

Absalom Returns from Exile (c. 980 BC)

2 Samuel 14:1–27

Joab's Plan

1 Joab the son of Zeruiah realized that the mind of the king *was* on Absalom.

2 So Joab sent to Tekoa and took from there a wise woman, and he said to her, "Please pretend to mourn and put on garments of mourning. You should not anoint yourself *with* oil, and you must act like this woman who has been mourning over the dead for a long time.

3 Then you must go to the king and speak to him according to this word." *Thus* Joab put the words in her mouth.

The Wise Woman's Story

4 So the Tekoite woman spoke to the king, and she fell on her face to the ground and did obeisance. She said, "Help me, O king!"

5 Then the king asked her, "What do you want?" And she said, "Truly I *am* a widow, and my husband *is* dead.

6 Your servant had two sons, and they both fought in the open field, and there *was* no one to part them. One struck the other and killed him.

7 And look, all of the family has risen up against your servant, and they said, 'Give up the one who struck his brother, that we may kill him in exchange for the life of his brother whom he murdered. We will also wipe out the heir,' and so they would put out my embers which remain, by not preserving for my husband a name and a remnant on the face of the earth."

8 Then the king said to the woman, "Go to your house, and I myself will give the command concerning you."

9 The Tekoite woman said to the king, "On me, my lord the king, *is* the guilt, and on the house of my father, but the king on his throne *is* innocent."

10 The king said, "*Whoever* has spoken to you, bring him to me, and he will not touch you again."

11 Then she said, "Please may the king remember Yahweh your God, to prevent the increase of blood avengers who kill, *so that they* not wipe out my son." He said, "As Yahweh lives, surely not one hair shall fall from your son to the ground."

The Wise Woman Reveals Her True Intention

12 The woman said, "Please let your servant speak a word to my lord the king." And he said, "Speak."

13 The woman said, "But why have you plotted like this against the people of God? By speaking this word, he is guilty not to bring back his banished one.

14 For we must certainly die, and *we are* as the waters spilled to the ground which cannot be gathered. God will not take a life but devises plans for a banished person not to be cast out from him.

15 Now I have come to speak this word to my lord the king, because the people made me afraid, and your servant thought, 'I will speak to the king, perhaps the king will grant the request of his servant.

16 For the king will listen, to deliver his servant from the hand of the man *who seeks* to destroy me and my son together from the inheritance of God.'

17 Your servant also thought, 'May the word of my lord the king bring rest, for as an angel of God, so *is* my lord the king, to sense what is good and what is bad.' May Yahweh your God be with you."

David Suspects Joab's Involvement

18 The king answered and said to the woman, "Please do not withhold from me a thing which I *am* about to ask you." The woman said, "Please let my lord the king speak."

19 The king asked, "*Was* the hand of Joab with you in all of this?" The woman answered and said, "As your soul lives, my lord the king, surely *one cannot* go to the right or to the left from all that my lord the king has spoken. Yes, your servant Joab himself commanded me, and he put all of these words in the mouth of your servant.

20 In order to change the situation, your servant Joab did this thing. But my lord *has* wisdom, as the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all that *is* on the earth."

David Allows Absalom to Return to Jerusalem but Refuses to See Him

21 Then the king said to Joab, "Look, please, I will grant this thing. Go and bring back the young man Absalom."

22 Joab fell with his face to the ground and did obeisance. And he blessed the king, and he said, "Today your servant knows that I have found favor in your eyes, my lord the king, *in* that the king has granted the request of his servant."

23 Then Joab got up and went to Geshur and brought Absalom to Jerusalem.

24 The king said, "Let him go over to his house, and he may not see my face." So Absalom went over to his house, and did not see the face of the king.

Absalom's Appearance

25 As far as Absalom, there was not a more handsome man in all of Israel to admire so much; from the sole of his foot up to his crown, there was no physical defect on him.

26 When he shaved his head, it would happen every year, which he did because *it was* heavy on him, he would shave it off and

weigh the hair of his head: two hundred shekels by the king's weight.

Absalom Names His Daughter after His Desolate and Humiliated Sister—Tamar

27 Three sons *were* born to Absalom and one daughter, whose name *was* Tamar. She *was* a woman beautiful of appearance.

Absalom Reunited with David (c. 978 BC)

2 Samuel 14:28–33

28 Absalom lived in Jerusalem two full years, but he did not see the face of the king.

29 So Absalom sent for Joab, *in order that he* send him to the king, but he was not willing to go to him. He sent again a second *time*, but he *was* not willing to go.

30 So he said to his servants, "Look at the tract of land of Joab next to mine, for he has barley plants there. Go, set it ablaze with fire." So the servants of Absalom set the tract of land ablaze with fire.

31 Then Joab got up and went to Absalom, to the house, and said to him, "Why have your servants set my tract of land ablaze with fire?"

32 Absalom said to Joab, "Look, I have sent to you, saying, 'Come here that I may send you to the king to say, "Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me if I *were* still there.'" ' So then, let me see the face of the king; if there *is* guilt in me, then let him kill me."

33 So Joab went to the king and he told him. Then he summoned Absalom, and he came to the king, and he bowed down to him with his face to the ground before the king. Then the king kissed Absalom.

Absalom Begins to Steal the Hearts of Israel (c. 978 BC)

2 Samuel 15:1–6

1 It happened afterward that Absalom made himself a chariot with horses and fifty men running before him.

2 Absalom used to rise early in the morning, and he stood beside the road *at* the gate; anyone who had a legal dispute to bring to the king for judgment Absalom would call to him and say, "Where are you from?" And he would say, "Your servant *is* from one of the tribes of Israel."

3 Then Absalom would say to him, "Look, your case *is* good and right, but for you there is no hearing with the king."

4 Then Absalom would say, "Oh, that someone would appoint me as judge in the land, that anyone might come to me who had a legal dispute or a case, and I would give him justice."

5 It happened whenever anyone drew near to do obeisance to him, that he would stretch his hand and take hold of him and kiss him.

6 Absalom did like this to all of Israel who came to the king for judgment; so Absalom stole the hearts of the people of Israel.

Absalom Leads a Treasonous Revolt Against David (c. 974 BC)

2 Samuel 15:7–12

7 It happened at the end of four years *that* Absalom said to the king, "Please let me go and pay my vow which I have made to Yahweh in Hebron,

8 for your servant made a vow while I *was* staying in Geshur in Aram, saying, 'If Yahweh will indeed let me return to Jerusalem, then I will worship Yahweh.'"

9 Then the king said to him, "Go in peace." So he got up and went to Hebron.

10 Then Absalom sent scouts throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "When you hear the sound of the trumpet, you shall shout 'Absalom has become king in Hebron!'"

11 Two hundred men from Jerusalem went with Absalom as invited guests, going in their innocence as they did not know anything.

12 Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, the advisor of David, from his city Giloh, while he offered the sacrifices. The conspiracy grew in strength, and the people *were* going and increasing with Absalom.

David Flees Across the Jordan River (c. 974 BC)

2 Samuel 15:13–16:14

David Flees from Jerusalem

15:13 Then the messenger came to David, saying, "The hearts of the men of Israel have gone after Absalom."

14 Then David said to all his servants who *were* with him in Jerusalem, "Get up and let us flee, for there will be no escape for us from Absalom! Hurry to go, otherwise he will come quickly and overtake us! And he will bring disaster on us and evil! He will attack the city with the edge of the sword!"

15 Then the servants of the king said to the king, “According to all that my lord the king chooses, your servants are ready to act!”

16 The king went out with all his household following him, but the king left behind ten concubines to look after the house.

17 So the king went out with all the people following him, and they stopped at the last house.

David Tests the Loyalty of the Philistines

18 All his servants *were* passing by him: all of the Kerethites and all of the Pelethites and all of the Gittites—six hundred men who had followed him from Gath—passing before the king.

19 The king said to Ittai the Gittite, “Why *are* you also coming with us? Return and stay with the king, for you *are* a foreigner; moreover, you *are* an exile. You *are* far from your place.

20 Yesterday when you came and today, I have caused you to wander by going with us. Now I *am* going to where I *am* going; return and let your brothers return. *May* loyal love and faithfulness *be* with you.”

21 But Ittai answered the king and said, “As Yahweh lives and my lord the king lives, surely in the place wherever my lord the king shall be, if for death or if for life, surely there your servant will be.”

22 Then David said to Ittai, “Go and pass over.” So Ittai the Gittite passed over and all his men and all of the little children who *were* with him.

23 All of the land *was* weeping *with* a loud voice as all the people *were* passing by and the king *was* crossing through the Wadi Kidron, and all the people *were* passing on the road to the wilderness.

David Sends Zadok and the Ark Back to Jerusalem

24 Suddenly Zadok *was* there, and all of the Levites with him, carrying the ark of the covenant of God. They set the ark of God down, and Abiathar offered sacrifices until all the people passed out of the city.

25 The king said to Zadok, “Let the ark of God return to the city. If I find favor in the eyes of Yahweh, he will let me return and let me see him in his dwelling place.

26 But if he says, ‘I take no pleasure in you,’ then I am ready. Let him do to me that which *is* good in his eyes.

27 Then the king said to Zadok the priest, “*Are* you a seer? Return to the city in peace, *with* Ahimaaz your son and Jonathan the son of Abiathar, your two sons with you.

28 See, I *am* waiting at the fords of the wilderness until a word comes from you all to inform me.”

29 So Zadok and Abiathar returned the ark of God to Jerusalem and they remained there.

David Commissions Hushai as a Spy

30 Now David *was* going up on the Ascent of the Olives, weeping as he went, with his head covered and going barefoot. All the people who *were* with him each covered their head and wept as they went.

31 Now David *was* told, “Ahithophel *was* among the conspirators with Absalom.” Then David said, “Please frustrate the counsel of Ahithophel, O Yahweh.”

32 It happened that as David *was* coming up to the summit where he used to worship God, suddenly Hushai the Arkite *was* there to meet him. His coat *was* torn and dirt *was* on his head.

33 David said to him, “If you move on with me, you will be a burden to me,

34 but if you want to return to the city and say to Absalom, ‘I *am* your servant, O king. I used to be a servant of your father, but from then and now I *will be* your servant,’ then you can frustrate the counsel of Ahithophel for me.

35 *Will* not Zadok and Abiathar the priests *be* with you there? It shall be that all the words you hear from the house of the king you shall tell Zadok and Abiathar the priests.

36 Look, there with them *are* their two sons, Ahimaaz of Zadok and Jonathan of Abiathar. You shall send to me by means of them all the words that you hear.”

37 So Hushai the friend of David came to the city *as* Absalom was entering Jerusalem.

Ziba Accuses Mephibosheth of Treason and David Makes a Snap Decision

16:1 Now David passed a little from beyond the summit, and suddenly Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth *was* there to meet him *with* a pair of saddled donkeys; on them *were* two hundred loaves of bread and a hundred raisin cakes, *with* a hundred summer fruits and a skin of wine.

2 The king said to Ziba, “What do you want to accomplish by bringing these?” And Ziba said, “The donkeys *are* for the king’s household to ride *on*; the bread and the summer fruit *are* for the young men to eat, and the wine *is* for the faint in the wilderness to drink.

3 Then the king said, “Where *is* the son of your lord?” And Ziba said to the king, “He *is* living in Jerusalem for he said, ‘Today the house of Israel shall return the kingdom of my father to me.’”

4 The king said to Ziba, “Look, all that *was* Mephibosheth’s is yours.” Ziba said, “I hereby do obeisance; may I find favor in your eyes, my lord the king.”

Shimei the Benjamite, a Relative of Saul, Curses David

5 King David came up to Bahurim and suddenly a man from there *was* coming out from the family of the house of Saul, and his name *was* Shimei the son of Gera. He was cursing as he came out.

6 And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David and at all the people and at all the mighty warriors on his right and on his left.

7 Shimei said while cursing him, “Go out, go out, *you* man of bloodshed, *you* man of wickedness.

8 Yahweh has returned on you all the blood of the household of Saul whom you have supplanted as king, and Yahweh has given the kingship into the hand of Absalom your son. Look, you *are* in disaster for you *are* a man of blood.”

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.” [\[Exod 22:28\]](#)

10 The king said, “What do we have in common, sons of Zeruiah? If he curses because Yahweh has said to him ‘Curse David,’ who can say, “Why have you done this?”

11 David said to Abishai and to all his servants, “Look, my son who came out of my loins *is* seeking my life. Now as far as *this* Benjaminite, leave him alone and let him curse, for Yahweh has spoken to him.

12 Perhaps Yahweh will look in my eye and repay good for me in place of his curse this day.

13 Then David and his men went on the road, with Shimei going on the side of the hill beside him, cursing as he went. He threw stones beside him and threw dust in the air.

14 When the king and all of the people who were with him arrived, he was weary, so he recovered there.

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