

# The Lord Preserves His King

## Text: 2 Samuel 16

**Introduction:** Go ahead and turn in your Bible to 2 Samuel 16. It begins on page 249 in the black pew Bible in front of you. If you don't own a Bible, we encourage you to take the pew Bible with you when you leave.

(Read 2 Samuel 16...Pray)

We are making our way through 2 Samuel, and we have come to the point of the narrative where David the king is in exile. David's son Absalom has rebelled against David and is seeking to establish himself as Israel's king. Last time we saw in chapter 15 that Absalom "stole the hearts of the people." As a result, it became clear to David that it was dangerous for him to remain in Jerusalem. So, David and those who were loyal to him fled the city.

Now, as we turn our attention to chapter 16, we see that there are various responses to David and his kingdom. Some oppose David. Others are loyal to David. And even among those who had previously been loyal to David, there is betrayal.

But we're going to see that **amid deception, opposition, loyalty, and betrayal, the Lord preserves His King.** That's true for David here in 2 Samuel 16. And it's even more true for the Son of David, the Lord Jesus Christ.

At this point in Israel's history where you've got this power struggle between King David and his son Absalom, people's response to David the king is all over the map. We've already seen various responses to David in chapter 15. And those varied responses continue in chapter 16.

Where first we see that...

### I. Many seek to deceive the king – Ziba (2 Samuel 16:1-4).

#### A. In this case we're talking about a man named Ziba.

1. We were first introduced to Ziba in 2 Samuel 9. Ziba was a servant of the house of Saul. And it was through Ziba that David showed kindness to the house of Saul via Jonathan's son Mephibosheth. David restored to Mephibosheth all the land of Saul his grandfather and permitted him to eat at his table always.
2. Now, Ziba comes to David on the Mount of Olives with a couple of donkeys carrying bread, raisins, fruit, and a skin of wine (vs. 1).
3. David wants to know what Ziba is up to. He asks him, "Why have you brought these?" (vs. 2a).
  - a. Now, we can imagine that David did in fact have a great need for the provisions that Ziba had brought. David had fled from Jerusalem in a hurry, and almost certainly did not have time to ensure that enough food was brought for himself, his family, and all who were with him.
  - b. So, Ziba showing up with all these provisions was a sight for sore eyes. But still, it must have seemed strange to David. What was Ziba up to? We'll learn in chapter 19 that David was right to be skeptical.
4. But Ziba assured David of his genuine concern for him when he said, "The donkeys are for the king's household to ride on, the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat, and the wine for those who faint in the wilderness to drink" (vs. 2b).
5. All of that seems straightforward enough. But David has another question: "And where is your master's son?" (vs. 3a). Ziba's master was Saul. The son that David was referring to was Saul's grandson Mephibosheth. If Ziba had come out to do this wonderful thing for David and his followers, why hadn't Mephibosheth come as well?
6. Look at Ziba's response in the second half of verse 3, "Behold, he remains in Jerusalem, for he said, 'Today the house of Israel will give me back the kingdom of my father'" (vs. 3b).

7. **Woah! Now that's a big claim! Ziba claims that Mephibosheth has forsaken David in hopes that David's son Absalom is going to return to Jerusalem and restore the kingdom to him as Saul's grandson and rightful heir.**
8. **We have no way of verifying this claim in the immediate context. The author of 2 Samuel makes no statement here about the truthfulness of the claim. But it doesn't sound right, does it?**
  - a. **First, we know that David had been exceedingly kind to Mephibosheth and restored to him all of Saul's land. Why would Mephibosheth now turn his back on David?**
  - b. **Also, why would Mephibosheth think that Absalom would give him the kingdom? Everything we know about Absalom says that Absalom is looking out for numero uno. He wants the kingdom for himself. He's not going to give it to Mephibosheth.**
9. **But while Ziba's claim seems strange to us, if it sounded strange to David, there's no indication of that in the text. Look at verse 4. (Read vs. 4)**
10. **Without verifying anything that Ziba told him, David gave Ziba everything that belonged to Mephibosheth.**
11. **And we will learn in chapter 19 that Ziba's entire story was a fabrication.**
12. **We're reminded here of the warning of Proverbs 18:17, "The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him."**
13. **Sadly, the once great King David has made a habit of being easily deceived ever since his tragic fall into grievous sin. First it was his son Amnon. Then his son Absalom. And now Ziba. The once wise and discerning king can now be described as foolish and gullible.**

As we're reading about David's exile from Jerusalem and all that transpired in his interactions with various people, we can't help but be reminded of the events surrounding the betrayal, arrest, and crucifixion of Jesus. King David points us to his descendant, King Jesus.

- B. **We're going to talk more about Judas when we get to Ahithophel, but I can't help but notice some similarity between Judas and Ziba as well.**
  1. **Many of you will remember that in John 12, Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, anointed Jesus' feet with expensive perfume and then wiped his feet with her hair. Do you remember how Judas responded? He got upset and questioned, "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" (Jn. 12:5). But the text notes, "He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it" (Jn. 12:6).**
  2. **See, something similar is happening here with Ziba and David. Ziba's real concern is not David and those who are with him. Ziba's concern is Ziba. Like Judas presented himself as caring about the poor when he was really looking out for himself, Ziba deceptively presents himself as caring for David and those who are with him when he is really only concerned about himself.**
  3. **I also think about Matthew 26:49 where the text tells us that Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss. Ziba approached David with gifts and words of loyalty, but it was all an act of deception to benefit himself from the king's crisis. In like manner, Judas didn't betray Jesus with a sword. He did it with a kiss. A sign of loyalty became an instrument of deception.**
  4. **Interestingly enough though, the Bible makes quite clear that while David actually was deceived by Ziba, Jesus was not fooled for even a minute by Judas. In fact, earlier on the same night that Jesus was arrested, Judas asked Jesus if he was the one who would betray Jesus. To which Jesus responded, "You have said so" (Matt. 26:25).**
  5. **Unlike King David, King Jesus cannot actually be deceived, but that doesn't keep people from trying, does it? There is no shortage of people willing to use Jesus for their own advancement while trying to make it look like they love Jesus.**

6. The problem for those who would attempt to deceive Jesus is that Jesus knows our hearts. He cannot be deceived.

We've seen that some seek to deceive the king. Now, let's see that...

## II. Others oppose the king – Shimei (2 Samuel 16:5-14).

### A. As we keep reading, we're introduced to a man named Shimei.

1. Shimei is a name that shows up earlier in the Old Testament, but this is the first time this particular Shimei is mentioned. He does show up again later in the narrative of 2 Samuel. The text tells us here that he's a man of the family of the house of Saul. His father's name was Gera.
2. "And as he came he cursed continually." And not only that, look at verse 6. (Read vs. 6-8)
3. Interestingly enough, Shimei is both half wrong and half right in his criticism of David.

- a. He's half wrong because he's saying that David is experiencing the consequences of his actions against the house of Saul. He calls David a "man of blood" and says, "the LORD has avenged on you all the blood of the house of Saul" (vs. 8). He clearly holds David responsible for the deaths of multiple people within the house of Saul, starting with Saul himself. Then there was Jonathan and the other sons of Saul. And then there was Abner, the commander of Saul's army, and Ish-bosheth, Saul's last remaining son. Of course, we know that David was not personally responsible for any of those deaths. The Philistines killed Saul and his sons. Joab murdered Abner. And Rechab and Baanah were responsible for Ish-bosheth's killing. So, Shimei was half wrong because David wasn't responsible for any of the deaths of the house of Saul. In fact, David had gone to great lengths to show kindness to the house of Saul.

- b. But Shimei was also half right when he called David a "man of blood" and said that "the LORD has avenged on you all the blood" because David WAS a murderer. He was directly responsible for the death of Bathsheba's husband Uriah. And the prophet Nathan said to David, "Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house." Through the rebellion of his son Absalom, David was in fact experiencing the consequences for his sin.

4. Now, we should note that Shimei was not a real threat to David and his men.

- a. The real threat was Absalom.
- b. You've heard the old saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me." Of course, we know that's not true. Words do hurt.
- c. And Shimei was doing more than hurling insults. The text says he was throwing stones and dirt.
- d. But Shimei had no authority or power to take David's kingdom as Absalom was trying to do. And David and his men could have put a stop to Shimei and his insults at any moment if they wished.

### B. Still, Abishai, who was one of David's men, was ready to take off Shimei's head.

1. Look at verse 9. (Read vs. 9)
2. One commentator writes, "Abishai proposes this because he has observed that people without heads do not curse" (Dale Ralph Davis, 203 via Begg).
3. But David wants nothing to do with Abishai's proposal. In fact, if David follows Abishai's suggestion, he will merely prove Shimei to be right in his criticism. Perhaps David is just "a man of blood."
4. Now, I have to ask if Abishai's proposal and David's response remind you of anything from the arrest of Jesus. Remember Peter's response when they seized Jesus to arrest Him? He took his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. And how

did Jesus respond? He said, “Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?” (Matt. 26:53). Jesus could have put a stop to it all at any moment. But He was committed to drinking the cup that His Father had given Him (Jn. 18:11). And what was that cup? The wrath of God toward our sin. Jesus would go to the cross and drink that cup for us.

5. But here in 2 Samuel 16, it seems that the Lord actually used Shimei to continue to bring about conviction in David’s heart. Look at verse 10. (Read vs. 10-11)

- a. See, David understands why he is in exile. It’s because of his sin against the Lord.
- b. God had told David through Nathan, “Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your own house” (2 Sam. 12:11).
- c. And now the Lord has in fact raised up evil against David from his own house.

6. But look at verse 12 where David throws himself on the mercy of God. (Read vs. 12)

7. David is a broken man. Broken by his sin and its consequences. But he still knows and trusts that the Lord is good. He doesn’t know what will happen with Absalom and the kingdom. But he knows that all that the Lord does is right.

8. So, he and his men continued along the road, and all who were with them arrived at the Jordan River and refreshed themselves (vs. 13-14).

C. Of course, we know that the opposition Jesus faced during His life and ministry was every bit as intense as that experienced by David.

1. In fact, the suffering Jesus experienced in his arrest, trial, and crucifixion was of a nature and intensity that David couldn’t even imagine.

2. And the big distinction between David and Jesus is that David suffered because of his sin. Jesus suffered because of our sin. Jesus had no sin of His own to pay for. His suffering was the suffering we deserved. Every bit of opposition Jesus faced belonged to us. But Jesus took it on Himself on our behalf.

Many seek to deceive the king. Others oppose the king. And...

III. Some stand with the king – Hushai (2 Samuel 16:15-19).

A. This is exactly what we see with Hushai beginning in vs. 15.

1. We were introduced to Hushai last week at the end of chapter 15. You remember, don’t you? David sent him to Absalom to “defeat...the counsel of Ahithophel.”
2. Well, now Absalom has arrived in Jerusalem, and so has Hushai.
3. Look at what Hushai said to Absalom in verse 16: “Long live the king! Long live the king!” Absalom was so consumed with himself that he thought Hushai was talking about him. But who was the king in Israel? David. David was still the king. And Hushai was talking about David. But he intentionally allowed Absalom to think he was talking about him.
4. Absalom then questioned Hushai about his loyalty to David (vs. 17).
5. And look at Hushai’s response in verse 18. (Read vs. 18)
6. Again, Absalom thinks Hushai is talking about him. But who had the Lord chosen? And who had the people chosen? To be king in Israel? David. Hushai pledges his loyalty to David, but Absalom thinks exactly the opposite is happening. That Hushai is pledging his loyalty to him.
7. Hushai’s rhetorical question at the beginning of verse 19 should have brought conviction to Absalom’s heart. “Whom should I serve?” Hushai asks. The obvious answer is David. He should serve David. The king. The Lord’s anointed. But that’s not how Absalom hears the question. It seems clear to Absalom that Hushai should serve him. And in a sense, that’s just what Hushai will do. While remaining loyal to David.

**B. Now, as we think about the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus and this idea of standing with the king, we're really left to look to negative examples where Jesus' closest followers did not stand with Him in His hour of greatest need.**

- 1. We probably think first about Peter and the fact that he betrayed Jesus three times despite earlier in the night pledging his loyalty to Jesus.**
- 2. But Matthew 26:56 tells us that when Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, "all the disciples left him and fled." They did not stand with Jesus in His hour of need.**
- 3. What about us? Do we stand with Jesus no matter the cost? Or do we only stand with Him when it seems advantageous to do so? What about you teenager? What does it look like to stand with Jesus at school? To do what you know is right even when the pressure to deny Jesus with your actions is strong? What about in the workplace? Do you stand with Jesus even when there may be a cost to doing so?**

We've seen that many seek to deceive the king. Others oppose the king. Some stand with the king. And finally, we see that...

#### **IV. Still others betray the king – Ahithophel (2 Samuel 16:20-23).**

**A. Ahithophel was David's counselor, but now we see him advising Absalom.**

- 1. Absalom asks him, "Give your counsel. What shall we do?" (vs. 20).**
- 2. And look at Ahithophel's evil counsel. (Read vs. 21)**
- 3. Understand that in that society, concubines were symbolic of the royal house. To seize the king's harem was to lay claim to the kingdom.**
- 4. One commentator writes, "When Absalom seized David's concubines, it became clear there was no retreat and no possibility of reconciliation. By this provocation, Absalom forced the people to make a choice" (Leithart, 273).**

- 5. As we keep reading, we see that Absalom followed Ahithophel's counsel. (Read vs. 22)**
- 6. The point here is not that this took place out in the open for all to see. Rather that the tent was pitched on the roof so that everyone in Jerusalem would know exactly what was going on inside that tent.**
- 7. This was, by the way, the very same roof from which David first spotted Bathsheba bathing.**
- 8. We should also note that Absalom's sin fulfilled the word of the Lord that had been spoken to David by Nathan the prophet, "I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun" (12:11).**
- 9. God keeps His promise. He always does exactly what He says He's going to do.**
- 10. But that is also good news for David. Because the Lord also said to David through Nathan the prophet, "The LORD has put away your sin; you shall not die" (12:13). And the Lord had previously promised, "Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever" (7:16).**
- 11. At the end of 2 Samuel 16, it's hard to see how that's possible. But we know it's true. Because God said it. And because God always keeps His promises. He always does exactly what He says He's going to do.**

**B. We noted last week that Ahithophel and his betrayal of David points us forward to Judas and his betrayal of Jesus.**

- 1. We looked at Psalm 41:9 where David writes, "Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me."**
- 2. We also know that Psalm 3 was written by David at some point during his exile from Jerusalem. He writes, "O LORD, how many are my foes! Many are rising against me; many are saying of my soul, there is no salvation for him in God" (Ps. 3:1-2).**

**3. It's hard for us to imagine the heartbreak and betrayal that David must have felt both by some of those closest to him and even his own son Absalom.**

**Conclusion:** But even in the midst of it all, David knew that the Lord preserves His king.

He went on to write in Psalm 3, “But you, O LORD, are a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head. I cried aloud to the LORD, and he answered me from his holy hill. I lay down and slept; I woke again, for the LORD sustained me. I will not be afraid of many thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around. Arise, O LORD! Save me, O my God! For you strike all my enemies on the cheek; you break the teeth of the wicked. Salvation belongs to the LORD; your blessing be on your people.”

We see it in the life of King David. And we see it in the life of the King of kings, King Jesus. Amid deception, opposition, loyalty, and betrayal, the Lord preserves His King.

And He'll preserve you too. If you'll cling to Jesus in faith.