

14[1] And Joab, son of Zeruah, knew that the king's heart was upon Absalom. [2] And Joab sent to Tekoa¹ and took from there a wise woman. And he said to her, "Please pretend to be a mourner, and please wear garments of mourning, and do not anoint with oil. And you shall have been this woman many days, mourning over the dead. [3] And you shall come in to the king and speak to him according to this word." And Joab put the words in her mouth.

[4] And the Tekoa woman spoke to the king. So, she fell with her nose to earth and bowed and said, "Save the king." [5] And the king said to her, "What is to you?" And she said, "Indeed, I am a widowed woman. So, my man is dead, and your maid-servant has two sons. And the two of them were fighting in the field, and there was no deliverer between them. And the one struck the one and killed him. [7] And behold, the whole family rose up against your maid-servant and said, 'Give up the striker of his brother. And we will kill him for his brother's soul which he killed, and we will exterminate also the heir.' So, they would extinguish my coal that is left, to not set for my man a name and a remnant upon the face of the ground."

[8] And the king said to the woman, "Go to your house, and I will command about you." [9] And the Tekoa woman said to the king, "Upon me, my lord the king, is the iniquity, and upon my father's house. And the king and his throne are innocent." [10] And the king said, "The one who speaks to you, so you shall bring him to me, and he will not yet again strike against you." [11] And she said, "Please, let the king remember Yehvah your Gods, from anymore of the avenger of blood to destroy, and they not exterminate my son." And he said, "Yehvah lives, not a single hair of your son shall fall to earth."

[12] And the woman said, "Please, let your maid-servant speak a word to my lord the king." And he said, "Speak." [13] And the woman said, "So why do you think as this against Gods' people? So, the king speaks this word as guilty, the king not returning his banished one. [14] For surely we will die, and as water is poured out to earth that is not gathered up. And Gods, he does not carry away a soul. And he thinks of thoughts to not banish a banished one from him."²

[15] "And now that I have come to speak to my lord the king this word, for the people made me afraid. And your maid-servant said, 'Please let me speak to the king. Perhaps, the king will do his maid's matter. [16] For the king will hear to deliver his maid from the palm of the man to exterminate me and my son together from Gods' inheritance.' [17] And your maid-servant said, 'Now the word of my lord the king will be for rest. For as the messenger of the Gods, so is my lord the king to hear the good and the bad. And may Yehvah your Gods be with you.'"

[18] And the king answered and said to the woman, "Please, do not hide from me a thing that I ask you." And the woman said, "Please, speak my lord the king." [19] And the king said, "Is Joab's hand with you in all this?" And the woman answered and said, "Your soul lives, my lord the king. None may go to the right or the left from all that my lord the king has spoken. For your servant Joab, he commanded me and he put all these words in your maid-servant's mouth, [20] to produce change with the face of the matter your servant Joab did this thing. And my

1 תְּקוּעָה (teqo`âh) "to Tekoa" - Tekoa also found in 1 Chronicles 2:24; 4:5; 2 Chronicles 11:6; 20:20; Jeremiah 6:1; Ezekiel 7:14; Amos 1:1.

2 מִמֶּנּוּ (mimmenu) "from him" or "from us" (e.g. Genesis 3:22 מִמֶּנּוּ). Either fits the context.

lord is wise, as the wisdom of the messenger of the Gods, to know all that is in the land.”

[21] And the king said to Joab, “Please behold, I shall do this thing. So, go. Bring back the young man Absalom.” [22] And Joab fell with his face to earth and bowed and blessed the king. And Joab said, “Today, your servant knows that I have found favor in your eyes, my lord the king, that the king has done his servant's³ matter.” [23] And Joab arose and went to Geshur and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. [24] And the king said, “Let him go around to his house and not see my face.” And Absalom went around to his house and did not see the king's face.

[25] And there was not in all Israel a man as handsome as Absalom, very praised. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head, there was no blemish in him. [26] And when he shaved⁴ his head at the end of every year (which he shaved because it was heavy upon him, so he shaved it), so the hair of his head weighed two hundred shekels, according to the stone of the king. [27] And to Absalom were born three sons and one daughter.⁵ And her name was Tamar. She was of beautiful appearance. [28] And Absalom dwelt in Jerusalem two full years⁶ and did not see the king's face.

[29] And Absalom sent to Joab to send him to the king, and he was unwilling to come to him. And he sent again a second time, and he was unwilling to come. [30] And he said to his servants, “See, Joab's plot is beside mine, and he has barley. Go and burn it in the fire.” And Absalom's servants burned the plot in the fire. [31] And Joab arose and went to Absalom, to the house. And he said to him, “Why did your servants burn my plot in the fire?” [32] And Absalom said to Joab, “Behold, I sent for you, saying, ‘Come here, and let me send you to the king, saying, ‘Why did you bring me from Geshur? Better for me if I was still there. And now, let me see the king's face. And if there is iniquity in me, so kill me.’””

[33] And Joab came to the king and told him. And he called for Absalom, and he came to the king and bowed to him upon his nostrils to earth before the king. And the king kissed Absalom.

3 Written עַבְדִּי (‘avdo) “his servant”; read עַבְדְּךָ (‘avdekhâ) “your servant”

4 בִּגְלַחוֹ (begallcho) “when he shaved” CSB, CEB, DARBY, etc.; “when he cut” NKJV, etc. - same verb as “shave” in e.g. Leviticus 14:8-9.

5 Evidently, the memorial Absalom built (2 Samuel 18:18) was either before the sons were born, or they all died or were unable somehow to continue his name.

6 שְׁנַתַּיִם יָמִים (shenâtayim yâmiym) “two full years” - more literally, “two years, days”