

**The Journey Home (c. 974 BC)**

2 Samuel 19:8b–40a

**Israel and Judah Argue About What to Do**

8b But the Israelite soldiers had all fled to their own homes.

9 All the people throughout all the tribes of Israel were arguing among themselves saying, “The king delivered us from the hand of our enemies. He rescued us from the hand of the Philistines, but now he has fled from the land because of Absalom.

10 But Absalom, whom we anointed as our king, has died in battle. So now why do you hesitate to bring the king back?”

**David Reaches Out to Judah and Punishes Joab for His Insubordination**

11 Then King David sent a message to Zadok and Abiathar the priests saying, “Tell the elders of Judah, ‘Why should you delay any further in bringing the king back to his palace, when everything Israel is saying has come to the king’s attention.

12 You are my brothers—my very own flesh and blood! Why should you delay any further in bringing the king back?’

13 Say to Amasa, ‘Are you not my flesh and blood? God will punish me severely, if from this time on you are not the commander of my army in place of Joab!’”

14 He won over the hearts of all the men of Judah as though they were one man. Then they sent word to the king saying, “Return, you and all your servants as well.”

**Shimei Meets David at the Jordan River and Begg Forgiveness**

15 So the king returned and came to the Jordan River. Now the people of Judah had come to Gilgal to meet the king and to help him cross the Jordan.

16 Shimei son of Gera the Benjaminite from Bahurim came down quickly with the men of Judah to meet King David.

17 There were a thousand men from Benjamin with him, along with Ziba the servant of Saul’s household, and with him his fifteen sons and twenty servants. They hurriedly crossed the Jordan within sight of the king.

18 They crossed at the ford in order to help the king’s household cross and to do whatever he thought appropriate. Now after he had crossed the Jordan, Shimei son of Gera threw himself down before the king.

19 He said to the king, “Don’t think badly of me, my lord, and don’t recall the sin of your servant on the day when you, my lord the king, left Jerusalem! Please don’t call it to mind!

20 For I, your servant, know that I sinned, and I have come today as the first of all the house of Joseph to come down to meet my lord the king.”

21 Abishai son of Zeruiah replied, “For this should not Shimei be put to death? After all, he cursed the LORD’s anointed!”

22 But David said, “What do we have in common, you sons of Zeruiah? You are like my enemy today! Should anyone be put to death in Israel today? Don’t you realize that today I am king over Israel?”

23 The king said to Shimei, “You won’t die.” The king vowed an oath concerning this.

**Mephibosheth Accuses Ziba of Slander**

24 Now Mephibosheth, Saul’s grandson, came down to meet the king. From the day the king had left until the day he safely returned, Mephibosheth had not cared for his feet nor trimmed his mustache nor washed his clothes.

25 When he came from Jerusalem to meet the king, the king asked him, “Why didn’t you go with me, Mephibosheth?”

26 He replied, “My lord the king, my servant deceived me! I said, ‘Let me get my donkey saddled so that I can ride on it and go with the king,’ for I am lame.

27 But my servant has slandered me to my lord the king. But my lord the king is like an angel of God. Do whatever seems appropriate to you.

28 After all, there was no one in the entire house of my grandfather who did not deserve death from my lord the king. But instead you allowed me to eat at your own table! What further claim do I have to ask the king for anything?”

29 Then the king replied to him, “Why should you continue speaking like this? You and Ziba will inherit the field together.”

30 Mephibosheth said to the king, “Let him have the whole thing! My lord the king has returned safely to his house!”

**David Expresses His Gratitude to Barzillai**

31 Now when Barzillai the Gileadite had come down from Rogelim, he crossed the Jordan with the king so he could send him on his way from there.

32 But Barzillai was very old—eighty years old, in fact—and he had taken care of the king when he stayed in Mahanaim, for he was a very rich man.

33 So the king said to Barzillai, “Cross over with me, and I will take care of you while you are with me in Jerusalem.”

34 Barzillai replied to the king, “How many days do I have left to my life, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem?

35 I am presently eighty years old. Am I able to discern good and bad? Can I taste what I eat and drink? Am I still able to hear the voices of male and female singers? Why should I continue to be a burden to my lord the king?

36 I will cross the Jordan with the king and go a short distance. Why should the king reward me in this way?

37 Let me return so that I may die in my own city near the grave of my father and my mother. But look, here is your servant Kimham.

Let him cross over with my lord the king. Do for him whatever seems appropriate to you.”

38 The king replied, “Kimham will cross over with me, and I will do for him whatever I deem appropriate. And whatever you choose, I will do for you.”

39 So all the people crossed the Jordan, as did the king. After the king had kissed him and blessed him, Barzillai returned to his home.

40a When the king crossed over to Gilgal, Kimham crossed 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 Now all the soldiers of Judah along with half of the soldiers of Israel had helped the king cross over.

41 Then all the men of Israel began coming to the king. They asked the king, “Why did our brothers, the men of Judah, sneak the king away and help the king and his household cross the Jordan—and not only him but all of David’s men as well?”

42 All the men of Judah replied to the men of Israel, “Because the king is our close relative! Why are you so upset about this? Have we eaten at the king’s expense? Or have we misappropriated anything for our own use?”

43 The men of Israel replied to the men of Judah, “We have ten shares in the king, and we have a greater claim on David than you do! Why do you want to curse us? Weren’t we the first to suggest bringing back our king?” But the comments of the men of Judah were more severe than those of the men of Israel.

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

20:1 Now a wicked man named Sheba son of Bicri, a Benjaminite, happened to be there. He blew the trumpet and said, “We have no share in David; we have no inheritance in this son of Jesse! Every man go home, O Israel!”

2a So all the men of Israel deserted David and followed Sheba son of Bicri.

### David Returns to Jerusalem With the Men of Judah

2b But the men of Judah stuck by their king all the way from the Jordan River to Jerusalem.

3 Then David went to his palace in Jerusalem. The king took the ten concubines he had left to care for the palace and placed them under confinement. Though he provided for their needs, he did not have sexual relations with them. They remained in confinement until the day they died, living out the rest of their lives as widows.

### David Sends Amasa to Mobilize the Men of Judah

4 Then the king said to Amasa, “Call the men of Judah together for me in three days, and you be present here with them too.”

5 So Amasa went out to call Judah together. But in doing so he took longer than the time that the king had allotted him.

### David Sends Abishai to Deal With Sheba

6 Then David said to Abishai, “Now Sheba son of Bicri will cause greater disaster for us than Absalom did! Take your LORD’s servants and pursue him. Otherwise he will secure fortified cities for himself and get away from us.”

7 So Joab’s men, accompanied by the Kerethites, the Pelethites, and all the warriors, left Jerusalem to pursue Sheba son of Bicri.

### Joab Kills Amasa and Takes Command

8 When they were near the big rock that is in Gibeon, Amasa came to them. Now Joab was dressed in military attire and had a dagger in its sheath belted to his waist. When he advanced, it fell out.

9 Joab said to Amasa, “How are you, my brother?” With his right hand Joab took hold of Amasa’s beard as if to greet him with a kiss.

10 Amasa did not protect himself from the knife in Joab’s other hand, and Joab stabbed him in the abdomen, causing Amasa’s intestines to spill out on the ground. There was no need to stab him again; the first blow was fatal. Then Joab and his brother Abishai pursued Sheba son of Bicri.

11 One of Joab’s soldiers who stood over Amasa said, “Whoever is for Joab and whoever is for David, follow Joab!”

12 Amasa was squirming in his own blood in the middle of the path, and this man had noticed that all the soldiers stopped. Having noticed that everyone who came across Amasa stopped, the man pulled him away from the path and into the field and threw a garment over him.

13 Once he had removed Amasa from the path, everyone followed Joab to pursue Sheba son of Bicri.

### Sheba Hides in Abel and Joab Besieges the City

14 Sheba traveled through all the tribes of Israel to Abel of Beth Maacah and all the Berite region. When they had assembled, they too joined him.

15 So Joab’s men came and laid siege against him in Abel of Beth Maacah. They prepared a siege ramp outside the city which stood against its outer rampart. As all of Joab’s soldiers were trying to break through the wall so that it would collapse,

16 a wise woman called out from the city, "Listen up! Listen up! Tell Joab, 'Come near so that I may speak to you.'"

17 When he approached her, the woman asked, "Are you Joab?" He replied, "I am." She said to him, "Listen to the words of your servant." He said, "Go ahead. I'm listening."

18 She said, "In the past they would always say, 'Let them inquire in Abel,' and that is how they settled things.

19 I represent the peaceful and the faithful in Israel. You are attempting to destroy an important city in Israel. Why should you swallow up the LORD's inheritance?"

20 Joab answered, "Get serious! I don't want to swallow up or destroy anything!

21 That's not the way things are. There is a man from the hill country of Ephraim named Sheba son of Bicri. He has rebelled against King David. Give me just this one man, and I will leave the city." The woman said to Joab, "This very minute his head will be thrown over the wall to you!"

22 Then the woman went to all the people with her wise advice and they cut off Sheba's head and threw it out to Joab. Joab blew the trumpet, and his men dispersed from the city, each going to his own home. Joab returned to the king in Jerusalem.

#### **David's Administration After the Rebellions of Absalom and Sheba**

23 Now Joab was the general in command of all the army of Israel. Benaiah the son of Jehoida was over the Kerethites and the Perethites.

24 Adoniram was supervisor of the work crews. Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was the secretary.

25 Sheva was the scribe, and Zadok and Abiathar were the priests.

26 Ira the Jairite was David's personal priest.

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