

2 Samuel 13: shape and keywords

[13.1-21 chiasm from Fokkelman; v. 22 added by WHB]

Some time passed. David's **son** Absalom had a beautiful **sister** whose name was Tamar; and David's **son** Amnon fell in love with her. Amnon was so tormented that he made himself ill because of his **sister** Tamar, for she was a virgin and it seemed impossible to Amnon to do anything to her.

But Amnon had a friend whose name was Jonadab, the **son** of David's **brother** Shimeah; and Jonadab was a very crafty man. He said to him, "O **son** of the **king**, why are you so haggard morning after morning? Will you not tell me?" Amnon said to him, "I love Tamar, my **brother** Absalom's **sister**." Jonadab said to him, "Lie down on your bed, and pretend to be ill; and when your father comes to see you, say to him, 'Let my **sister** Tamar come and give me something to eat, and prepare the food in my sight, so that **I may see it and eat it from her hand**.'"

So Amnon lay down, and pretended to be ill; and when the **king** came to see him, Amnon said to the **king**, "Please let my **sister** Tamar come and make a pair of hot dumplings **in my sight, so that I may eat from her hand**." Then David sent Tamar from his house, saying, "Go, please, to your **brother** Amnon's house, and prepare food for him." So Tamar went to her **brother** Amnon's house, where he was lying down. She took dough, kneaded it, made dumplings in his sight, and boiled the dumplings. Then she took the pan and poured them out before him, but he refused to eat.

Amnon said, "Send out everyone from me." So everyone went out from him.

Then Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food into the chamber, **so that I may eat from your hand**." So Tamar took the dumplings she had made and brought them into the chamber to Amnon her **brother**. But when she brought them near him to eat, he took hold of her, and said to her, "Come, lie with me, my **sister**." She answered him, "No, my **brother**, do not force me; **for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do anything so foolish!** As for me, where could I carry my shame? And as for you, you would be as one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, I beg you, speak to the **king**; for he will not withhold me from you." But he would not listen to her;

and being stronger than she, he forced her and lay with her. And Amnon hated her with a great and powerful hatred, because the great hatred with which he hated her was more than the love with which he had loved her

Amnon said to her, "Get out!" But she said to him, "No, my **brother**; for **this evil in sending me away is greater than the other that you did to me**." But he would not listen to her.

He called the young man who served him **and said, "Send this thing away,** and bolt the door after."

(Now she was wearing a long robe with sleeves; for this is the robe the virgin daughters of the **king** wore.) So his slave put her out and bolted the door after her. But Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the long robe that she was wearing; she put her hand on her head, and went away, crying aloud as she went.

Her **brother** Absalom said to her, "Has Amnon your **brother** been with you? Be quiet for now, my **sister**; he is your **brother**; do not take this to heart."

So Tamar remained, a desolate woman, in her **brother** Absalom's house.

When **King** David heard of all these things, he became very angry [*following added by Septuagint: and he would not cause pain to Amnon's spirit; he loved his son that was his firstborn.*] But Absalom spoke to Amnon neither good nor bad; for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had raped his **sister** Tamar.

After **two full years** Absalom had sheepshearers at Baal-hazor, which is near Ephraim, and Absalom invited all the **king's sons**.

[Absalom and the king re: king's sons]

Absalom came to the **king**, and said, "Behold, please! Your slave has sheepshearers; will the **king** and his slaves please go with your slave?" But the **king** said to Absalom, "No, my **son**, let us not all go, or else we will be burdensome to you." He pressed him, but he would not go but gave him his blessing. Then Absalom said, "If not, please let my **brother** Amnon go with us." The **king** said to him, "Why should he go with you?" But Absalom pressed him until he let Amnon and all the **king's sons** go with him. Absalom made a feast like a **king's** feast. Then Absalom commanded his lads, "Watch, please, when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say to you, 'Strike Amnon,' then kill him. Do not be afraid; have I not myself commanded you? Be courageous and valiant." So the lads of Absalom did to Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the **king's sons** rose, and each mounted his mule and fled.

While they were on the way, the report came to David that Absalom had killed all the **king's sons**, and not one of them was left. The **king** rose, tore his garments, and lay on the ground; and all his slaves who were standing by tore their garments.

[Jonadab and the king re: king's sons]

But Jonadab, the **son** of David's **brother** Shimeah, said, "Let not my lord suppose that they have killed all the lads, the **king's sons**; Amnon alone is dead. This was placed upon the mouth of Absalom from the day Amnon raped his **sister** Tamar. Now therefore, do not let my lord the **king** take it to heart, as if all the **king's sons** were dead; for Amnon alone is dead." But Absalom fled. When the lad who kept watch looked up, behold, he saw many people coming from the Horonaim road by the side of the mountain. Jonadab said to the **king**, "Behold, the **king's sons** have come; as your slave said, so it has come about." As soon as he had finished speaking, behold, the **king's sons** arrived and raised their voices and wept; and the **king** and all his slaves also wept a great weeping.

But Absalom fled, and went to Talmai **son** of Ammihud, **king** of Geshur. David mourned for his **son** day after day. Absalom, having fled to Geshur, stayed there **three years**. And **King** David put an end to marching forth against Absalom, for he was consoled over Amnon, since he was dead. *[Bodner translation for this sentence.]*