

## WHAT IF . . . ?

### What If Someone Kicks You When You're Down?

2 Samuel 16:5–14



#### LET'S BEGIN HERE

David, already at his lowest, was pummeled with stones and debris and cursed in public. All this hate came from a man named Shimei, in 2 Samuel 16:5–14. Chuck Swindoll outlined in his message just how much we can learn from this ugly and vile scene about enduring mistreatment.

In today's study, we're going to focus on *how* David got to this low point with Shimei in the first place.



#### DIGGING DEEPER: OBSERVING THE CONTEXT

Chuck's message zoomed in on David's taunting by Shimei in 2 Samuel 16:5–14. David was at his low point. How did he get so low? If we just look at this passage in isolation, we will miss a good portion of *why* David was the butt of cruel treatment in the land of Bahurim instead of safe in his own kingdom.

In his book *Searching the Scriptures*, Chuck Swindoll writes,

There are some crucial questions we need to ask when we're interpreting the Bible to ensure that we do it responsibly and accurately. A good place to start is by asking, "What is the setting?" Every verse has a context, even the first verse of the Bible. When we begin reading in the middle of a paragraph . . . we need to see what comes before and after the verse. We need to place the verses we're studying into their proper contexts. If we fail to do so, we will be awash, and it won't be long before we slide down the slippery slope of error. The context helps us hold true to the correct meaning.<sup>1</sup>

This would be a good place to pause and turn to a good commentary on 2 Samuel. First, read through the introductory material at the beginning of the section. Then locate the specific passage and make some notes about what is discussed. What jumps out at you as significant? What detail about this passage is highlighted in the commentary that will help you understand the setting of David's plight?

## Quotable

*God will always  
seem slower  
than we expect,  
especially when  
we're going through  
unfair treatment.  
But count on this:  
God misses nothing.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



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How did David go from being king of the castle to fugitive pelted by rocks?

Let's read Scripture to discover the context that led to David's low point in Bahurim. (We're going to do a fair amount of reading in this lesson!)

#### Toxic Roots, Mangled Family Tree

- *David had many wives and children.*

Read 1 Chronicles 3:1–9, and list David's wives and children. Note that this is not an exhaustive list.

- *David sat in his palace when he should have been at war.*

Read 2 Samuel 11:1. Note how the narrator begins this chapter.

- *David raped Bathsheba and made sure her husband was murdered.*

Read 2 Samuel 11, and jot down observations.



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- *David did not protect his daughter Tamar or punish his son Amnon.*

Read 2 Samuel 13:1–22, and observe the people who speak and the people who are silent.

- *Absalom acted because David was absent and passive.*

Read 2 Samuel 13:22–39, and note the language, action, silence, and distance. Note Absalom's familiar strategy to ensnare and murder.

- *David longed for Absalom but could not bring himself to fully reconcile. Instead, David remained silent and distant.*

Note 2 Samuel 14:24, then 14:28–32. Did David's distance allow bitterness to fester in Absalom?

When David sinned against God, Bathsheba, and Uriah, how long did it take for God to allow David back into God's presence?



- Absalom sets in motion a coup d'état in 2 Samuel 15.

Read 2 Samuel 15 to see how Absalom campaigned to win the people's favor by being present. Jot down notes and observations.



### Like Father, Like Son

There are two kinds of trouble a family can experience: trouble from without and trouble from within. Trouble from within devastated David's household. Deuteronomy 17:17 says, "The king must not take many wives for himself, because they will turn his heart away from the LORD," and David's insatiable collecting of women had devastating results. Second Samuel 11 is just a snapshot of what happens when the powerful king chooses what's right in his own eyes rather than the law of God.

David had been forgiven of his sin with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11), but he had to live with the ongoing consequences of his sin.

Chuck Swindoll clarifies, "Some of you are saying, 'Well, wasn't David forgiven?' Absolutely. 'Well, didn't that mean that all was well?' Absolutely not. Some sins are followed by consequences, though there is forgiveness for any sin. And these consequences are bitter and difficult."

What were the consequences for David? God had pronounced that one of David's "companions" would lie with David's wives in broad daylight (2 Samuel 12:11 NASB). In other words, the sins David committed in secret would be committed against him for all to see.

The Hebrew word for "companion"—*rea*—has a significant semantic range, meaning "friend," "intimate partner," or "fellow." But coupled with Nathan's pronouncement that the disaster would come from David's *household* or family, "companion" in 2 Samuel 12:11 implies "relative."

In 2 Samuel 16:22, Absalom, in full view of Israel, had sex with his father's concubines—perhaps on the very roof from which David gazed upon Bathsheba. This act was also a political one: to sleep with the king's concubines was to declare oneself as king. When Absalom took David's concubines, Nathan's sad prophecy came to fruition.



Though the family dynamics of 2 Samuel 16 may not be the most cheerful Father's Day text, the relationship between David and Absalom serves as a potent cautionary tale. David's secret, selfish strategies—the assault of Bathsheba, the contract murder of Uriah—became the template of lust and power for David's sons, Amnon (2 Samuel 13:1–20), Absalom (16:20–23), and Adonijah (1 Kings 2:15–25).

### Applying Scripture: What David's Context Means for Us

Now that we have obtained the historical context, we can see how David ended up at this low point in Bahurim. We can also admire his humble response to Shimei and deduce that perhaps David's acceptance of Shimei's words are a result of his recalling how his own sins catalyzed his circumstances.

Here are some lessons we can learn from studying David's path to Bahurim:

- Though God graciously forgives Christians, we often tell ourselves that grace means that all consequences for sin are removed. Sometimes that mentality allows us to be sucked under by the power of the flesh. But we have the power in the person of the Holy Spirit to say no to sin at every turn of our lives.<sup>2</sup>
- Though we think we're committing sins in secret, they are in full view of the living God.
- The people under our influence—children, coworkers, peers, spouses—are observing and emulating us more than we think.
- Men, the boys around you will learn how to regard women based on what you do and say.
- In Psalm 51:17 David wrote, “The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. / You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God,” because he *lived* it. God won't withdraw from us in our brokenness. God accepts our repentance.
- Even the godly can screw up. God's love still amazingly abounds.
- Seek reconciliation, not isolation. Don't expect less mature people to do the right thing: *you* do it.
- *Say something*. Don't be silent or passive in the face of injustice.

What are some additional applications you have gleaned from today's study?



## Chuck's Application: Four Practical Suggestions

Chuck found four applications for us to remember when we're facing harsh and even unfair criticism:

- Ask God to give you a tougher hide.
- Remember that God is fully aware and engaged, even though He might be silent.
- Rely on God's grace to make things right.
- Find comfort by resting in God's mercy. Chuck says, "Mercy is God's ministry to the miserable. Do you realize that in the Scriptures there's a reference to the mercy seat? Sit there."



## A FINAL PRAYER

Meditate on this hymn, "Come Ye Disconsolate," as a prayer to sit in God's mercy seat.

*Come, ye disconsolate, where'er ye languish;  
Come to the mercy seat, fervently kneel;  
Here bring your wounded hearts, here tell your anguish;  
Earth has no sorrow that heav'n cannot heal.*

*Joy of the desolate, Light of the straying,  
Hope of the penitent, fadeless and pure,  
Here speaks the Comforter, tenderly saying,  
"Earth has no sorrow that heav'n cannot cure."*

*Here see the Bread of Life; see waters flowing,  
Forth from the throne of God, pure from above;  
Come to the feast of love; come, ever knowing  
Earth has no sorrow but heav'n can remove.<sup>3</sup>*

## Endnotes

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs* (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale, 2016), 120–21.
2. Adapted from Insight for Living Ministries, *Insight's Bible Application Guide: Joshua–Esther* (Plano, Tex.: IFL Publishing House, 2013), 75.
3. Thomas Moore (st. 1–2, 1816, 1824) and Thomas Hastings (st. 3, 1832), "Come Ye Disconsolate," public domain.



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STUDY



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For the 2017 broadcast, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by the Pastoral Ministries Department in collaboration with Mark Tobey, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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