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Shim'i Curses David

Second Samuel 16: 5-14

Shim'i curses David DIG: What significance do you see in Shim'i's family ties? Why else is Shim'i so mad at David? Is his anger justified? What does Abishai think? What does David think? Why does David attribute Shim'i's cursing to God? What does this tell you about David's character? About his view of God's character? What similarities are there between the life of Christ and the life of David?

REFLECT: What strong conviction about ADONAI did David have throughout his flight from Jerusalem? When have you, like David, been under the LORD's discipline? What for? Could you take "the heat," however it was dished out? How did you respond? When the heat on you is not "from YHVH," how do you respond?

977 BC

This is part of a 24-hour period starting at 15:13 and extending all the way to 17:23.

David's forced flight from **Jerusalem** not only put **his** own **Kingdom** in jeopardy, but it also opened the door to further contention for the throne between the dynasties of **Sha'ul** and **David**. **Absalom** was apparently in the process of seizing power in **Tziyon**, but that was by no means implied that he could also gain control over **the** northern **kingdom** of **Isra'el**. In fact, the shakeup in **David's** own family began to revive hope among the descendants of **Sha'ul** that they might be able to recover **the Kingdom** for themselves.³⁹⁸

Through **Ziba's** lies (**to see link click [Dr - David and Ziba](#)**) **the Adversary** attacked **David** as a **serpent** who **deceives** (**Second Corinthians 11:3; Genesis 3:1-7**), and then through **Shim'i's** words and **stones**, **the devil** came as a **lion** who **devours** (**First Peter 5:8**). **Ziba** told lies and **Shim'i** threw **stones**, and both were making it hard for **David** on **his** retreat from **Zion**.³⁹⁹



The Cursing of Shim'i: As King David approached Bahurim, a Benjamite city, a man from the same clan as Sha'ul's family came out from there. His name was Shim'i son of Gera, and like a human volcano he cursed as he came out. Shim'i was on the side of the hill (verse 13), which was apparently overlooked on the road followed by David and his company, but was separated from it by a narrow valley (verse 9). He thought he was close enough to do some damage, but far enough to be safe. Not content with hurling curses at the king, Shim'i 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 (Second Samuel 16:5-7). Shim'i could not resist the temptation of taunting David in his hour of humiliation.

The charge of Shim'i is important. As he cursed, Shim'i yelled: **Get out, get out, you murderer. You are a worthless rat. ADONAI has repaid you for all the blood you shed specifically in the household of Sha'ul, in whose place you have reigned. Shim'i interprets Absalom's rebellion as divine punishment for David's actions against the house of Sha'ul. The LORD has given the Kingdom into the hands of your son Absalom. You have come to ruin because you are a murderer (Second Samuel 16:8)!** There were enough people in the northern Kingdom who believed that David had something to do with the deaths of Sha'ul (Second Samuel 31:2-6), Ish-Bosheth (Second Samuel 4:5-12) and Abner (2 Samuel 3:26-27) to make this a potential problem for the king. Indeed, we have noted in Second Samuel Chapters 2-4 that great care is taken by the narrator to clear David of all charges, which generated the energy behind the charge. At any rate, Shim'i, and doubtless many if not most of his countrymen, were apparently ready to acknowledge Absalom as their new king.

However, Shim'i violated the Torah while venting his anger at David, for Exodus 22:28 says: **Do not curse God or curse the ruler of your people.** In addition, to curse a descendant of Abraham is to invite divine retribution (Genesis 12:3), and Shim'i's

headstrong actions would not ultimately go unpunished (see [Fg - David's Last Charge to Solomon](#)) despite **his** repenting from them (**Second Samuel 19:18-20**).⁴⁰⁰

The Sparing of Shim'i: David's attitude was one of submission because **he** accepted **Shim'i's** abuse as from the hand of **God**. **Shim'i's** charge evoked the rage of **Abishai**. Then David's nephew **Abishai** said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and cut off his head." **Abishai** had always been violently loyal to **David** (**First Samuel 26:8; Second Samuel 19:21**). Oh, right. That's all **David** needed right then, another assassination! **He** had all the trouble **he** could handle with **Absalom**. **He** didn't need to hand all those loyal to **Sha'ul** an excuse to come out of the woodwork to join **Absalom** (if they had not already done so). **David** would have none of it. So the king said: What does this have to do with you, you sons of **Zeruiah** (two nephews of **King David** who had a long history of shedding blood)?

David had merely accepted the cursing of **Shim'i** as part of **God's** discipline. If **Shim'i** is cursing because the **LORD** said to him, "Curse David," who can ask, "Why do you do this?" Then **David** said to **Abishai** and all his officials, "My son, my own flesh and blood, is trying to kill me. How much more, then, can I expect respect from this **Benjamite**! Leave him alone; let him curse, for **YHVH** has told him to. Notice that **David** didn't say **he** was innocent. **He** knew that **he** was an adulterer and a murderer who deserved to die. Yet **Ha'Shem** let **him** live. Why should **he** complain about someone calling **him** names and throwing some stones at **him**? And if **Absalom** (Hebrew: my father is peace), **David's own son**, was out to kill **him**, why should a total stranger be punished for slandering the king? **David** hoped that **God** would look upon his misery and consider it enough punishment, and restore him to the **LORD's** covenant blessing instead of His curse today."

So **Shim'i's** pelting **David** with stones and cursing **him** didn't stop. **David** and his men continued slowly along the road while **Shim'i** was going along the hillside parallel to **him**, cursing as he went and throwing stones at **him** showering **him** with dirt. **David** had faith that **God** would one day take care of people like **Absalom** and **Shim'i**. Perhaps **David** was thinking of **Deuteronomy 32:35**, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay."⁴⁰¹

The king and all the people with him arrived at their destination beyond **Bahurim** some twenty miles to the ford of the **Jordan River** where they rested. And there **David** refreshed himself (**Second Samuel 16:9-14**). Very early the next morning they crossed the river and proceeded to **Mahanaim** (**Second Samuel 17:22-24**), where **Jacob** had prepared to meet his brother, **Esau**, and had wrestled with **God** (see commentary **Genesis**

Hw - Jacob Wrestles with God). Perhaps **David** remembered the army of angels that **YHVH** sent to protect Jacob.⁴⁰²

What did all that suffering do for **David**? It made **him** more like **Jesus**. **David** was rejected by **his** own people and betrayed. **He** gave up everything for the sake of **his people** and would have surrendered **his** own life to save **his** rebellious **son** who deserved to die. Like **Messiah**, **David** crossed the Kidron and went up the Mount of Olives. **He** was falsely accused and shamefully treated, and yet **he** submitted to **Ha'Shem's** sovereign will. **David** had lost **his** throne, but **ADONAI-Tzva'ot** was still on the throne and would keep **His** promises to **His** suffering servant. Faithful to **His** covenant (see [Ct - The LORD's Covenant with David](#)), **God** remembered **David** and all the hardships that **he** endured (see [Cu - ADONAI Swore an Oath to David](#)), and **He** remembers us today.⁴⁰³