
2SAMUEL 16: 1 When David was a little past the top, behold, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of donkeys saddled, and on them two hundred loaves of bread, and one hundred clusters of raisins, and one hundred summer fruits, and a bottle of wine.

Ziba, servant of Mephibosheth, meets David with provisions, and by false insinuations obtains the grant of his masters property, 2Sam 16:1-4. Shimei abuses and curses David, who restrains Abishai from slaying him, 2Sam 16:5-14. Hushai makes a feigned tender of his services to Absalom, 2Sam 16:15-19. Absalom calls a council and Ahithophel advises him to go in to his father's concubines, 2Sam 16:20-22. Character of Ahithophel as a counselor, 2Sam 16:23.

Verse 1

Two hundred loaves of bread - The word loaf gives us a false idea of the ancient Jewish bread; it was thin cakes, not yeasted and raised like ours.

Bunches of raisins - See on 1Sam 25:18 (note).

Summer fruits - These were probably pumpions, cucumbers, or watermelons. The two latter are extensively used in those countries to refresh travelers in the burning heat of the summer. Mr. Harmer supposes they are called summer fruits on this very account.

A bottle of wine - A goat's skin full of wine; this I have already shown was the general bottle in the Eastern countries; see on 1Sam 25:18 (note).

2SAMUEL 16: 2 The king said to Ziba, What do you mean by these? Ziba said, The donkeys are for the king's household to ride on; and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat; and the wine, that such as are faint in the wilderness may drink.

Verse 2

The asses be for the king's household - This is the Eastern method of speaking when any thing is presented to a great man: "This and 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 are so understood. It is a high Eastern compliment: These presents are not worthy of your acceptance; they are only fit for the slaves of your slaves.

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

Verse 3

To-day shall the house of Israel - What a base wretch was Ziba! and how unfounded was this accusation against the peaceable, loyal and innocent Mephibosheth!

2SAMUEL 16: 4 Then the king said to Ziba, "Behold, all that pertains to Mephibosheth is yours." Ziba said, "I do obeisance. Let me find favour in your sight, my lord, O king."

Verse 4

Thine are all - This conduct of David was very rash; he spoiled an honorable man to reward a villain, not giving himself time to look into the circumstances of the case. But David was in heavy afflictions, and these sometimes make even a wise man mad. Nothing should be done rashly; he who is in the habit of obeying the first impulse of his passions or feelings, will seldom do a right action, and never keep a clear conscience.

2SAMUEL 16: 5 When king David came to Bahurim, behold, a man of the family of the house of Saul came out, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera. He came out, and cursed still as he came.

Verse 5

David came to Bahurim - This place lay northward of Jerusalem, in the tribe of Benjamin. It is called Almon, Jos 21:18; and Alemeth, 1Chr 6:60. Bahurim signifies youths, and Almuth youth; so the names are of the same import.

Cursed still as he came - Used imprecations and execrations.

2SAMUEL 16: 6 He cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David, and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left.

2SAMUEL 16: 7 Shimei said when he cursed, "Be gone, be gone, you man of blood, and base fellow!

2SAMUEL 16: 8 The LORD has returned on you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned! the LORD has delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom your son! Behold, you are caught by your own mischief, because you are a man of blood!"

2SAMUEL 16: 9 Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Please let me go over and take off his head."

2SAMUEL 16: 10 The king said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? Because he curses, and because the LORD has said to him, 'Curse David;' who then shall say, 'Why have you done so?'"

Verse 10

Because the Lord hath said - The particle וְכִי vechi should be translated for if, not because. For If the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David, who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so!

2SAMUEL 16: 11 David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, "Behold, my son, who came out of my bowels, seeks my life. How much more this Benjamite, now? Leave him alone, and let him curse; for the LORD has invited him.

Verse 11

Let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him - No soul of man can suppose that ever God bade one man to curse another, much less that he commanded such a wretch as Shimei to curse such a man as David; but this is a peculiarity of the Hebrew language, which does not always distinguish between permission and commandment. Often the Scripture attributes to God what he only permits to be done; or what in the course of his providence he does not hinder. David, however, considers all this as being permitted of God for his chastisement and humiliation. I cannot withhold from my readers a very elegant poetic paraphrase of this passage, from the pen of the Rev. Charles Wesley, one of the first of Christian poets: - "Pure from the blood of Saul in vain,

He dares not to the charge reply:

Uriah's doth the charge maintain,

Uriah's doth against him cry!

Let Shimei curse: the rod he bears

For sins which mercy had forgiven:

And in the wrongs of man reveres

The awful righteousness of heaven.

Lord, I adore thy righteous will,

Through every instrument of ill

My Father's goodness see;

Accept the complicated wrong

Of Shimei's hand and Shimei's tongue

As kind rebukes from Thee.

2SAMUEL 16: 12 It may be that the LORD will look on the wrong done to me, and that the LORD will repay me good for the cursing of me today."

2SAMUEL 16: 13 So David and his men went by the way; and Shimei went along on the hillside opposite him, and cursed as he went, threw stones at him, and threw dust.

2SAMUEL 16: 14 The king, and all the people who were with him, came weary; and he refreshed himself there.

2SAMUEL 16: 15 Absalom, and all the people, the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him.

Verse 15

The men of Israel - These words are wanting in the Chaldee, Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate, and Arabic, and in two of Kennicott's and De Rossi's MSS.

2SAMUEL 16: 16 When Hushai the Archite, David's friend, had come to Absalom, Hushai said to Absalom, "Long live the king! Long live the king!"

2SAMUEL 16: 17 Absalom said to Hushai, "Is this your kindness to your friend? Why didn't you go with your friend?"

2SAMUEL 16: 18 Hushai said to Absalom, "No; but whomever the LORD, and this people, and all the men of Israel have chosen, his will I be, and with him I will stay."

Verse 18

Whom the Lord and this people - choose - Here is an equivocation; Hushai meant in his heart that God and all the people of Israel had chosen David; but he spake so as to make Absalom believe that he spoke of him: for whatever of insincerity may appear in this, Hushai is alone answerable. What he says afterwards may be understood in the same way.

2SAMUEL 16: 19 Again, whom should I serve? Shouldn't I serve in the presence of his son? As I have served in your father's presence, so will I be in your presence."

2SAMUEL 16: 20 Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, "Give your counsel what we shall do."

2SAMUEL 16: 21 Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Go in to your father's concubines, that he has left to keep the house. Then all Israel will hear that you are abhorred by your father. Then the hands of all who are with you will be strong."

Verse 21

Go in unto thy father's concubines - It may be remembered that David left ten of them behind to take care of the house, see 2Sam 15:16. Ahithophel advised this infernal measure, in order to prevent the possibility of a reconciliation between David and his son; thus was the prophecy to Nathan fulfilled, 2Sam 12:11. And this was probably transacted in the very same place where David's eye took the adulterous view of Bath-sheba; see 2Sam 11:2.

The wives of the conquered king were always the property of the conqueror; and in possessing these, he appeared to possess the right to the kingdom. Herodotus informs us that Smerdis, having seized on the Persian throne after the death of Cambyses, espoused all the wives of his predecessor, lib. iii., c. 68. But for a son to take his father's wives was the sum of abomination, and was death by the law of God, Lev 20:11. This was a sin rarely found, even among the Gentiles.

Every part of the conduct of Absalom shows him to have been a most profligate young man; he was proud, vindictive, adulterous, incestuous, a parricide, and, in fine, reprobate to every good word and work. We still however recollect that David had grievously sinned, and we should also recollect that

he suffered grievously for it; and that his humiliation, repentance, and amendment, were most decisive and exemplary. Reader, God is as just as he is merciful.

2SAMUEL 16: 22 So they spread Absalom a tent on the top of the house; and Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.

2SAMUEL 16: 23 The counsel of Ahithophel, which he gave in those days, was as if a man inquired at the oracle of God: so was all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom.
