

The Shame of Shimei

'When King David came to Bahurim, there came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera, and as he came he cursed continually. And he threw 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. And Shimei said as he cursed, "Get out, get out, you man of blood, you worthless man! The LORD has avenged on you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned, and the LORD has given the kingdom into the hand of your son Absalom. See, your evil is on you, for you are a man of blood." Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and take off his head." But the king said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? If he is cursing because the LORD has said to him, 'Curse David,' who then shall say, 'Why have you done so?'" And David said to Abishai and to all his servants, "Behold, my own son seeks my life; how much more now may this Benjaminite! Leave him alone, and let him curse, for the LORD has told him to. It may be that the LORD will look on the wrong done to me, and that the LORD will repay me with good for his cursing today."

(2 Sam. 16:5-12)

During David's withdrawal from Jerusalem, during the ordeal involving his usurper son Solomon, the king was scorned by Shimei's stinging words like acid arrows in the back. David's friend Abishai wanted to take down Shimei, but David did not permit it. Despite the pain, David knew that if Yahweh had told Shimei to do this thing, had somehow given Shimei authority to say what he said, who was David to stand in his way? (v10) David knew that Yahweh authorizes certain actions and if this Shimei was obeying the will of God, who was David to oppose him? Perhaps the Spirit of God moved Shimei to say these words, David may have surmised.

However, the story of shameful Shimei does not cease here. It became manifest that the curses of Shimei were not from Yahweh God's Spirit. David kept his oath to his own death not to punish Shimei. Yet, David's Son Solomon had taken no such oath: David then entrusted his son with the deed of punishing the unauthorized accusation of Shimei the son of Gera, the Benjaminite from Bahurim. (1 Ki. 2:8-9)

Hence, let us not believe that just because we may do a thing, that we should do that thing. Shimei had liberty to speak and act, but neither his words nor his actions were approved by Yahweh God: the cost of careless words was his life. What could it cost us?