

The Journey Home (c. 974 BC)

2 Samuel 19:8b–40a

Israel and Judah Argue About What to Do

8b *whereas* all of Israel had fled, each to his tent.

9 Then it happened that all the people *were* disputing among all the tribes of Israel, saying, “The king delivered us from the hand of our enemies, and he saved us from the hand of *the* Philistines, but now he has fled from the land because of Absalom.

10 Now Absalom whom we anointed *as king* over us has died in the battle; so then, why *are* you taking no action to restore the king?”

David Reaches Out to Judah and Punishes Joab for His Insubordination

11 Then King David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying, “Speak to the elders of Judah: ‘Why *are* you last to bring back the king to his house? The talk of all Israel has come to the king in his house.

12 My brothers, you *are* my bones and you *are* my flesh. Why should you be the last to bring back the king?’

13 To Amasa you shall say: ‘Are you not my bones and my flesh? May God punish me if you *are* not the commander of my army before me forever, in place of Joab.’”

14 So he turned the heart of all the men of Judah as one man, and they sent *word* to the king, “Return, you and all your servants.”

Shimei Meets David at the Jordan River and Begs Forgiveness

15 Then the king returned and he came to the Jordan; Judah had come to Gilgal to come to meet the king, to bring the king over the Jordan.

16 Then Shimei the son of Gera, the son of the Benjaminite, who *was* from Bahurim quickly came down with the men of Judah to meet King David,

17 and a thousand men *were* with him from Benjamin. Too, Ziba the servant of the household of Saul and fifteen of his sons and twenty of his servants *were* with him, and they rushed to the Jordan before the king.

18 The crossing took place to bring the household of the king over and to do good in his eyes. Then Shimei the son of Gera fell before the king when he crossed over the Jordan,

19 and he said to the king, “May not my lord hold me guilty, and may you not remember how your servant did wrong on the day that my lord the king went out from Jerusalem, by taking it to heart!

20 For your servant knows that I have sinned; look, I have come this day *as the first* of all the house of Joseph to come down to meet my lord the king.”

21 Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah responded and said, “Because of this, should not Shimei be put to death, for he cursed the anointed one of Yahweh?”

22 Then David said, “What *is* it to me or to you, sons of Zeruiah, that you should be an adversary today? *Should* anyone be put to death in Israel? Do I not know today that I *am* king over Israel?”

23 Then the king said to Shimei, “You shall not die,” and so the king swore to him.

Mephibosheth Accuses Ziba of Slander

24 Now, Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king; he had not taken care of his feet nor trimmed his moustache nor washed his clothes from the day the king left until the day he came back in peace.

25 It happened that when he came to Jerusalem to meet the king, the king said to him, “Why did you not come with me, Mephibosheth?”

26 Then he said, “My lord the king, my servant deceived me, for your servant had said, ‘Let me saddle the donkey that I may ride on her and go with the king,’ for your servant *is* lame.

27 But he slandered against your servant to my lord the king. My lord the king *is* like the angel of God; do as you see fit.”

28 For there *was no one* in all the house of my father who were not doomed to death before my lord the king, but you set your servant among those who eat at your table. Do I have any righteousness any longer except to cry out to the king?”

29 Then the king said to him, “Why should you speak any more *about* the matter? I have decided: you and Ziba shall divide the land.”

30 Then Mephibosheth said to the king, “Let him take the whole *thing*, since my lord the king has come safely to his house.”

David Expresses His Gratitude to Barzillai

31 Then Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim and crossed with the king over the Jordan to escort him through the Jordan.

32 Now Barzillai *was* very old, eighty years old. Now he had provided the king *with food* while he *was* staying at Mahanaim, for he *was* a very wealthy man.

33 The king said to Barzillai, “You cross over with me, and I will provide for you *to dwell* with me in Jerusalem.”

34 Then Barzillai said to the king, “What *are* the days of the years of my life, that I should go with the king to Jerusalem?”

35 I *am* eighty years old today. Can I discern between good and bad? Or can your servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Or can I still hear the voice of singing men and women? Why should your servant be a burden any longer to my lord the king?”

36 Your servant shall go over the Jordan with the king a little way, but why should the king recompense me with this reward?
 37 Please let your servant return, and let me die in my city in the tomb of my father and my mother. Here *is* your servant Kimham; let him cross over with my lord the king, and do for him that which *is* good in your eyes.”
 38 The king said, “Let Kimham go over with me, and I will do for him the good in your eyes, and all that you desire of me I will do for you.”
 39 Then all the people crossed over the Jordan, and the king crossed and kissed Barzillai and blessed him; then he returned to his place.
 40a The king went over to Gilgal, and Kimham went over with him.

David's Return to Jerusalem is Marred by Sheba's Rebellion (c. 974 BC)

2 Samuel 19:40b–20:26

At Gilgal, Israel Accuses Judah of Insulting Them

19:40b All the people of Judah went over with the king, and half of the people of Israel too.
 41 Suddenly, all the men of Israel *were* coming to the king. They said to the king, “Why have our brothers the men of Judah stolen away and brought the king and his household over the Jordan, with all the men of David?”
 42 Then all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, “Because the king *is* my close relative! Why *are* you this angry over this matter? Have we by any means eaten *anything* from the king? Did we take by any means anything that was not ours?”
 43 Then the people of Israel answered the men of Judah and said, “I have ten times as much in the king, moreover in David I have more than you. Why did you treat me with contempt by not giving me first chance to bring back my king?” But the words of the men of Judah *were* fiercer than the word of the men of Israel.

Sheba, a Benjaminite, Takes Advantage of the Tension to Start Another Revolt

20:1 Now a man of wickedness was found there whose name *was* Sheba the son of Bichri, a Benjaminite. He blew the horn and said, “There is no share for us in David, and there *is* no inheritance for us in the son of Jesse; each to his tents, O Israel!”
 2a Then all the men of Israel went up from *following* after David, *following instead* after Sheba the son of Bicri,

David Returns to Jerusalem With the Men of Judah

2b but the men of Judah stuck to their king from the Jordan up to Jerusalem.
 3 David went up to his house in Jerusalem, then the king took the ten concubines whom he had left to look after the house, and he put them under confinement. However, he provided for them, but he did not sleep with them. So they were confined until the day of their death, like a lifetime of widowhood.

David Sends Amasa to Mobilize the Men of Judah

4 Then the king said to Amasa, “Summon for me the men of Judah *within* three days, and be here yourself.”
 5 So Amasa went to summon Judah, but he tarried more than the appointed time which he had set for him.

David Sends Abishai to Deal With Sheba

6 Then David said to Abishai, “Now Sheba the son of Bicri will do us more harm than Absalom. You take the servants of your lord and pursue after him, lest he find fortified cities for himself and escape from us.”
 7 Then the men of Joab, the Kerethites and the Pelethites, and all the mighty warriors went out after him; they went out from Jerusalem to pursue after Sheba the son of Bicri.

Joab Kills Amasa and Takes Command

8 They *were* near the big rock that *is* in Gibeon, and Amasa came before them. Joab was dressed in his military clothing, *with* a utility belt on him and a sword strapped to his waist in its scabbard. Now he went out, and it fell out.
 9 Then Joab said to Amasa, “Is it peace, O you my brother?” Then the right hand of Joab took hold of the beard of Amasa *as if* to kiss him.
 10 Now Amasa was not on his guard against the sword that *was* in Joab's hand, and he struck him with it into the stomach, and his entrails poured out to the ground. He did not strike him again, and he died. Then Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba the son of Bicri.
 11 A young man stood over him, from the young men of Joab, and he said, “Whoever takes delight in Joab and whoever *is* for David, *follow* after Joab.”
 12 Now Amasa *was* wallowing in the blood in the middle of the highway; when the man saw that all the people stood *there*, he turned Amasa over from the highway into the field, and he threw a garment over him because he had seen that all who had come by him had stopped.
 13 After he was removed from the highway, all the men passed by after Joab to pursue after Sheba the son of Bicri.

Sheba Hides in Abel and Joab Besieges the City

14 (He had passed through all the tribes of Israel to Abel and Beth Maacah; now all of the Berites had been treated badly, so they also followed after him.)

15 And they came and besieged him in Abel Beth Maacah. They threw up a siege ramp against the city, and they stood against the ramparts. And all the army who *were* with Joab *were* battering to cause the wall to fall.

16 Then a wise woman from the city called out, "Listen, listen! Please speak to Joab *to* come near here so that I may speak to you."

17 Then he came near to her, and the woman asked, "*Are* you Joab?" And he said, "*I am.*" Then she said to him, "Listen to the words of your servant." He said, "*I am* listening."

18 Then she said, "In former times, they would always say, 'By all means, let them inquire in Abel,' and so they settled things.

19 *I am* one of the faithful representatives of Israel. You *are* seeking to destroy a city and a mother in Israel. Why do you want to swallow the inheritance of Yahweh?"

20 Then Joab answered and said, "Far be it, far be it from me that I should swallow or I should destroy.

21 That is not the matter. But a man from the mountains of Ephraim, whose name *is* Sheba the son Bicri, has lifted up his hand against the king, against David. Give only him to us, and I will depart from the city." The woman said to Joab, "Look, his head *is* being thrown down to you over the wall."

22 The woman went to all of the people with her wise plan, so they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bicri and threw *it* to Joab. Then he blew the horn and dispersed from the city, each to his tent. Then Joab returned to Jerusalem to the king.

David's Administration After the Rebellions of Absalom and Sheba

23 Now Joab *was* over all the army of Israel and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was* over the Carites and over the Pelethites.

24 Adoram *was* over the forced labor, and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud *was* the recorder.

25 Shiya *was* secretary, and Zadok and Abiathar *were* priests.

26 Also Ira the Jairite *was* priest for David.

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