect, abuse or impossible demands, even good, loving, caring parents can have children who choose a bad path.

Our passage does not try to explain what went wrong, it simply shows us what happened, and how David responded in the crisis. David, with all his faults, was still a man who put God at the forefront of his life. Did that faith commitment make a difference in how David responded? You be the judge.

### What do we make of Ziba? – 2 Samuel 16:1-4

1. Who meets King David as he is descending from the Mount of Olives (v.1)?  
What do we know about him?
2. What aid is offered to King David (v. 1)?
3. The king asks why these gifts have been brought to him and his men. What response does he receive (v. 2)?
4. Then the king asks where Ziba's master is. Where does Ziba say Mephibosheth is? Why is he there according to Ziba?
5. Does King David believe Ziba (v. 4)? What reward does Ziba receive for his gifts to the king?

6. There is no way of knowing what motivates a man. Later we will read Mephibosheth's version of what happened, which is quite different than the story Ziba presents (cf. 2 Samuel 19:24-30). Is Ziba to be trusted?

### **Shimei Curses David – 2 Samuel 16:5-14**

7. Bahurim is a village on the east slope of the Mount of Olives. There King David is confronted by Shimei. What do we know of Shimei (v. 5)? How did he respond to the King?
8. Besides calling down curses on the King, what else did Shimei do (v. 6)?
9. What does Shimei call King David in verse 7?
10. Why does Shimei think David is suffering as he is (v. 8)?
11. A warrior can only take so much abuse before he responds. Abishai is a valiant warrior, and protector of the king. What does he want to do with Shimei (v. 9)?
12. Does David let his soldier defend his honour (v. 10)? What perspective does David have on what is happening?
13. In verse 11 the King gives a command. What is it? Why does he give it?
14. In verse 12 we get to the heart of the King. He is not resigning himself to defeat. What is he trusting in?
15. In verse 13 we read how Shimei is very persistent. The stress of everything the King and his followers are facing starts to show. What is the state of the King and his party by the time they reach the Jordan River (v. 14)?

### **Absalom in Jerusalem – 2 Samuel 16:15-23**

16. According to verse 15, who accompanies Absalom into Jerusalem? What does this say about the state of the country?

17. How does Hushai, David's friend, greet Absalom when he arrives in the city (v. 16)? How does Absalom respond to this greeting (v. 17)?
18. In verses 18-19 we get Hushai's explanation for why he is there in apparent support of Absalom. In verse 18 we get a key phrase about kingship, and who deserves to be king. What does Hushai say? How might this be viewed as a bit of a poke at Absalom?
19. Absalom turns to Ahithophel in verse 20 and asks what he should do next. (We get the impression that Ahithophel has been behind this coup). What does he suggest Absalom should do (v. 21)? Why might he suggest this action?
20. How did Absalom make sure that everyone knew he had violated his father's concubines (v. 22)?
21. In verse 23 we get an explanation why Absalom would follow such advice from Ahithophel. What are we told?

### **Advice to the New King – 2 Samuel 17:1-14**

22. What strategy does Ahithophel suggest for Absalom (vss. 1-4)? Is it a good plan? What are the advantages of this plan?
23. Absalom wants to hear what Hushai has to say about this strategy. What does Hushai say about Ahithophel's plan (v. 7)?
24. How does Hushai describe David in verse 8? Remembering how David left Jerusalem, is Hushai's description accurate?
25. To further dissuade Absalom from following Ahithophel's advice, what does Hushai suggest (vss. 9-13)? What does Hushai's advice give to David?
26. Verse 14 we read how Absalom and his men agree with Hushai. As far as military strategy goes, his is not the better plan. Why do the people follow the plan that actually gives David the advantage (v. 14)?
27. Looking back at what Hushai says in 16:18, what is the message we get from this passage?

### **Warning David of the Coming Battle – 2 Samuel 17:15-23**

28. Who does Hushai tell about the counsel Absalom received (v. 15)? Why them?
29. What advice does Hushai want to send to David (v. 16)? Why?
30. Jonathan and Ahimaaz are stationed outside the city so they can carry messages to David. What goes wrong with the plan (v. 18)?
31. What do Jonathan and Ahimaaz have to do to escape detection (vss. 18-20)? Are they successful?
32. The young men are finally able to get to David. How does David respond to their message (v. 22)?
33. When Ahithophel realizes Absalom will not follow his instructions, how does he respond (v. 23)? Why?

### **Preparing for War – 2 Samuel 17:24-29**

34. David comes to Mahanaim, (v. 24) east of the Jordan. This had been Ishbosheth's (Saul's son) headquarters when he confronted David. Now it is David's base. The people are connected to Saul's family. Do you think David's treatment of Ishbosheth has made a difference? Relate this to Matthew 10:42.
35. Absalom follows David across the river and sets up camp. Who is with Absalom according to verse 24?
36. Who is the head of Absalom's army (v. 25)? We get a long list of who he is connected to, but the bottom line is that he is family to David and Absalom. He is from the tribe of Judah. Why might Absalom choose him to lead?
37. As David left Jerusalem we saw many foreigners following him. In verses 27-29 we read of foreigners coming to David's aid. What aid do they give (vss.28-29)? What reason do they give for helping (v. 29)?

## Conclusion

This is one of the lowest times in David's life. Though the years of running from Saul were difficult, running from your own son after he has turned on you is far worse. Reading the texts one gets the feeling that David is depressed and almost without hope. Nonetheless, God is with him.

First, we see that David has decided he will let God determine the outcome of this challenge. When Shimei curses the King and a brave soldier volunteers to silence him (permanently) David refuses the offer, and instead suggests that God might repay him good for suffering this injustice this day (16:12). Knowing God was in control of his life brought some comfort in this day of testing.

Second, David finds he has some true friends, people who will stand by him even at the cost of their own lives. These two chapters are full of brave friends of David, from Hushai to Zadok and Abiathar, Jonathan and Ahimaaz, an unnamed woman and her husband, to foreigners who would provide food and comforts to the King. God seldom leaves us alone, and as we learn to do good to the people around us they in turn will be there for us in our time of need.

In our darkest hours it is easy to focus so much on our pain and troubles that we do not see that God is still with us, and has a plan even for our pain. We also are sometimes blinded to who our true friends are, as we focus on the people who turned their backs on us. May we have eyes to see the people God has already put in our lives who love us and will be there for us, thick or thin.

David has made some good investments in people around him. Now he is reaping the fruits of those investments, when he needs it most. David is a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14, Acts 13:22) which means he has learned the value of loving others. He is not perfect, but he is on the right track.