

Questions to consider in interpreting 2 Samuel 13-14

1. How do the two chapters fit together?
2. Given the many echoes of Genesis, what do we imagine the “direction” of echo is: Genesis echoing Samuel or Samuel echoing Genesis?
3. Is Amnon’s mother, Ahinoam, Saul’s former wife (3.2)? (This might explain David’s lack of concern with Absalom’s revenge.)
4. Given 2 Sam 12.11, should we see the rape of Tamar and death of Amnon as YHWH’s punishment?
5. Given the indeterminate time reference (13.1), how old do we imagine the characters are?
6. What is Jonadab’s purpose in facilitating Amnon’s rape of Tamar? Does he represent the ongoing jealousy of David’s brothers? (Recall 1 Samuel 17.28 and brother Eliab’s anger at young David.)
7. Why all the details about food preparation in the rape story?
8. Where are the other brothers during the two years between the rape and the revenge? (including the future royal rivals, Adonijah and Solomon)
9. In 13.39, does David “yearn” for Absalom or seek to destroy him?
10. Why does Joab go to Tekoa to fetch the “wise woman”?
11. Is “wise woman” a role or a description? What is her “wisdom”?
12. How does the story she tells about two sons in the field relate to the rape of Tamar and Absalom’s revenge?
13. How do we interpret the seemingly confusing exchange between the woman and her “lord the king”?
14. Given his sudden appearance at 14.21, do we imagine Joab listening from the door to the king’s and woman’s conversation or is the text omitting his arrival after the fact?
15. In the announcement of Absalom’s offspring (14.27), why no mention of a wife/mother?
16. By the end of ch. 14, seven years have passed since the rape of Tamar. What do we imagine has been happening? Where has the king been all this time?