

Responses to Saul's Death

CHARACTERS: David, Abigail, Servant, Uriah, Joab

SETTING: bare stage

RUN TIME: 3 minutes

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: 2 Samuel 11

As you read: Imagine you are Joab. David condemned you for killing Abner to get revenge for Abner killing your brother Ashael. Now David arranges a hit on a man to cover up his adultery. How might this influence your opinion of David?

DAVID: Servant, who is that beautiful woman I just now saw, the one bathing on her roof?

SERVANT: Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, one of your mighty men.

DAVID: Bring her to me.

ABIGAIL: David slept with her and Bathsheba became pregnant.

DAVID: *(aside to audience)* Now what will I do? *(to SERVANT)* Tell Joab to send me Uriah the Hittite from the battle lines.

URIAH: Uriah reporting, King David.

DAVID: How goes the battle?

URIAH: Not much to report.

DAVID: Go home. *(to SERVANT)* take this gift to him. Watch him and report back to me.

SERVANT: Uriah slept at the door of the palace with all his master's servants; he did not go down to his house.

DAVID: Uriah, haven't you just come from a journey? Why didn't you go home?

URIAH: The ark, Joab and the soldiers are camping in the open field. How can I enter my house to eat and drink and sleep with my wife? As surely as you live and by your life, I will not do this!

DAVID: *(aside to audience)* Drat! My plan was foiled. *(to URIAH)* Stay here today also and dine with me. Tomorrow I will send you back. *(to SERVANT)* See that he drinks enough to get drunk.

SERVANT: I did, King David but Uriah slept here by the servants; he did not go home.

DAVID: Uriah, take this letter to Joab.

URIAH: Joab, a message from the king.

JOAB: (*reading as an aside to audience*) Put Uriah at the front of the fiercest fighting, then withdraw from him so that he is struck down and dies. (*looking up*) Why does David want Uriah dead?

ABIGAIL: Joab did as David commanded.

JOAB: Send this report to David: As we were besieging the city,

SERVANT: we attacked right up to the entrance of the gate. However, the archers shot down on your soldiers from the top of the wall, and some of the soldiers fell in battle.

DAVID: (*upset*) Why did you get so close to the city to fight? Didn't you realize they would shoot from the top of the wall?

SERVANT: Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.

DAVID: Tell Joab not to let this matter upset him because the sword devours all alike. Have him intensify the fight against the city and demolish it. Encourage him.

ABIGAIL: When Uriah's wife heard that her husband Uriah had died, she mourned for him.

DAVID: The time of mourning for Uriah has ended, I will marry Bathsheba.

ABIGAIL: Bathsheba bore David a son. However, the Lord considered what David had done to be evil.

Nathan's Parable and David's Repentance

CHARACTERS: David, Abigail, Servant, Nathan, Elder, Servant

SETTING: bare stage

RUN TIME: 3 minutes

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: 2 Samuel 11

ABIGAIL: The Lord sent Nathan to David.

NATHAN: King David, rich man had a large number of sheep and cattle, but a poor man had nothing except one small ewe lamb that he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up, living with him and his children. That lamb shared his meager food and drank from his cup; it slept in his arms, and it was like a daughter to him.

DAVID: I was a shepherd once and remember the dear little lambs.

NATHAN: A traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man could not bring himself to take one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for his guest.

DAVID: *(furious)* As the Lord lives, the man who did this deserves to die! Because he has shown no pity, he must pay four lambs for that lamb.

NATHAN: You are the man! This is what the Lord God of Israel says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from Saul. If that was not enough, I would have given you even more. Why then have you despised the command of the Lord by doing what I consider evil?

DAVID: *(humbled and repentant)* I have sinned against the Lord. I struck down Uriah with the Ammonite's sword and took his wife.

NATHAN: You murdered him therefore; the sword will never leave your house because you despised God. God will bring disaster on you from your own family: I will take your wives and give them to another before your very eyes, and he will sleep with them publicly. You acted in secret, but God will do this before all Israel and in broad daylight.

DAVID: I have sinned.

NATHAN: The Lord has taken away your sin; you will not die. However, because you treated the Lord with such contempt in this matter, the son born to you will die.

SERVANT: King, your new son, the one Bathsheba bore, is very ill.

DAVID: I will fast, spend the night lying on the ground.

ELDER: David, it has been seven days. Get up and eat.

DAVID: No.

SERVANT: (*aside to audience*) How can we tell David the baby has died? While he lived, David wouldn't listen to us. He may do something desperate.

DAVID: I hear you whispering. Is the baby dead?

SERVANT: Yes

ABIGAIL: David rose, washed, changed his clothes, went to the Lord's house, and worshiped.

SERVANT: I don't understand. While the baby was alive, you fasted and wept, but when he died, you got up and ate food.

DAVID: While the baby was alive, I fasted and wept because I thought, 'Who knows? The Lord may be gracious to me and let him live.' But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I'll go to him, but he will never return to me.

ABIGAIL: David comforted his wife Bathsheba; he went and slept with her. She gave birth to a son named Solomon.

NATHAN: Call this child Jedidiah because the Lord loves him.

Amnon Rapes Tamar; Absalom Revenges the Act

CHARACTERS: David, Abigail, Jonadab, Amnon, Tamar, Assassin, Absalom

SETTING: bare stage

RUN TIME: 4 minutes

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: 2 Samuel 13

JONADAB: Amnon, why are you, the king's son, so miserable every morning? Won't you tell me?

AMNON: My half-brother Absalom's beautiful sister.

JONADAB: You're infatuated with Tamar?

AMNON: Yes, but there's nothing I can do about it.

JONADAB: Lie down on your bed and pretend you're sick. Then ask your father to let Tamar come and prepare food in your presence.

AMNON: I'll do it.

DAVID: (to SERVANT) Send word to Tamar at the palace: "Please go to your brother Amnon's house and prepare a meal for him."

ABSALOM: Tamar took dough, kneaded it, made cakes in Amnon's presence, and baked them.

TAMAR: Here is bread.

AMNON: Everyone leave me!

ABSALOM: Everyone left.

AMNON: Bring the meal to the bedroom, so I can eat from your hand. (*grabbing TAMAR*) Come sleep with me, my sister!

TAMAR: Don't, my brother! Don't humiliate me, for such a thing should never be done in Israel. Don't do this horrible thing! Where could I ever go with my disgrace?

AMNON: So?

TAMAR: And you—you would be like one of the immoral men in Israel! Please, speak to the king, for he won't keep me from you.

ABSALOM: Amnon refused to listen to her, and because he was stronger than she was, he raped her.

AMNON: (*hateful with such intensity that the hatred he hated her with was greater than the love he had loved her with*) Get out of here!

TAMAR: No, sending me away is much worse than the great wrong you've already done to me!

AMNON: Servant, throw this woman out and bolt the door behind her!

ABSALOM: Amnon's servant threw her out and bolted the door behind her. She was wearing a long-sleeved garment, because this is what the king's virgin daughters wore.

TAMAR: I put ashes on my head and tore the long-sleeved garment I was wearing.

ABSALOM: (to TAMAR) Has your brother Amnon been with you? Be quiet for now, my sister. He is your brother. Don't take this thing to heart.

TAMAR: I am desolate woman.

ABSALOM: Live in my house.

ABIGAIL: When King David heard about all these things, he was furious.

ABSALOM: I didn't say anything to Amnon, either good or bad, because I hated Amnon since he disgraced my sister Tamar. I bided my time.

TAMAR: Two years later, Absalom's invited the king and all the king's sons to a sheep shearing party.

DAVID: We should not all go, or we would be a burden to you.

ABSALOM: If not, please let my brother Amnon go with us.

DAVID: Ok.

ABSALOM: (*aside to assassin*) Watch Amnon until he is in a good mood from the wine. When I order you to strike Amnon, then kill him. Don't be afraid. Am I not the one who has commanded you? Be strong and courageous!

ASSASSIN: Will do.

TAMAR: Absalom's young men did to Amnon just as Absalom had commanded. Then all the rest of the king's sons got up, and each fled on his mule.

SERVANT: Absalom struck down all the king's sons; not even one of them survived!

DAVID: No!

JONADAB: My lord must not think they have killed all the young men, the king's sons, because only Amnon is dead. In fact, Absalom has planned this ever since the day Amnon disgraced his sister Tamar.

TAMAR: Meanwhile, Absalom had fled to his grandfather, Talmai, king of Geshur.

DAVID: These three years I have longed to go to Absalom, for I am finished grieving over Amnon's death.

Absalom Restored to David

CHARACTERS: David, Abigail, Joab, Wise woman,

SETTING: bare stage

RUN TIME: 3 minutes

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: 2 Samuel 14

ABIGAIL: Joab observed that the king's mind was on Absalom so he summoned a clever woman.

JOAB: Wise woman, dress in mourning clothes and don't put on any oil. Act like a woman who has been mourning for the dead for a long time. Go to the king and speak these words to him.

WISE WOMAN: Help me, my king!

DAVID: What's the matter?

WISE WOMAN: I am a widow who had two sons. They were fighting in the field with no one to separate them, and one struck the other and killed him.

DAVID: Sounds like Cain and Abel.

WISE WOMAN: Now the whole clan is demanding my only son to execute for the life of the brother he murdered. They would destroy the heir, extinguish my one remaining ember and wipe out my husband's name and posterity on earth.

DAVID: Go home. I will issue a command on your behalf. As the Lord lives, not a hair of your son will fall to the ground.

WISE WOMAN: Please, may your servant speak a word to my lord the king?

DAVID: Speak.

WISE WOMAN: Why have you devised something similar against the people of God? The king has not brought back his own banished one.

(OPTIONAL ALL: We will certainly die and be like water poured out on the ground, which can't be recovered. But God would not take away a life; He would devise plans so that the one banished from Him does not remain banished.

DAVID: Did Joab put you up to all this?"

WISE WOMAN: Yes, he has done this to address the issue indirectly, but you have wisdom like the wisdom of the Angel of God, knowing everything on earth."

DAVID: (to Joab) I grant this request. Go; bring back the young man Absalom. He may return to his house, but he may not see my face.

ABIGAIL: No man in all Israel was as handsome and highly praised as Absalom. From the sole of his foot to the top of his head, he did not have a single flaw.

JOAB: When he shaved his head—

ABIGAIL: he shaved it every year because his hair got so heavy for him that he had to shave it off—

JOAB: the hair weighed five pounds. This long hair would lead to his death.

ABIGAIL: But that's a story for later on.

ABSALOM: Joab, get me in to see the king.

ABIGAIL: Joab arranged it. Things seemed back to normal.

Absalom Revolts and People Choose Sides

CHARACTERS: David, Abigail, Absalom, Ahinoam, Jonadab, Ittai, Zadok, Hushai

SETTING: bare stage

RUN TIME: 3 minutes

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: 2 Samuel 15

While you read: David did nothing when he learned Amnon raped Absalom's sister Tamar. As king and judge, what should David have done? As a father, what might have been his thoughts and feelings? How might have David's inaction influenced Absalom's actions in this scene?

ABIGAIL: Absalom would get up early and stand beside the road leading to the city gate. Whenever anyone had a grievance to bring before the king for settlement, Absalom called out to him

ABSALOM: Look, your claims are good and right, but the king does not have anyone to listen to you. If only someone would appoint me judge in the land. Then anyone who had a grievance or dispute could come to me, and I would make sure he received justice.

ABIGAIL: For four years, Absalom did this to all the Israelites who came to the king for a settlement.

AHINOAM: So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

ABSALOM: Please let me go to Hebron to fulfill a vow I made to the Lord.

DAVID: What vow?

ABSALOM: If the Lord brought me back to Jerusalem, I will worship the Lord in Hebron.

DAVID: Go in peace,

ABSALOM: *(aside to Messenger)* Go throughout the tribes of Israel with this message: When you hear the sound of the ram's horn, you are to say, 'Absalom has become king in Hebron!'

JONADAB: The number of people supporting you continues to increase including David's adviser Ahithophel.

MESSENGER: The hearts of the men of Israel are with you.

JOAB: David, Absalom is revolting.

DAVID: We have to flee, or we will not escape the edge of the sword.

ABIGAIL: The king's entire household plus 600 guards followed him except 10 concubines to take care of the palace.

ITTAI THE GITTITE: I go with you, David.

DAVID: Why? You're both a foreigner and an exile from your homeland. Besides, you only arrived recently. Should I make you wander around with us today while I go wherever I can? Go back and take your brothers with you. May the Lord show you kindness and faithfulness.

ITTAI: As the Lord lives and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king is, whether it means life or death, your servant will be there!

DAVID: March on.

ABIGAIL: As we left, people were weeping loudly.

ZADOK: I have the ark to go with you.

DAVID: Return the ark of God to the city. If I find favor in the Lord's eyes, He will bring me back and allow me to see both it and its dwelling place.

ZADOK: What if he doesn't?

DAVID: If He should say, 'I do not delight in you,' then here I am—He can do with me whatever pleases Him. Have your son Ahimaaz and Abiathar's son Jonathan update me at the fords of the wilderness.

JOAB: Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.

DAVID: Lord, please turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness! *(to Hushai)* Return to the city and tell Absalom, that you will serve him so that you can counteract Ahithophel's counsel for me.

HUSHAI: I will and I'll report everything I hear from the king's palace to Zadok and Abiathar the priests.

DAVID: Send messages through Zadok's son Ahimaaz and Abiathar's son Jonathan.

David Flees for his Life

CHARACTERS: David, Abigail, Barzillai, Shobi, Macir, Abishai, Ziba, Shimei, Ahithophel, Hushai, Absalom, Zadok, Servant girl, wife

SETTING: bare stage

RUN TIME: 4 minutes

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: 2 Samuel 16-17

ZIBA: I have brought supplies: 200 loaves of bread, 100 clusters of raisins, 100 bunches of summer fruit, and a skin of wine.

DAVID: Where is your master's grandson, Meshiboleth?

ZIBA: He's staying in Jerusalem thinking Israel will restore his grandfather Saul's kingdom to me.

DAVID: All that belongs to Mephibosheth is now yours.

ABIGAIL: A man from the family of Saul, Shimei cursed us and threw stones at David and all of us with him.

SHIMEI: Get out, get out, you worthless murderer! The Lord has paid you back for all the blood of the house of Saul and has handed the kingdom over to your son Absalom. Look, you are in trouble because you're a murderer!

ABISHAI: Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and cut his head off!

DAVID: Look, my own son, my own flesh and blood, intends to take my life—how much more now this Benjaminite! Leave him alone and let him curse me.

ABISHAI: Why?

DAVID: Perhaps the Lord will see my affliction and restore goodness to me instead of Shimei's curses.

ABIGAIL: Meanwhile back in Jerusalem ...

HUSHAI: Long live the king!

ABSALOM: Is this your loyalty to your friend? Why didn't you go with David?

HUSHAI: I am on the side of the one that the Lord, the people, and all the men of Israel have chosen.

ABSALOM: *(to Ahithophel)* Give me your advice. What should we do?

HUSHAI: *(aside to audience)* Ahithophel's advice was considered like asking about a word from God—such was the regard that both David and Absalom had for Ahithophel's advice.

AHITHOPHAL: Let me choose 12,000 men, and I will set out in pursuit of David tonight. I will attack him while he is weak and weary, throw him into a panic, and all the people with him will scatter.

ABSALOM: What about those with him?

AHITOPHEL: I will strike down only the king of Israel.

ABSALOM: Hushai, what do you think?

HUSHAI: The advice Ahithophel has given this time is not good. Your father and his men are warriors and desperate like a wild bear robbed of her cubs. Your father is probably already hiding in one of the caves.

ABSALOM: He used to hide from Saul in caves.

HUSHAI: If some of our troops fall first, someone is sure to hear and say,

MESSENGER: There's been a slaughter among the people who follow Absalom.

HUSHAI: Then, even a brave man with the heart of a lion will melt because all Israel knows that your father and the valiant men with him are warriors.

ABSALOM: What do you advise?

HUSHAI: Gather the entire army and lead them yourself. Wipe them all out.

ABIGAIL: God decreed that Ahithophel's good advice be undermined in order to bring about Absalom's ruin.

ABSALOM: We'll go with Hushai's plan.

HUSHAI: (*secretly to Zadok and Abiathar*) Send someone quickly and tell David what has been decided.

ZADOK: (*to servant girl*) Sneak this message to Jonathan and Ahimaaz hiding in the well at the house of a man in Bahurim.

SERVANT GIRL: But Absalom's men had seen them and came to arrest them.

WIFE of WELL OWNER: They passed by toward the water.

SERVANT GIRL: After Absalom's men left, Ahimaaz and Jonathan climbed out of the well and informed King David.

JONATHAN: Get up and immediately ford the river, for Ahithophel has given this advice against you.

ABIGAIL: Meanwhile, back in JerusalemWhen Ahithophel realized that his advice had not been followed, he set his affairs in order and hanged himself.

ABSALOM: Let's go after my father. Uncle Amasa, you're in charge of my army.

SHOBI: David, We have brought you beds, basins and pottery.

MACHIR: We brought food too.

BARZILLAI: Your people must be hungry, exhausted, and thirsty in the desert.

Absalom's Defeat

CHARACTERS: David, Joab, Abishai, Ahimaaz, Cushite messenger

SETTING: bare stage

RUN TIME: 2 minutes

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: 2 Samuel 18

JOAB: David, remain in the city as we go into battle.

DAVID: Ok. Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, commanders of my troops, treat the young man Absalom gently for my sake.

ABISHAI: Our side was victorious. Absalom's long hair proved a problem.

CUSHITE MESSENGER: Absalom is suspended in midair, hanging from a tree.

JOAB: Why didn't you strike him to the ground right there? I would have given you 10 silver pieces and a belt!

MESSENGER: Even if I had the weight of 1,000 pieces of silver in my hand, I would not raise my hand against the king's son.

JOAB: Why not?

MESSENGER: We heard the king command you, Abishai, and Ittai to protect the young man Absalom. If I had jeopardized my own life—and nothing is hidden from the king—you would have thrown me under the bus and abandoned me.

ABISHAI: Joab found Absalom and plunged three spears into Absalom's heart while he was still alive in the oak tree.

JOAB: Call off pursuit of Absalom's troops and head home.

AHIMAAZ: I'll run and tell the king the good news that the Lord has delivered him from his enemies. (to DAVID) May the Lord your God be praised! He delivered up the men who rebelled against my lord the king.

CUSHITE: Today the Lord has delivered you from all those rising up against you!

DAVID: Is Absalom all right?

CUSHITE: No. He's dead.

DAVID: *(weeping)* My son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you, Absalom, my son, my son!

David's Kingdom Restored

CHARACTERS: David, Abigail, Mephibosheth, Ziba, Joab, Shimei, Barzillai, Servant, Abishai

SETTING: bare stage

RUN TIME: 4 minutes

SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: 2 Samuel 19

m Restored

ABIGAIL: The troops returned to the city quietly that day like people come in when they are humiliated after fleeing in battle.

DAVID: My son Absalom! Absalom, my son, my son!

SERVANT: (to Joab) The king is weeping. He's mourning over Absalom.

JOAB: Today you have shamed all your soldiers—those who rescued your life and the lives of your sons and daughters, your wives, and your concubines.

DAVID: My son, my son!

JOAB: You love your enemies and hate those who love you! Today you have made it clear that the commanders and soldiers mean nothing to you. In fact, today I know that if Absalom were alive and all of us were dead, it would be fine with you!

DAVID: He's dead.

JOAB: Now get up! Go out and encourage your soldiers, for I swear by the Lord that if you don't go out, not a man will remain with you tonight. This will be worse for you than all the trouble that has come to you from your youth until now!

SERVANT: Look, the king is sitting in the gate.

ABIGAIL: The people came into the king's presence.

DAVID: (to the priests, Zadok and Abiathar) And tell my cousin Amasa, 'Aren't you my flesh and blood? I will appoint you commander of the army from now on instead of Joab!'

SHEMEI: My lord, don't hold me guilty, and don't remember your servant's wrongdoing on the day my lord the king left Jerusalem.

DAVID: When you threw rocks at us and cursed us?

SHEMEI: May the king not take it to heart. I know I have sinned. But look! Today I am the first one of the entire house of Joseph to come down to meet my lord the king.

ABISHAI: Shouldn't Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the Lord's anointed?

DAVID: Should any man be killed in Israel today? No. (to Shimei) You will not die.

ZIBA: Here I am with my servants and sons to help you get back home.

ABIGAIL: Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson, also went down to meet the king. He had not taken care of his feet, trimmed his mustache, or washed his clothes from the day the king left until the day he returned safely.

DAVID: Mephibosheth, why didn't you come with me?

MEPHIOSHETH: My lord the king, my servant Ziba betrayed me. Actually, I said: 'I'll saddle the donkey for myself so that I may ride it and go with the king'—for your servant is lame. Ziba slandered your servant to my lord the king.

ZIBA: Did not.

MEPHIOSHETH: But my lord the king is like the Angel of God, so do whatever you think best. For my grandfather's entire family deserves death from my lord the king, but you set your servant among those who eat at your table. So what further right do I have to keep on making appeals to the king?

DAVID: Why keep on speaking about these matters of yours? I hereby declare: you and Ziba are to divide the land.

MEPHIOSHETH: Instead, since my lord the king has come to his palace safely, let Ziba take it all!

ABIGAIL: Barzillai was a very old man—80 years old—and since he was a very wealthy man, he had provided for the needs of the king while he stayed in Mahanaim.

DAVID: *(to Barzillai)* Cross over with me, and I'll provide for you at my side in Jerusalem.

BARZILLAI: How many years of my life are left that I should go up to Jerusalem with the king? I'm now 80 years old. Can I discern what is pleasant and what is not?

DAVID: Maybe not.

BARZILLAI: Can your servant taste what he eats or drinks? Can I still hear the voice of male and female singers? Why should your servant be an added burden to my lord the king? Since your servant is only going with the king a little way across the Jordan, why should the king repay me with such a reward?

DAVID: Because I appreciate what you did.

BARZILLAI: Let me die in my own city near the tomb of my father and mother. But here is my son and your servant Chimham: let him cross over with my lord the king. Do for him what seems good to you.

DAVID: I will and whatever you desire from me, I will do for you.

.