

The Wise Woman of Abel

2 Samuel 20

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The argument between Judah and Israel that had begun as David crossed the Jordan continued to escalate. A man named Sheba rebelled against David and rallied the men of Israel. But the men of Judah remained faithful to their king and escorted him from the Jordan River to Jerusalem.

Then the king told Amasa, the cousin of Joab, "Mobilize the army of Judah within three days." Amasa began the work, but it took him longer than three days.

Then David said to Abishai, "We can't wait any longer. Take my men and go after Sheba immediately."

Abishai and his brother Joab took the king's bodyguard and all of David's Mighty Men and set out after Sheba. Amasa met them on the way. Joab stepped forward to greet him, "How are you, my cousin?" Joab took hold of Amasa and stabbed him in the belly. His intestines spilled out on the ground. Joab and Abishai left their cousin to die and continued after Sheba.

Sheba had taken refuge in the city of Abel. When Joab arrived with his forces, a wise woman of Abel spoke to him, "Abel is peaceful and faithful to Israel."

Joab replied, "I don't want to destroy your city. All I want is Sheba. Hand over this one man and I will leave Abel in peace."

"All right," she replied. The woman went to the people of Abel and offered her wise advice. They cut off Sheba's head and threw it out to Joab.

Joab blew the ram's horn and his men withdrew from the city. Joab went back to Jerusalem and was once again made commander of David's army.