

Now Joab son of Zeruiah perceived that the King's mind was on Absalom. Joab sent to Tekoa and brought from there a wise woman. He said to her, 'Pretend to be in mourning; put on mourning garments, do not anoint yourself with oil, but behave like a woman who has been mourning many days for the dead. Go to the King and speak to him as follows.' And Joab put the words into her mouth.

When the woman of Tekoa came to the King, she fell ~~down~~ on her face to the ground and did obeisance, and said, 'Help, O King!' The King asked her, 'What is your trouble?' She answered, 'Alas, I am a widow: my husband is dead. Your servant had two sons, and they fought with one another in the field; there was no one to part them, and one struck the other and killed him. Now the whole family has risen against your servant. They say, "Give up the man who struck his

his brother, so that we may kill him for the life of his brother whom he murdered, even if we may kill him for the life of his brother whom he murdered, even if we may kill him for the life of his brother whom he murdered, even if we destroy the heir as well." Thus they would quench my one remaining ember, and leave to my husband neither name nor remnant on the face of the earth!

Then the King said to the woman, 'Go to your house, and I will give orders concerning you.' The woman of Tekoa said to the King, 'On me be the guilt, my lie to the King, and on my father's house; let the King and his throne be guiltless.'

The King said, 'If anyone says anything to you, bring him to me, and he shall never touch you again.' Then she said, 'Please, may the King keep the lord you'

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in mind, so that the avenger of blood may kill no more, and my son not be destroyed.' He said, 'As the Lord lives, not one hair of your son shall fall to the ground.'

Then the woman said, 'Please let your servant speak a word to my lord the King.' He said, 'Speak!' The woman said, 'Why then have you planned such a thing against the people of God? For in giving this decision the King convicts himself, inasmuch as the King does not bring his banished one home again. We must all die; we are like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up. But God will not take away a life; he will devise plans so as not to keep an outcast banished for ever from his presence. Now I have come to say this to my lord the King because the people have made me afraid.'

your servant thought, "I will speak to the King: it may be that the King will perform the request of his servant. For the King will hear, and deliver his servant from the hand of the man who would cut both me and my son off from the heritage of God." Your servant thought, "The word of my lord the King will set me at rest"; for my lord the King is like the angel of God, discerning good and evil. The Lord your God be with you!"

Then the King answered the woman, 'Do not withhold from me anything I ask you.' The woman said, 'Let my lord the King speak.' The King said, 'Is the hand of God with you in all this?' The woman answered and said, 'As surely as you live, my lord the King, one cannot turn right or left from anything that my lord the

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17 *Homework*

King has said. For it was your servant Joab who commanded me; it was he who put all these words into the mouth of your servant.

In order to change the course of affairs your servant Joab did this. But my lord has wisdom like the wisdom of the angel of God to know all things that are on the earth.'

Then the King said to Joab, 'Very well I grant this; go, bring back the young man Absalom.' Joab prostrated himself with his face to the ground and did obeisance, and he blessed the King; and Joab said, 'Today your servant knows that I have found favour in your sight, my lord the King, in that the King has granted the request of his servant.' So Joab set off, went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. The King said, 'Let him go to his own house; he is

not to come into my presence.' So Absalom went to his own house, and did not come into the King's presence.

Now in all Israel there was no one to be praised so much for his beauty as Absalom; from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. When he cut the hair of his head (for at the end of every year he used to cut it; when it was heavy on him, he cut it), he weighed the hair of his head, two hundred shekels by the King's weight. There were born to Absalom three sons, and one daughter whose name was Tamar; she was a beautiful woman.

So Absalom lived two full years in Jerusalem without coming into the King's presence. Then Absalom sent for Joab to send him to the King; but Joab would

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17 *Bawasted*

not come to him. He sent a second time, but Joab would no come. Then he said to his servants, 'Look, Joab's field is next to mine, and he has barley there; go and set it on fire.' So Absalom servant set the field on fire. Then Joab rose and went to Absalom at his house, and said to him, 'why have your servants set my fields on fire?' Absalom answered Joab, 'Look, I sent word to you: Come here, that I may send you to the King with the question, "why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me to be there still." Now let me go unto the King's presence; if there is guilt in me, let him kill me!' Then Joab went to the King and told him; and he summoned Absalom. So he came to the King and prostrated himself with his face to the ground before the

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17 Hebrews

the King; and the King kissed Absalom

'after this Absalom got himself a chariot and horses,
, and fifty men to run ahead of him.

Absalom used to rise early and stand beside
the road into the gate; and when anyone
brought a suit before the King for judgement,
Absalom would call out and say 'from what
city are you?' when the person said 'your servant
is of such and such a tribe in Israel', Absalom
would say, 'See, your claims are good and right;
but there is no one deputed by the King to hear
you.' Absalom said moreover: 'if only I were
Judge in the land. Then all who had a suit
or cause might come to me, and I would give
them Justice, whenever people came near to do
obeisance to him, he would put out his and take
hold of them, and kiss them.⁶ Thus Absalom did
to every Israelite who came to the King for
judgement, so Absalom stole the hearts of the
people of Israel.

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at the end of four years Absalom used to
tire Said to the King please let me go to
Hebron and pay the vow that I have made to
the Lord. for your servant made a vow while
I lived at Geshur in Aram. If the lord will
indeed bring me back to Jerusalem, then I will
worship the lord in Hebron. the King said
to him 'Go in Peace' So he got up and went
to hebron, but absalom sent Secret messages
throughout all the tribes in Israel, saying
'as soon as you hear the Sound of trumpets
then Shout Absalom has become King at Hebron.
Two hundred men went with Absalom from
Jerusalem, they were invited guests, and they
went in their innocence, knowing nothing of the
matter. While Absalom was offering the
¹² sacrifices, he sent for Ahithophel the Cilonite,
Davids counsellor, from his City Cilon. the conspiracy
grew in Strength, and the people with Absalom
Kept Increasing.

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A messenger came to David saying 'The hearts of the Israelites have gone after Absalom. Then David said to his officials who were with him at Jerusalem 'Get up! Let us flee, or there will be no escape for us from Absalom, Hurry, or he will soon overtake us, and bring disaster down upon us, and attack the city with the edge of the sword.¹⁵ the king's officials said to the King 'your servants are ready to do whatever our lord, the King decides, so the King left, followed by his household, except ten concubines whom he left behind to look after the house. The King left, followed by all the people, and they stopped at the last house; all his officials passed by him; and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites and all the six hundred Gittites who had followed him from Gath, passed on before the King.

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Then the King said to Ittai the Gittite, 'Why are you also coming with us? Go back, and stay with the King; for you are a foreigner, and also an exile

from your home.²⁰ You came only yesterday, and shall I today make you wander about with us, while I go wherever I can? Go back, and take your kinsfolk with you; and may the Lord show steadfast love and faithfulness to you.²¹ But Ittai answered the King, 'As the Lord lives, and as my lord the King lives, wherever my lord the King may be, whether for death or for life, there also your servant will be.'²² David said to Ittai, 'Go then, march on. So Ittai the Gittite marched on, with all his men and all the little ones who were with him.²³ The whole country wept aloud as all the people passed by; the King crossed the Wadi Ridron, and all the people moved on towards the wilderness.

²⁴ Abiathar came up, and Zadok also, with all the Levites, carrying the ark of the covenant of God. They set down the ark of God, until the people had all passed out of the city.²⁵ Then the King said to Zadok, 'Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favour in the eyes of the Lord.

he will bring me back and let me see both it and the place where it remains.²⁶ But if he says, 'I take no pleasure in you', here I am, let him do to me what seems good to him.

²⁷ The King also said to the priest Zadok, 'Look, go back to the city in peace, you and Abiathar, with your two sons, Ahimelech your son and Jonathan son of Abiathar. ²⁸ See, I will wait at the fords of the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me.' So Zadok and Abiathar carried the ark of God back to Jerusalem, and they remained there.

²⁹ But David went up the ascent of the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went, with his head covered and walking barefoot; and all the people who were with him covered their heads and went up, weeping as they went. ³⁰ David was told that Ahithophel was among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, 'O Lord I pray you, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.'

³² When David came to the summit, where God was worshipped, Hushai the archite came to meet him with his coat torn and earth on his head.

³³ David said to him, If you go on with me, 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 now I will be your servant', then you will defeat for me the counsel of Ahithophel. ³⁵ The priests Zadok and Abiathar will be with you there. So whatever you hear from the King's house, tell it to the priests Zadok and Abiathar. ³⁶ Their two sons are with them there, Zadok's son Ahimaaz and Abiathar's son Jonathan; and by them you shall report to me everything you hear. ³⁷ So Hushai, David's friend, came into the city, just as Absalom was entering Jerusalem.

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17 *Hannah's*

16 When David had passed a little beyond the summit, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, carrying two hundred loaves of bread, one hundred bunches of raisins, one hundred of summer fruits, and one skin of wine. ² The king said to Ziba, 'why have you brought these?' Ziba answered, 'The donkeys are for the king's household to ride, the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat, and the wine is for those to drink who faint in the wilderness.'

³ The King said, 'And where is your master's son?' Ziba said to the king, 'He remains in Jerusalem; for he said, "Today the house of Israel will give me back my grandfather's kingdom."

⁴ Then the king said to Ziba, 'All that belonged to Mephibosheth is now yours.' Ziba said, 'I do obeisance; let me find favour in your sight, my lord the King.'

⁵ When King David came to Bahurim, a man of

the family of the house of Saul came out whose name was Shimei son of Gera; he came out cursing.⁶ He threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David; now all the people and all the warriors were on his right and on his left.

⁷ Shimei shouted while he cursed, 'Out! Out! Murderer! Scoundrel! ⁸The Lord has avenged on all of you 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, disaster has overtaken you; for you are a man of blood.'

⁹ Then Abishai son of Zeruah said to the king, 'Why should this dead dog curse my lord the King? Let me go over and take off his head.' ¹⁰ But the king said, 'What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruah? If he is cursing because the Lord has said to him, "Curse David", who then shall say, "why have you done so?"' " David said to

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and to all his servants, 'My own son
seeks my life; how much more now
may this Benjamite! let him alone, and
let him curse; for the Lord has bidden
him.¹² It may be that the Lord will look on
my distress, and the Lord will repay me with
good for this cursing of me today.'¹³ So David and his
men went on the road, while Shimei went along on
the hillside opposite him and cursed as he went,
throwing stones and flinging dust at him.¹⁴ The King
and all the people who were with him arrived
weary at the Jordan; and there he refreshed himself.
¹⁵ Now Absalom and all the Israelites came to Jerusalem;
Ahithophel was with him.¹⁶ When Hushai the Archite,
David's friend, came to Absalom, Hushai said to
Absalom, 'Long live the King! Long live the King!
¹⁷ Absalom said to Hushai, 'Is this your loyalty to
your friend? Why did you not go with your friend?
¹⁸ Hushai said to Absalom, 'No; but the one whom the
Lord and this people and all the Israelites have chosen,

his I will be, and with him I will remain.

¹⁹ Moreover, whom should I serve? Should it not be his son? Just as I have served your father, so I will serve you.

²⁰ Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, 'Give us your counsel; what shall we do?' ²¹ Ahithophel said to Absalom, 'Go into your father's concubines, the ones he has left to look after the house; and all Israel will hear that you have made yourself odious to your father, and the hands of all who are with you will be strengthened.' ²² So they pitched a tent for Absalom upon the roof; and Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel. ²³ Now in those days the counsel that Ahithophel gave was as if one consulted the oracle of God; so all the counsel of Ahithophel was esteemed, both by David and by Absalom.

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17. Moreover, Ahithophel said to Absalom, 'Let me choose twelve thousand men, and I will set out and pursue David tonight. 2. I will come upon him while he is weary and discouraged, and throw him into a panic; and all the people who are with him will flee. I will strike down only the king, 3 and I will bring all the people back to you as a bride comes home to her husband. You seek the life of only one man, and all the people will be at peace.

4 The advice pleased Absalom and all the elders of Israel.

5. Then Absalom said, 'Call Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear too what he has to say.'

6. When Hushai came to Absalom, Absalom said to him, 'This is what Ahithophel has said; shall we do as he advises? If not, you tell us.' 7. Then Hushai said to Absalom, 'This time the counsel that Ahithophel has given

is not good'. 8. Hushai continued, "You know

that your father and his men are warriors, and that they are enraged, like a bear robbed of her cubs in the field. Besides, your father is expert in war, he will not spend the night with the troops. 9. Even now he has hidden himself in one of the pits, or in some other place. And when some of our troops fall at the first attack, whoever hears it will say, "There has been a slaughter among the troops who follow Absalom." 10. Then even the valiant warrior, whose heart is like the heart of a lion, will utterly melt with fear; for all Israel knows that your father is a warrior, and that those who are with him are valiant warriors. 11. But my counsel is that all Israel be gathered to you, from Dan to Beer-sheba, like the sand by the sea for multitude, and that you go to battle in person.

12. So we shall come upon him in whatever place he may be found, and we shall light

on him ~~in~~ whatever as the dew falls on the ground; and he will not survive, nor will any of those with him. 13. If he withdraws into a city, then all Israel will bring ropes to that city, and we shall drag it into the valley, until not even a pebble is to be found there. 14. Absalom and all the men of Israel said, 'The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel. ' For the Lord had ordained to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, so the Lord might bring ruin on Absalom.

15. Then Hushai said to the priests Zadok and Abiathar, 'Thus and so did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel; and thus and so I have counselled. 16. Therefore send quickly and tell David, "Do not lodge to-night at the fords of the wilderness, but by all means cross over; otherwise the king and all the people who are with him will be swallowed up."

17. Jonathan and Ahimaaz were waiting at En-roged; a servant-girl used to go and tell them, and they would go and tell King David; for they could not risk being seen entering the city. 18 But a boy saw them, and told Absalom; so both of them went away quickly, and came to the house of a man at Bahurim, who had a well in his courtyard; and they went down to it.

19. The man's wife took a covering, stretched it over the well's mouth, and spread out grain on it; and nothing was known of it. 20. When Absalom's servants came to the woman at the house, they said, 'Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?' The woman said to them, 'They have crossed over the brook of water.' And when they had searched and could not find them, they returned to Jerusalem.

21. After they had gone, the men came up out of the well, and went and told King David.

They said to David, "Go and cross the water quickly;

for thus and so has Ahithophel counselled against you. 22. So David and all the people who were with him set out and crossed the Jordan; by daybreak not one was left who had not crossed the Jordan.

23. When Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his donkey and went off home to his own city. He set his house in order, and hanged himself; he died and was buried in the tomb of his father.

24 Then David came to Mahanaim, while Absalom crossed the Jordan with all the men of Israel. 25. Now Absalom had set Amasa over the army in the place of Joab. Amassa was the son of a man named Ithra the Ishmaelite, who had married Abigail daughter of Nahash, sister of Zeruiah, Joab's mother. 26. The Israelites and Absalom encamped in the land of Gilead.

27 When David came to Mahanaim, Shobi son of Nahash from Rabbah of the Ammonites, and Machir son of Ammiel from

Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim 28 brought beds, basins, and earthen vessels, wheat, barley, meal, parched grain, beans and lentils, ^{2^a} honey and curds, sheep, and cheese from the herd, for David and the people with him to eat; for they said, 'The troops are hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness.'