

19. The Final Act: Sheba's Rebellion

7 **Sheba Leads a Short Lived Rebellion** (20:1-22)

7.1 **Sheba Rebels** (2 Sam 20:1-2)

7.2 **David Sequesters His Concubines** (2 Sam 20:3)

7.3 **Joab Kills Amasa and Takes Back the Army** (2 Sam 20:4-13)

- 20:5-6 - **Amasa** (“burden” or “bears a burden”) was David’s nephew through his sister Abigail. His delay made David fear that the rebellion could grow stronger if not quelled quickly. |

Abishai (“my father is a gift”) was David’s nephew through his sister Zeruah. He was Joab’s brother along with **Asahel** (“made by God”) who had been killed by Abner earlier.

Joab (“YHWH is Father”) was also David’s nephew through his sister Zeruah. So, Amasa and Joab were cousins. Joab had been replaced with Amasa by David because he killed Absalom against David’s counsel. AND remember: *Amasa had led Absalom’s forces that Joab had been fighting.*

- 20:8-10 - When Joab dropped his sword, he apparently picked it up with his *left hand* because he grabs Amasa’s beard with his right. Since most men used their weapons with their right hand, the gesture by Joab would have obscured his bad intentions to Amasa. *Once again, the Sons of Zeruah prove to be treacherous:*

2 Samuel 3:22-30 – Joab murders Abner; 2 Samuel 18:9-15 – Joab kills Absalom; 2 Samuel 19:1-8 – Joab rebukes and pressures David; 2 Samuel 16:5-14; 19:16-23 – Abishai urges execution of Shimei; 2 Samuel 20:8-10 – Joab murders Amasa. **See also David’s counsel to Solomon about Joab in 1 Kings 2:5-6:**

“Moreover, you [Solomon] also know what Joab the son of Zeruah did to me, how he dealt with the two commanders of the armies of Israel, Abner the son of Ner, and Amasa the son of Jether, whom he killed, avenging in time of peace for blood that had been shed in war, and putting the blood of war on the belt around his waist and on the sandals on his feet. Act therefore according to your wisdom, but do not let his gray head go down to Sheol in peace.

Solomon eventually puts Joab to death by the hand of Benaiah in retribution for all his “bloody deeds” (See 1 Kings 2:28-35).

- 20:11-13 - “follow Joab!” this admonition is technically treasonous since David had relieved Joab of command.

7.4 **Sheba is Trapped and Killed** (2 Sam 20:14–22)

- 20:14 - Abel-beth-maacah (“meadow of the house of oppression”) is in the far North of Israel, about 30 miles north of the Sea of Galilee.
- 20:16 - **The Wise Women of Samuel:** Beginning with **Abigail** (1 Sam 25:23–35), the books of Samuel present “wise women” as decisive agents of God’s wisdom who intervene at moments of escalating violence and redirect the narrative through discerning, courageous speech. Abigail restrains David from bloodguilt and vengeance, recognizing both his future kingship and the Lord’s justice, thereby preserving life and shaping his moral trajectory. This pattern continues with **the woman of Tekoa** (2 Sam 14:1–20), who, like Nathan (2 Sam 12:1–7), employs a parable to expose David’s inconsistency and move him toward restoring Absalom (2 Sam 14:21–24). **The wise woman of Abel Beth Maacah** (2 Sam 20:14–22), negotiates with Joab to avert the destruction of her city by surrendering Sheba.

Together, these women embody *wisdom in action*—operating outside formal power yet shaping outcomes at critical junctures—preserving “the inheritance of the Lord” (2 Sam 20:19), counterbalancing impulsive or destructive male leadership, and functioning in a quasi-prophetic role that reveals truth, restrains violence, and advances God’s purposes in the unfolding story of the kingdom.

“As in previous situations throughout the history of Israel (cf. Judg 4:17–21; 9:52–54; 1 Sam 25:14–35), a woman’s daring initiative was responsible for the resolution of a significant crisis.” [Robert D. Bergen, 1, 2 Samuel, 438]

7.5 **David’s Officials are Summarized** (2 Sam 20:23–26)

- This is the second list of David’s officials, see also 2 Samuel 8:15–18
- 20:23 - **Benaiah** - was in command of the Cherethites and the Pelethites who were apparently part of an elite fighting force or maybe a body guard group for David. Benaiah would eventually kill Joab at King Solomon’s command and become leader of the armed forces (see 1 Kings 2:34-35)
- 20:24 - **Adoram** (Adoniram) and **forced labor** - he would also be over more than 180,000 non-Israelite men who served as the primary labor for Solomon’s building projects including The Temple (see 1 Kings 9:15–19).