

Exegetical Notes – 2 Samuel 16:1-14

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2 Samuel 16:1-14

(For more information about Absalom, David's son and Israel's Crown Prince after Amnon's murder and his rebellion against King David, read 2 Samuel 13:1–15:1-37 and the exegetical notes prepared for those passages.)

Verses 1-4

¹ *When David had gone a short distance beyond the summit, there was Ziba, the steward of Mephibosheth, waiting to meet him. He had a string of donkeys saddled and loaded with two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred cakes of raisins, a hundred cakes of figs and a skin of wine.*

² *The king asked Ziba, "Why have you brought these?"*

Ziba answered, "The donkeys are for the king's household to ride on, the bread and fruit are for the men to eat, and the wine is to refresh those who become exhausted in the wilderness."

³ *The king then asked, "Where is your master's grandson?"*

Ziba said to him, "He is staying in Jerusalem, because he thinks, 'Today the Israelites will restore to me my grandfather's kingdom.'"

⁴ *Then the king said to Ziba, "All that belonged to Mephibosheth is now yours." "I humbly bow," Ziba said. "May I find favor in your eyes, my lord the king."*

- David is fleeing from Jerusalem in the face of Absalom's coup. He had retreated to the top of the Mount of Olives. There, he found Ziba, Mephibosheth's steward, waiting for him with supplies. Mephibosheth was the son of Jonathan. He was the only survivor of Saul. He was crippled and David had given him protection when he became Israel's king (see 2 Samuel 9). David had made Ziba steward of Mephibosheth's estate.
- Ziba was loyal to David even as David fled. He brought supplies to aide David.
- When David asked Ziba where Mephibosheth was, Ziba said that Mephibosheth was waiting in Jerusalem in hopes of being made Israel's king. Ziba said that Mephibosheth hoped that his grandfather's dynasty

would be restored but, even though David had shown him great favor, he (Mephibosheth) was not loyal to David.

- In response to Ziba's loyalty and Mephibosheth's apparent betrayal, David gave Ziba everything that belonged to Mephibosheth. This favor is meaningless if David loses the kingdom to either Absalom or Mephibosheth. But it seems that there are now two men who seek David's throne.
- When we get to 2 Samuel 19, we will see that Ziba's accusations were false.

Verses 5-8

⁵ As King David approached Bahurim, a man from the same clan as Saul's family came out from there. His name was Shimei son of Gera, and he cursed as he came out. ⁶ He pelted David and all the king's officials with stones, though all the troops and the special guard were on David's right and left. ⁷ As he cursed, Shimei said, "Get out, get out, you murderer, you scoundrel! ⁸ The LORD has repaid you for all the blood you shed in the household of Saul, in whose place you have reigned. The LORD has given the kingdom into the hands of your son Absalom. You have come to ruin because you are a murderer!"

- As David passed Bahurim, a small village, a man named Shimei, who was also a descendant of King Saul came out and began to shout curses at him. Shimei pelted the royal procession with stones. He told David that David was getting what he deserved.

Verses 9-12

⁹ Then Abishai son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and cut off his head."

¹⁰ But the king said, "What does this have to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? If he is cursing because the LORD said to him, 'Curse David,' who can ask, 'Why do you do this?'"

¹¹ David then said to Abishai and all his officials, "My son, my own flesh and blood, is trying to kill me. How much more, then, this Benjamite! Leave him alone; let him curse, for the LORD has told him to. ¹² It may be that the LORD will look upon my misery and restore to me his covenant blessing instead of his curse today."

- Abishai, Joab's brother and one of David's generals, wanted to go and silence Shimei by cutting off his head. But David would not allow him to do so.

- David's argument was twofold: 1. Shimei was nothing. The real threat was Absalom; and, 2. If God was for him, nothing would stand against him, but if God was against him, all was lost. If God was against him, Shimei was right. David was getting what he deserved.

Verses 13-14

¹³ So David and his men continued along the road while Shimei was going along the hillside opposite him, cursing as he went and throwing stones at him and showering him with dirt. ¹⁴ The king and all the people with him arrived at their destination exhausted. And there he refreshed himself.

- So things went until David arrived at the place where he intended to camp. There he took refreshment.

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