

was taken from the head of their king<sup>g</sup> and it was placed on David's head—it weighed a talent of gold, and [on it]<sup>h</sup> were precious stones. He also carried off a vast amount of booty from the city. <sup>31</sup>He led out the people who lived there and set them to work with saws, iron threshing boards, and iron axes, or assigned them to brickmaking; David did this to all the towns of Ammon. Then David and all the troops returned to Jerusalem.

**13** This happened sometime afterward: Absalom son of David had a beautiful sister named Tamar, and Amnon son of David became infatuated with her. <sup>2</sup>Amnon was so distraught because of his [half-]sister Tamar that he became sick; for she was a virgin, and it seemed impossible to Amnon to do anything to her. <sup>3</sup>Amnon had a friend named Jonadab, the son of David's brother Shimah; Jonadab was a very clever man. <sup>4</sup>He asked him, "Why are you so dejected, O prince, morning after morning? Tell me!" Amnon replied, "I am in love with Tamar, the sister of my brother Absalom!" <sup>5</sup>Jonadab said to him, "Lie down in your bed and pretend you are sick. When your father comes to see you, say to him, 'Let my sister Tamar come and give me something to eat. Let her prepare the food in front of me, so that I may look on, and let her serve it to me.'"

<sup>6</sup>Amnon lay down and pretended to be sick. The king came to see him, and Amnon said to the king, "Let my sister Tamar come and prepare a couple of cakes in front of me, and let her bring them to me." <sup>7</sup>David sent a message to Tamar in the palace, "Please go to the house of your brother Amnon and prepare some food for him." <sup>8</sup>Tamar went to the house of her brother Amnon, who was in bed. She took dough and kneaded it into cakes in front of him, and cooked the cakes. <sup>9</sup>She took the <sup>a</sup>pan and set out [the cakes],<sup>a</sup> but Amnon refused to eat and ordered everyone to withdraw. After everyone had withdrawn, <sup>10</sup>Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food inside and feed me." Tamar took the cakes she had made and brought them to her brother inside. <sup>11</sup>But when she served them to him, he caught hold of her and said to her, "Come lie with me, sister." <sup>12</sup>But she said to him, "Don't, brother. Don't force me. Such things are not done in Israel! Don't do such a vile thing! <sup>13</sup>Where will I carry my shame? And you, you will be like any of the scoundrels in Israel!

<sup>g</sup> Heb. "malkam," perhaps equivalent to "Milcom," the Ammonite deity; cf. 1 Kings 11.5.

<sup>h</sup> So Targum and 1 Chron. 20.2.

<sup>a-a</sup> Meaning of Heb. uncertain.

Please, speak to the king; he will not refuse me to you." <sup>14</sup>But he would not listen to her; he overpowered her and lay with her by force.

<sup>15</sup>Then Amnon felt a very great loathing for her; indeed, his loathing for her was greater than the passion he had felt for her. And Amnon said to her, "Get out!" <sup>16</sup>She pleaded with him, "Please don't <sup>a</sup>commit this wrong; to send me away would be even worse<sup>a</sup> than the first wrong you committed against me." But he would not listen to her. <sup>17</sup>He summoned his young attendant and said, "Get that woman out of my presence, and bar the door behind her."—<sup>18</sup>She was wearing an ornamented tunic,<sup>b</sup> for maiden princesses were customarily dressed <sup>c</sup>in such garments.<sup>c</sup>—His attendant took her outside and barred the door after her. <sup>19</sup>Tamar put dust on her head and rent the ornamented tunic she was wearing; she put her hands on her head,<sup>d</sup> and walked away; screaming loudly as she went. <sup>20</sup>Her brother Absalom said to her, "Was it your brother Amnon<sup>e</sup> who did this to you? For the present, sister, keep quiet about it; he is your brother. Don't brood over the matter." And Tamar remained in her brother Absalom's house, forlorn. <sup>21</sup>When King David heard about all this, he was greatly upset.<sup>f</sup> <sup>22</sup>Absalom didn't utter a word to Amnon, good or bad; but Absalom hated Amnon because he had violated his sister Tamar.

<sup>23</sup>Two years later, when Absalom was having his flocks sheared at Baal-hazor near Ephraim, Absalom invited all the king's sons. <sup>24</sup>And Absalom came to the king and said, "Your servant is having his flocks sheared. Would Your Majesty and your retinue accompany your servant?" <sup>25</sup>But the king answered Absalom, "No, my son. We must not all come, or we'll be a burden to you." He urged him, but he would not go, and he said good-bye to him. <sup>26</sup>Thereupon Absalom said, "In that case, let my brother Amnon come with us," to which the king replied, "He shall not go with you." <sup>27</sup>But Absalom urged him, and he sent with him Amnon and all the other princes.<sup>g</sup>

<sup>28</sup>Now Absalom gave his attendants these orders: "Watch, and when Amnon is merry with wine and I tell you to strike down Amnon, kill him! Don't be afraid, for it is I who give you the order. Act with determination, like brave men!" <sup>29</sup>Absalom's attendants did to Amnon as Absalom had ordered; whereupon all the other princes mounted their mules and fled. <sup>30</sup>They were still on the road when a rumor reached David that Absalom had killed all the princes, and that not one of them had survived.

<sup>b</sup> See Gen. 37.3 and note.

<sup>c-c</sup> Meaning of Heb. uncertain. Emendation yields "(thus) in olden times," me'olam.

<sup>d</sup> A gesture of wild grief; cf. Jer. 2.37.

<sup>e</sup> Heb. "Amnon."

<sup>f</sup> Septuagint adds "but he did not rebuke his son Amnon for..."

<sup>31</sup>At this, David rent his garment and lay down on the ground, <sup>h</sup>and all his courtiers stood by with their clothes rent. <sup>h</sup><sup>32</sup>But Jonadab, the son of David's brother Shimah, said, "My lord must not think that all the young princes have been killed. Only Amnon is dead; for this has been <sup>i</sup>decided by <sup>i</sup>Absalom ever since his sister Tamar was violated. <sup>33</sup>So my lord the king must not think for a moment that all the princes are dead; Amnon alone is dead."

<sup>34</sup>Meanwhile Absalom had fled.

The watchman on duty looked up and saw a large crowd coming <sup>j</sup>from the road to his rear, <sup>j</sup>from the side of the hill. <sup>35</sup>Jonadab said to the king, "See, the princes have come! It is just as your servant said." <sup>36</sup>As he finished speaking, the princes came in and broke into weeping; and David and all his courtiers wept bitterly, too.

<sup>37</sup>Absalom had fled, and he came to Talmai son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And [King David] mourned over his son a long time. <sup>38</sup>Absalom, who had fled to Geshur, remained there three years. <sup>39</sup>And <sup>k</sup>King David<sup>k</sup> was pining away for Absalom, for [the king] had gotten over Amnon's death.

**14** Joab son of Zeruah could see that the king's mind was on Absalom; <sup>2</sup>so Joab sent to Tekoa and brought a clever woman from there. He said to her, "Pretend you are in mourning; put on mourning clothes and don't anoint yourself with oil; and act like a woman who has grieved a long time over a departed one. <sup>3</sup>Go to the king and say to him thus and thus." And Joab told her what to say.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>4</sup>The woman of Tekoa came<sup>b</sup> to the king, flung herself face down to the ground, and prostrated herself. She cried out, "Help, O king!" <sup>5</sup>The king asked her, "What troubles you?" And she answered, "Alas, I am a widow, my husband is dead. <sup>6</sup>Your maidservant had two sons. The two of them came to blows out in the fields where there was no one to stop them, and one of them struck the other and killed him. <sup>7</sup>Then the whole clan confronted your maidservant and said, 'Hand over the one who killed his brother, that we may put him to death for the slaying of his brother, <sup>c</sup>even though we wipe out the heir.'<sup>c</sup> Thus they would quench the last ember remaining to me, and leave my husband without name or remnant

<sup>h-h</sup> Septuagint reads "and all his courtiers who were standing by him rent their clothes."

<sup>i-i</sup> Lit. "determined by the command of."

<sup>j-j</sup> Emendation yields "down the slope of the Horonaim road. The watchman came and told the king 'I see men coming from the Horonaim road.'" Cf. Septuagint.

<sup>k-k</sup> Some Septuagint mss. and 4QSam<sup>a</sup> read "the spirit [ruah] of the king."

<sup>a</sup> Lit. "and he put words into her mouth."