

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian  
Church, 10 Downing St. Oakleigh, Vic.,  
3166]

**DHW BIBLE CLASS  
LESSON 9B  
SECOND SAMUEL  
CHAPTER 15 & 16**

**INTRODUCTION**

David encountered evil men after he fled for his life from Jerusalem. Things were getting out of control. The people he met were out to deceive him and take advantage of his dire circumstances. Shimei hurled curses at David based upon a lie. One moment he was the king, safe and secure, and the next he faced uncertainty and even death. And all these by the hands of his own son! In such times, we truly need the LORD!

The betrayal was painful to say the least but David realized that he had it coming based upon the prophecy of Nathan -- judgment for committing adultery with Bathsheba.

God sent men to help His servant even as he goes through testing and trials. The good, the bad and the ugly are all sent by God to test us in multi-faceted ways. Very often, the trial will get worse before it gets better. This way the believer will be left without a doubt that it is God who has delivered him.

This chapter describes Hushai's part in helping David regain his kingdom. The other characters include Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, and Shimei.

**COMMENTARY**

**Hushai the Wise Old Man  
—15:30-37**

Immediately after David had worshipped and prayed to God on Mount Olives "to turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness", God answered him in the person of Hushai, the Archite. He came to meet David on the mount, mourning. He wanted to go with David but David told him frankly that he would be a burden. Perhaps it was due to the fact that he was an old man. But he could be a great asset to David if he did not remain with David. Hushai too was a wise man and David, sensing the LORD's providence, told Hushai to return to Jerusalem and offer his services to Absalom. Then he would be in a position to "defeat the counsel of Ahithophel". He could collude with Zadok and Abiathar informing them of the latest developments in Absalom's court and the priests would update David. It was a great plan. Hushai concurred and left for Jerusalem. As he entered the city, Absalom also entered at the same time! God often does not use supernatural means to answer the petitions of His children. He uses a more natural, interesting and challenging way. God's ways are always the best. Human agents are the best agents for God's service.

**Ziba, Servant of Mephibosheth  
—16:1-4**

Immediately after David and his men had passed Mount Olive, they were intercepted by Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth. He brought a great amount of provisions, sufficient to feed David and his whole entourage. It was very thoughtful of him. When David enquired of the whereabouts of his master, Ziba alleged that Mephibosheth chose to remain in

Jerusalem because he believed the dynasty of Saul, his father, would be restored to him (16:3). Later, Mephibosheth when confronted by David would deny this. David made an impulsive decision and transferred all of Mephibosheth's property and estate to Ziba.

One wonders whether Ziba was telling the truth about his master Mephibosheth. It would be utterly absurd for Mephibosheth to harbour such a hope because the populace was for Absalom's kingship. Most likely, Ziba was a manipulator capitalising on the troubles that were besetting David. His motive was not too difficult to discern. He tried to win the king's favour and made a little sacrifice of those gifts. Perhaps it was not inconceivable that he had taken the produce from Mephibosheth's own farm and gave them to David. For the moment, Ziba succeeded in gaining David's trust and favour and was richly rewarded by him.

#### **Shimei Curses David—16:5-14**

David came under verbal abuse and stoning at Bahurim, a place east of Jerusalem on the road to the Jordan valley. The aggressor was Shimei, a descendant of Saul. He was abusive and called David "thou bloody man" meaning "you murderer" and "thou man of Belial" that is, "you good-for-nothing". He claimed that the LORD was punishing him for killing Saul's family and seizing the throne. The LORD had now given the kingdom to David's son and that David deserved his present troubles.

His claim to know the LORD's will could not be right because the Bible had revealed clearly that it was due to Saul's own unrepentance that David was chosen by the LORD to replace him. In fact, David was not

even born yet when God rejected Saul. Shimei was a disgruntled member of the Benjamin tribe and perhaps had lost his prestige of being related to the king and now harboured bitterness against the newly God appointed sovereign.

Abishai told David that Shimei should not be tolerated for his abusive outburst and he would kill him if David allowed him. But David seemed to be quite harsh in his reply to Abishai who was merely defending his king. Abishai was "rebuked". Note that David said "sons" and not "son". He addressed all the sons of Zeruah and not just Abishai. This was the new repentant David and not the abrasive and hasty David who previously wanted to kill Abigail's husband who insulted David's men. He was more subdued and calm in his evaluation of his trials and adversities.

Then he turned his attention to Abishai alone. He told him to let Shimei curse him because he believed that the LORD was punishing him for his sins. David then spoke to Abishai and all his servants that if his own son sought to take his life, how much more so "this Benjamite". He might have been sent by the LORD to curse him. And maybe the LORD would look upon his suffering and bless him in return.

David continued his trek with his men. Shimei followed them along the slopes of the hill at a safe distance, throwing stones and dirt at David.

David displayed a submissive spirit to the LORD in his troubles and tribulations. He did not allow Abishai to cut off Shimei's head to stop his curses. Instead, David trusted God in all circumstances. He showed great self control.

### Absalom Confronts Hushai— 16:15-19

The section opened with a statement that *Absalom and all the people, the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel was with him* (16:15). Absalom was in Hebron when he had declared himself the new king by staging a *coup d'etat*. The fact that God mentioned this “and **Ahithophel** was with him” implied that Absalom was very confident of success. Ahithophel had been David’s personal adviser and bosom friend. He was one of the greatest men in his time. When he spoke, it was considered as “the oracle of God,” that is, his counsel was regarded as never wrong for it came from God! He was a shrewd military strategist and was very influential. His service to any ruler was a great asset.

**Hushai**, the Archite, David’s friend, came to Absalom and saluted him, saying: “God save the king” (Hebrew, “let the king live”), repeating the salutation twice (16:16). This would undoubtedly please Absalom. Hushai’s mission was to continue to serve the king as a trusted counsellor as suggested by David who told him to return to the royal courts to serve his cause. When Hushai greeted Absalom, “let the king live” he did not mention the name of the king. He did not say, “Let king Absalom live.”

It appeared that his greeting might have a double meaning. He could be referring to Absalom or to David, whom he considered to be the anointed king. Hushai was being discreet. When Absalom questioned him, implying that he was unkind and disloyal to his friend (David) because he did not go with him, Hushai gave a “**good**” answer. He replied with an

emphatic “Nay” which meant that he was not unkind to David without giving away any details. At the same time, it could also mean that he did not go with David. Hushai continued and said: “but whom the LORD, and this people, and all the men of Israel, choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide” (16:18). He did not specify whom the LORD had chosen. He knew that the LORD had chosen Absalom’s father, David, as king. But for the moment Absalom was king. His reference to “the LORD”, “this people”, “all the men of Israel” must have elated **Absalom, a man full of self-glory**.

Hushai then hinted at his desire and duty to serve Absalom as he had served in his father’s presence (16:19). By saying that he would serve the son of his father, Hushai was strongly implying that his relationship with David was still intact. **Hushai chose his words carefully** when speaking to Absalom. He had shown himself loyal and faithful to his master David. Absalom, on the other hand, was so immersed in his own vain glory that he failed to see the inference of Hushai’s words. Could Absalom have thought that he was the LORD’s chosen king?

### Absalom’s Public Announcement—16:20-23

Absalom went to Ahithophel for advice. **Ahithophel’s first advice** to Absalom was for Absalom to show that he had totally severed his relationship with his father. In this way, it would strengthen and encourage his supporters and all the people who might have doubts whether there was any possibility that David might return. Ahithophel advised him to lay with his father’s concubines before all the people of

Israel. This would **humiliate and disgrace his father** and cause him to hate him. This would signal that as far as he was concerned, his relationship with his father no longer existed. To sleep with the concubines or wife of the previous king was a symbol of the arrival of the new king. This legitimised his new kingdom.

So they erected a tent on the roof top of the palace, possibly the very spot where David first saw Bathsheba. Absalom committed the sin of sexual relationship with his father's concubines, a sin that carried the death penalty.<sup>1</sup> This act would humiliate David so much that it would make any reconciliation impossible. Ahithophel showed his understanding and assessment of the whole situation. He realized that for Absalom to succeed, he must be willing to demonstrate his total commitment to his goal.

### PRACTICAL VALUE

Absalom's bad character and conduct must partly be blamed on his father. David "loved" him so much that he had failed in his duty to discipline him. This is a precious lesson for all parents. We have to pay the price if our children love the world more than God. God tells us in His word to train up our children at a very early age in the way that they should go so that when they are grown up, they will not depart from it

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<sup>1</sup> Leviticus 18:8 The **nakedness** of thy father's wife shalt thou not uncover: it *is* thy father's **nakedness**.

Leviticus 20:11 And the man that lieth with his father's wife hath uncovered his father's **nakedness**: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood *shall be* upon them.

(Proverbs 22:6). How many children today forsake and desert their aged parents who have cared for and nurtured them?

Absalom, Ahithophel, Shimei, and others who rebelled against David were actually fighting against the LORD and His kingdom. David should not be viewed as an individual but as the LORD's covenantal king.

From David, we learn to trust God under trying circumstances. Submit to the will of the Lord and His grace. Pray and plead with Him, and just as He answered David's prayer, the Lord too will answer our prayers. The trouble with many of us is that we cannot see God's providence because we are blinded by our own perceptions and ways.

AMEN

**DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**Daily Readings**

**Monday:** 2 Samuel 15:30-37; Luke 19:41-44.

**Tuesday:** 2 Samuel 16:1-23.

**Wednesday:** 2 Samuel 16:1-23.

**Thursday:** 2 Samuel 16:1-23.

**Friday:** 2 Samuel 16:1-23.

**Analysis:**

Text	Practical Value
2 Samuel 15:30-37	
2 Samuel 16:1-4	
2 Samuel 16:5-14	
2 Samuel 16:15-19	
2 Samuel 16:20-23	

**Discussion Questions**

1. Did David do right when he asked Hushai to “spy” for him especially after he had prayed to the LORD?

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2. Do you agree that David was impulsive when he listened to only Ziba’s charge against Mephibosheth without giving the latter an opportunity to defend himself? Are there instances where it is justified to consider only “one side” and make a judgment?

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3. Should David have punished Shimei for cursing the LORD’s anointed? Was his theology correct when he decided not to retaliate against Shimei?

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4. Was Hushai right to speaking with “double” meaning under these circumstances? What about letting your yea be yea and your nay, nay?

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5. David experienced the darkest time of his life. What can you say of his character and conduct during this time, and where do you think was the source of his strength and sustenance?

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