

## Absalom Returns from Exile (c. 980 BC)

2 Samuel 14:1–27

### Joab's Plan

1 Now Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart *was inclined* toward Absalom.  
 2 So Joab sent to Tekoa and brought a wise woman from there and said to her, "Please pretend to be a mourner, and put on mourning garments now, and do not anoint yourself with oil, but be like a woman who has been mourning for the dead many days;  
 3 then go to the king and speak to him in this manner." So Joab put the words in her mouth.

### The Wise Woman's Story

4 Now when the woman of Tekoa spoke to the king, she fell on her face to the ground and prostrated herself and said, "Help, O king."  
 5 The king said to her, "What is your trouble?" And she answered, "Truly I am a widow, for my husband is dead.  
 6 Your maidservant had two sons, but the two of them struggled together in the field, and there was no one to separate them, so one struck the other and killed him.  
 7 Now behold, the whole family has risen against your maidservant, and they say, 'Hand over the one who struck his brother, that we may put him to death for the life of his brother whom he killed, and destroy the heir also.' Thus they will extinguish my coal which is left, so as to leave my husband neither name nor remnant on the face of the earth."  
 8 Then the king said to the woman, "Go to your house, and I will give orders concerning you."  
 9 The woman of Tekoa said to the king, "O my lord, the king, the iniquity is on me and my father's house, but the king and his throne are guiltless."  
 10 So the king said, "Whoever speaks to you, bring him to me, and he will not touch you anymore."  
 11 Then she said, "Please let the king remember the LORD your God, *so that* the avenger of blood will not continue to destroy, otherwise they will destroy my son." And he said, "As the LORD lives, not one hair of your son shall fall to the ground."

### The Wise Woman Reveals Her True Intention

12 Then the woman said, "Please let your maidservant speak a word to my lord the king." And he said, "Speak."  
 13 The woman said, "Why then have you planned such a thing against the people of God? For in speaking this word the king is as one who is guilty, *in that* the king does not bring back his banished one.  
 14 For we will surely die and are like water spilled on the ground which cannot be gathered up again. Yet God does not take away life, but plans ways so that the banished one will not be cast out from him.  
 15 Now the reason I have come to speak this word to my lord the king is that the people have made me afraid; so your maidservant said, 'Let me now speak to the king, perhaps the king will perform the request of his maidservant.  
 16 For the king will hear and deliver his maidservant from the hand of the man who would destroy both me and my son from the inheritance of God.'  
 17 Then your maidservant said, 'Please let the word of my lord the king be comforting, for as the angel of God, so is my lord the king to discern good and evil. And may the LORD your God be with you.'"

### David Suspects Joab's Involvement

18 Then the king answered and said to the woman, "Please do not hide anything from me that I am about to ask you." And the woman said, "Let my lord the king please speak."  
 19 So the king said, "Is the hand of Joab with you in all this?" And the woman replied, "As your soul lives, my lord the king, no one can turn to the right or to the left from anything that my lord the king has spoken. Indeed, it was your servant Joab who commanded me, and it was he who put all these words in the mouth of your maidservant;  
 20 in order to change the appearance of things your servant Joab has done this thing. But my lord is wise, like the wisdom of the angel of God, to know all that is in the earth."

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

21 Then the king said to Joab, "Behold now, I will surely do this thing; go therefore, bring back the young man Absalom."  
 22 Joab fell on his face to the ground, prostrated himself and blessed the king; then Joab said, "Today your servant knows that I have found favor in your sight, O my lord, the king, in that the king has performed the request of his servant."  
 23 So Joab arose and went to Geshur and brought Absalom to Jerusalem.  
 24 However the king said, "Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face." So Absalom turned to his own house and did not see the king's face.

### Absalom's Appearance

25 Now in all Israel was no one as handsome as Absalom, so highly praised; from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no defect in him.  
 26 When he cut the hair of his head (and it was at the end of every year that he cut *it*, for it was heavy on him so he cut it), he

weighed the hair of his head at 200 shekels by the king's weight.

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

27 To Absalom there were born three sons, and one daughter whose name was Tamar; she was a woman of beautiful appearance.

### **Absalom Reunited with David (c. 978 BC)**

2 Samuel 14:28–33

28 Now Absalom lived two full years in Jerusalem, and did not see the king's face.

29 Then Absalom sent for Joab, to send him to the king, but he would not come to him. So he sent again a second time, but he would not come.

30 Therefore he said to his servants, "See, Joab's field is next to mine, and he has barley there; go and set it on fire." So Absalom's servants set the field on fire.

31 Then Joab arose, came to Absalom at his house and said to him, "Why have your servants set my field on fire?"

32 Absalom answered Joab, "Behold, I sent for 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 still to be there."' Now therefore, let me see the king's face, and if there is iniquity in me, let him put me to death."

33 So when Joab came to the king and told him, he called for Absalom. Thus he came to the king and prostrated himself on his face to the ground before the king, and the king kissed Absalom.

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

2 Samuel 15:1–6

1 Now it came about after this that Absalom provided for himself a chariot and horses and fifty men as runners before him.

2 Absalom used to rise early and stand beside the way to the gate; and when any man had a suit to come to the king for judgment, Absalom would call to him and say, "From what city are you?" And he would say, "Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel."

3 Then Absalom would say to him, "See, your claims are good and right, but no man listens to you on the part of the king."

4 Moreover, Absalom would say, "Oh that one would appoint me judge in the land, then every man who has any suit or cause could come to me and I would give him justice."

5 And when a man came near to prostrate himself before him, he would put out his hand and take hold of him and kiss him.

6 In this manner Absalom dealt with all Israel who came to the king for judgment; so Absalom stole away the hearts of the men of Israel.

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

2 Samuel 15:7–12

7 Now it came about at the end of [four] years that Absalom said to the king, "Please let me go and pay my vow which I have vowed to the LORD, in Hebron.

8 For your servant vowed a vow while I was living at Geshur in Aram, saying, 'If the LORD shall indeed bring me back to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD.'"

9 The king said to him, "Go in peace." So he arose and went to Hebron.

10 But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then you shall say, 'Absalom is king in Hebron.'"

11 Then two hundred men went with Absalom from Jerusalem, who were invited and went innocently, and they did not know anything.

12 And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his city Giloh, while he was offering the sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong, for the people increased continually with Absalom.

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

2 Samuel 15:13–16:14

#### **David Flees from Jerusalem**

15:13 Then a messenger came to David, saying, "The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom."

14 David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, "Arise and let us flee, for *otherwise* none of us will escape from Absalom. Go in haste, or he will overtake us quickly and bring down calamity on us and strike the city with the edge of the sword."

15 Then the king's servants said to the king, "Behold, your servants *are ready to do* whatever my lord the king chooses."

16 So the king went out and all his household with him. But the king left ten concubines to keep the house.

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

#### **David Tests the Loyalty of the Philistines**

18 Now all his servants passed on beside him, all the Cherethites, all the Pelethites and all the Gittites, six hundred men who had come with him from Gath, passed on before the king.

19 Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, “Why will you also go with us? Return and remain with the king, for you are a foreigner and also an exile; *return* to your own place.

20 You came *only* yesterday, and shall I today make you wander with us, while I go where I will? Return and take back your brothers; mercy and truth be with you.”

21 But Ittai answered the king and said, “As the LORD lives, and as my lord the king lives, surely wherever my lord the king may be, whether for death or for life, there also your servant will be.”

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

23 While all the country was weeping with a loud voice, all the people passed over. The king also passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over toward the way of the wilderness.

#### **David Sends Zadok and the Ark Back to Jerusalem**

24 Now behold, Zadok also *came*, and all the Levites with him carrying the ark of the covenant of God. And they set down the ark of God, and Abiathar came up until all the people had finished passing from the city.

25 The king said to Zadok, “Return the ark of God to the city. If I find favor in the sight of the LORD, then He will bring me back again and show me both it and His habitation.

26 But if He should say thus, ‘I have no delight in you,’ behold, here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him.”

27 The king said also to Zadok the priest, “Are you *not* a seer? Return to the city in peace and your two sons with you, your son Ahimaaz and Jonathan the son of Abiathar.

28 See, I am going to wait at the fords of the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me.”

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

#### **David Commissions Hushai as a Spy**

30 And David went up the ascent of the *Mount of Olives*, and wept as he went, and his head was covered and he walked barefoot. Then all the people who were with him each covered his head and went up weeping as they went.

31 Now someone told David, saying, “Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.” And David said, “O LORD, I pray, make the counsel of Ahithophel foolishness.”

32 It happened as David was coming to the summit, where God was worshiped, that behold, Hushai the Archite met him with his coat torn and dust on his head.

33 David said to him, “If you pass over with me, then you will be a burden to me.

34 But if you return to the city, and say to Absalom, ‘I will be your servant, O king; as I have been your father’s servant in time past, so I will now be your servant,’ then you can thwart the counsel of Ahithophel for me.

35 Are not Zadok and Abiathar the priests with you there? So it shall be that whatever you hear from the king’s house, you shall report to Zadok and Abiathar the priests.

36 Behold their two sons are with them there, Ahimaaz, Zadok’s son and Jonathan, Abiathar’s son; and by them you shall send me everything that you hear.”

37 So Hushai, David’s friend, came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem.

#### **Ziba Accuses Mephibosheth of Treason and David Makes a Snap Decision**

16:1 Now when David had passed a little beyond the summit, behold, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him with a couple of saddled donkeys, and on them *were* two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred clusters of raisins, a hundred summer fruits, and a jug of wine.

2 The king said to Ziba, “Why do you have these?” And Ziba said, “The donkeys are for the king’s household to ride, and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat, and the wine, for whoever is faint in the wilderness to drink.”

3 Then the king said, “And where is your master’s son?” And Ziba said to the king, “Behold, he is staying in Jerusalem, for he said, ‘Today the house of Israel will restore the kingdom of my father to me.’”

4 So the king said to Ziba, “Behold, all that belongs to Mephibosheth is yours.” And Ziba said, “I prostrate myself; let me find favor in your sight, O my lord, the king!”

#### **Shimei the Benjamite, a Relative of Saul, Curses David**

5 When King David came to Bahurim, behold, there came out from there a man of the family of the house of Saul whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera; he came out cursing continually as he came.

6 He threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David; and all the people and all the mighty men were at his right hand and

at his left.

7 Thus Shimei said when he cursed, “Get out, get out, you man of bloodshed, and worthless fellow!

8 The LORD has returned upon you all the bloodshed 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. And behold, you are *taken* in your own evil, for you are a man of bloodshed!”

9 Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, “Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over now and cut off his head.” [[Exod 22:28](#)]

10 But the king said, “What have I to do with you, O sons of Zeruiah? If he curses, and if the LORD has told him, ‘Curse David,’ then who shall say, ‘Why have you done so?’”

11 Then David said to Abishai and to all his servants, “Behold, my son who came out from me seeks my life; how much more now this Benjamite? Let him alone and let him curse, for the LORD has told him.

12 Perhaps the LORD will look on my affliction and return good to me instead of his cursing this day.”

13 So David and his men went on the way; and Shimei went along on the hillside parallel with him and as he went he cursed and cast stones and threw dust at him.

14 The king and all the people who were with him arrived weary and he refreshed himself there.

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