

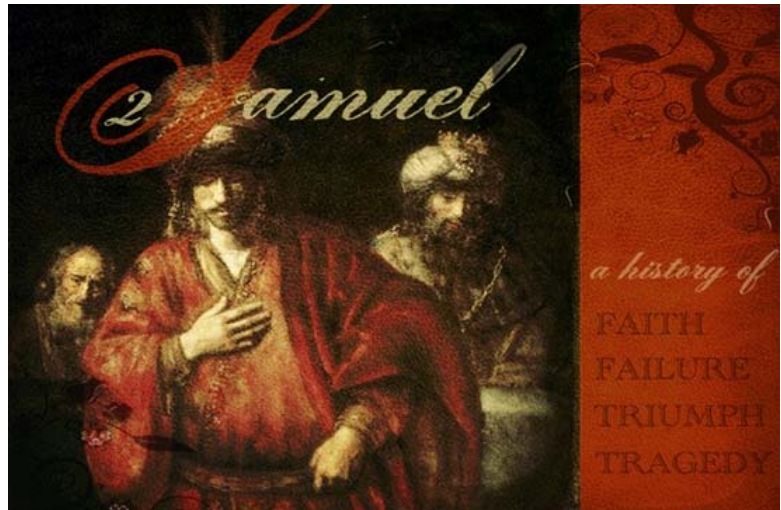
2 Samuel 14
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Related Topics: David; Absalom; Joab;
Absalom's return and reconciliation to David

REVIEW

In the previous chapter we witnessed the beginning of the trouble in the household of David that was prophesied by Nathan following David's sins of adultery and murder. The players in that tragedy were Absalom, Amnon and Tamar. Absalom and Tamar were the children of David through David's wife named Maacah, who was the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur. (*2 Samuel 3:3*).



Now Joab the son of Zeruiah knew that the king's heart went out to Absalom. Amnon was David's eldest son. He was David's first born son, born from his wife Ahinoam the Jezreelitess (*2 Samuel 3:2*). He was the half brother to both Absalom and Tamar.

Amnon lusted after his half-sister. He was so sexually obsessed with his sister Tamar that he becomes physically ill.

Amnon had a cousin named Jonadab. He was a very gifted and bright young man who used his intellectual skills for wicked things. He advised Amnon how to gratify his lust for her and that began a disastrous chain of events.

We noted that Jonadab was an ungodly friend, who was in reality a spiritual enemy who advised Amnon how to gratify his lusts and ruin his soul.

Amnon finally got Tamar alone. *2 Samuel 13:14* She pleaded with Amnon to not oppress or humble and abuse her by forcing her to have sex with him. Then Amnon, in order to satisfy his lusts, oppressed, humbled and abused her by forcing her to have sex with him.

Having gratified the lust that had made him sick at the beginning, he was now made sick by the object he so desired!! He had Tamar thrown out and bolted the door behind her. When David heard what Amnon had done he was angry, but did nothing. Remember last night's Credo study, Adam did nothing when Eve was being tempted.

When Absalom found out what Amnon had done to his Tamar he was very cold and calculating. He waited two years and then planned and carried out the execution of Amnon, like a mob hit carried out by hit men.

CHAPTER 13 ended with

37But Absalom fled and went to Talmai the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And David mourned for his son day after day. 38So Absalom fled and went to Geshur, and was there three years. Absalom's grandfather was the king of Geshur 39And the spirit of the king longed to go out to Absalom, because he was comforted about Amnon, since he was dead.

1Now Joab the son of Zeruah knew that the king's heart went out to Absalom.

KEY INSIGHT:

Literally, "the heart of the king on Absalom". The preposition does not usually mean "toward," but "against". *ver. 13*. This same phrase occurs again only in *Dan. 11:28*, and certainly there implies hostility.

Dan 11:28 ...but his heart shall be set against the holy covenant.

Some translate the passage as "the king's heart was still set against Absalom." Others translate it "the king could not forget Absalom."

In a negative sense. Others say it can be read in a more neutral way indicating that David was simply thinking constantly about him.

2 Samuel 14:2...And Joab sent to Tekoa

This town is famous as the birthplace of the Prophet Amos. Also the birthplace of Joab, 5 miles to the south of Bethlehem and right on the borders of the great Judean wilderness that was south and east of Jerusalem.

and brought from there a wise woman and said to her, "Pretend to be a mourner and put on mourning garments. Do not anoint yourself with oil, but behave like a woman who has been mourning many days for the dead. 3Go to the king and speak thus to him." So Joab put the words in her mouth.

This plan would make no sense if Joab had perceived in David an attitude of kindness and compassion for Absalom. We know that Joab was fiercely loyal to David. It would appear that Joab did this to protect David. Figuring that it was dangerous to have Absalom stewing away in a distant country, And that the safest thing to do was to bring about reconciliation between father and son.

Joab decides to soften David's heart towards Absalom by bringing before David a hardship case that involved a widow and her estrangement from her son. Every detail was planned to insure that David would let Absalom return. She was a widow, which would invite sympathy. She lived at some distance from Jerusalem which made it difficult to easily know or inquire of the facts of her case. She was old which gave more dignity to her story. She wore the clothes of mourning to heighten the effect. She brought a case of family estrangement to David to tug on David's heart regarding David's estrangement from Absalom. He made sure that her story was not too similar lest it arouse David's suspicions.

4When the woman of Tekoa came to the king, she fell on her face to the ground and paid homage and said, "Save me, O king." 5And the king said to her, "What is your trouble?" She answered, "Alas, I am a widow; my husband is dead. 6And your servant had two sons, and they quarreled with one another in the field. There was no one to separate them, and one struck the other and killed him. 7And now the whole clan has risen against your servant, and they say, 'Give up the man who struck his brother, that we may put him to death for the life of his brother whom he killed.' And so they would destroy the heir also. Thus they would quench my coal that is left and leave to my husband neither name nor remnant on the face of the earth."

The story of the woman of Tekoa involves the custom of the avenger of blood. The avenger of blood had the responsibility of avenging the death of a member of the family. The cities of refuge mentioned in *Numbers 35:9-34* were meant to protect someone guilty of manslaughter from being killed by an avenger of blood before the case could be heard properly.

8Then the king said to the woman, "Go to your house, and I will give orders concerning you." 9And the

woman of Tekoa said to the king, "On me be the guilt, my lord the king, and on my father's house; let the king and his throne be guiltless." 10The king said, "If anyone says anything to you, bring him to me, and he shall never touch you again." 11Then she said, "Please let the king invoke the Lord your God, that the avenger of blood kill no more, and my son be not destroyed." He said, "As the Lord lives, not one hair of your son shall fall to the ground."

The plan worked. Her circumstances, a story worthy of being featured on Oprah. Her widow's needs. Her age. Her impressive ability to play the part. All worked together to emotionally move the king to the desired ruling.

"As the Lord lives, not one hair of your son shall fall to the ground."

This is what Joab hoped to hear. David, moved by emotion, ignores the cause of justice for the sake of sympathy. David had a responsibility as the king and chief judge of Israel.

QUOTE:

Alan Redpath — "He guaranteed safety at the expense of justice, and immediately the farsighted woman captured him in her trap."

12Then the woman said, "Please let your servant speak a word to my lord the king." He said, "Speak." 13And the woman said, "Why then have you planned such a thing against the people of God? For in giving this decision the king convicts himself, inasmuch as the king does not bring his banished one home again."

Literally: and by the king's speaking this word he is as one guilty, unless he fetch home again his banished one. Wow, this is just like when Nathan confronted David in regards to Bathsheba and Uriah. David has once again pronounced sentence on himself without realizing it.

KEY OBSERVATION:

"Why then have you planned such a thing against the people of God?" She starts talking about the national interests of Israel. A couple of thoughts here. At the request of a widow, the king of Israel was willing to pardon the lowest of his subjects for the crime of murdering his brother, but he is not willing to pardon his son Absalom, whose restoration to the palace was desired by the whole nation. Failing to reconcile with Absalom was a threat against Israel. Every day that passed without genuine reconciliation caused Absalom to grow more and more bitter. This made Absalom a threat to Israel, and David was allowing it to happen.

14We must all die; we are like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again.

The woman of Tekoa is wisely speaking to David about the urgency of reconciliation. "David, we all die and then the opportunity for reconciliation is over. Do it now." But God will not take away life, and he devises means so that the banished one will not remain an outcast. The woman is challenging David: "Find a way to do it, David. God finds a way to bring us back to Himself."

CRUCIAL

Up to this point, Joab and the woman having been framing everything on mere emotional response to tragedy and injustice. And David has been responding and rendering judgment on the basis of mere emotion. It is true that God finds a way, but not at the expense of justice. God reconciles us not on the basis that He feels bad about our estrangement from Him. God reconciles us by satisfying justice not by ignoring justice. Many people are confused about this. Ask them why they can be forgiven and they will respond because God loves them. Wrong. God does love them, but they can never be forgiven merely because God loves them! They can only be forgiven because of the death of Jesus in our place on the cross. The Father sent the Son because He loves us. The Son gladly went because He loves us. But it is only by way of the death of Jesus on the cross that we are delivered from the wrath that is to come. God's love sent and gave. Christ's death reconciles!

2 Cor 5:20-21

20Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that

in him we might become the righteousness of God.

This is so awesome. God has devised a way to bring the banished back to Himself. A way that they might not ever be expelled from Him again. The way is through the person and work of Jesus. The way was made when He stood in the place of guilty sinners as He hung on the cross and received the punishment that we deserved. That is why Jesus said "I am the Way".

The woman is going to return to the story of her own affairs. To make the king believe that nothing or no one had led her to tell the story other than her own need.

15Now I have come to say this to my lord the king because the people have made me afraid, and your servant thought, 'I will speak to the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his servant. 16For the king will hear and deliver his servant from the hand of the man who would destroy me and my son together from the heritage of God.' 17And your servant thought, 'The word of my lord the king will set me at rest,' for my lord the king is like the angel of God to discern good and evil. The Lord your God be with you!' 18Then the king answered the woman, "Do not hide from me anything I ask you." And the woman said, "Let my lord the king speak." 19The king said, "Is the hand of Joab with you in all this? The woman answered and said, "As surely as you live, my lord the king, one cannot turn to the right hand or to the left from anything that my lord the king has said. It was your servant Joab who commanded me; it was he who put all these words in the mouth of your servant. 20In order to change the course of things your servant Joab did this.

Joab knew exactly what strings to pull in David. Joab was loyal to David, but in time we will see that it was not a selfless loyalty.

20..... But my lord has wisdom like the wisdom of the angel of God to know all things that are on the earth." 21Then the king said to Joab, "Behold now, I grant this; go, bring back the young man Absalom." 22And Joab fell on his face to the ground and paid homage and blessed the king. And Joab said, "Today your servant knows that I have found favor in your sight, my lord the king, in that the king has granted the request of his servant." 23So Joab arose and went to Geshur and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. 24And the king said, "Let him dwell apart in his own house; he is not to come into my presence." So Absalom lived apart in his own house and did not come into the king's presence.

DON'T MISS THIS

Joab got what he wanted. Joab got what he thought was best for the nation of Israel. In his own wisdom he concluded that Absalom's reconciliation with David would prevent a rebellion. Tragically, what he did was provide an opportunity for an unrepentant, coldhearted, narcissist to come back to the palace and eventually overthrow the throne of David.

25Now in all Israel there was no one so much to be praised for his handsome appearance as Absalom. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. 26And when he cut the hair of his head (for at the end of every year he used to cut it; when it was heavy on him, he cut it), he weighed the hair of his head (who does that but someone enthralled with his own hair), two hundred shekels by the king's weight.

Five pounds of hair. The hair he was so proud of would cost him his life!

27There were born to Absalom three sons, and one daughter whose name was Tamar. She was a beautiful woman. 28So Absalom lived two full years in Jerusalem, without coming into the king's presence.

Absalom was back, but without genuine repentance, restoration and reconciliation.

CRUCIAL

David permitted Absalom to return without one word of confession, one symptom of repentance. That is a breeding ground for trouble.

QUOTE:

F.B. Meyer — The king was overmastered by the father; and the result was disastrous. It shook the respect of his people, undermined the foundations of just government, slackened the bands of every family in the land, and confirmed Absalom in his willful and obstinate career. "What!" said he to himself, "does my father bid me come back without conditions? Does he demand no confession or reparation? Then he condones my sin."

During these two years we Absalom grew more and more bitter against David.

29Then Absalom sent for Joab, to send him to the king, but Joab would not come to him. And he sent a second time, but Joab would not come. 30Then he said to his servants, "See, Joab's field is next to mine, and he has barley there; go and set it on fire." So Absalom's servants set the field on fire.

We might say that in a sense Absalom is David's prodigal son. What a huge contrast between Absalom and the Prodigal Son of Jesus' parable. The Prodigal Son came back humble and repentant. Absalom came back burning Joab's fields. Having said that, sometimes God gets our attention by setting our "barley field" on fire.

31Then Joab arose and went to Absalom at his house and said to him, "Why have your servants set my field on fire?" 32Absalom answered Joab, "Behold, I sent word to you, 'Come here, that I may send you to the king, to ask, "Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me to be there still." Now therefore let me go into the presence of the king, and if there is guilt in me, let him put me to death.'"

CRUCIAL:

This statement reflects Absalom's sense that he was fully justified in what he did in killing Absalom, in his bitterness towards David.

33Then Joab went to the king and told him, and he summoned Absalom. So he came to the king and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king,

Don't miss this. Absalom pretends submission to David's authority, but his heart was full of calculated designs to secure the throne for himself. Note well that some people fault David for not stepping actively towards restoration.

QUOTE:

Jamieson, Fausset, Brown —

Whatever error David committed in authorizing the recall of Absalom, he displayed great prudence and command over his feelings afterwards—for his son was not admitted into his father's presence but was confined to his own house and the society of his own family. This slight severity was designed to bring him to sincere repentance, on perceiving that his father had not fully pardoned him, as well as to convince the people of David's abhorrence of his crime.

The two years only served to harden Absalom's heart. The heat of trial or adversity will harden or soften. The outcome depends on the substance exposed to it.

Illustration: Wax or clay in the sun. David's caution proved that Absalom was an unrepentant murderer. And the king kissed Absalom. Don't miss this. David offered Absalom forgiveness without any repentance or resolution of the wrong.

QUOTE:

Alan Redpath — "David's forgiveness of Absalom was completely inadequate, leading to a further outbreak of sin. God's forgiveness of a man's soul is completely adequate, and a great deterrent to continued sin."

QUOTE:

Alan Redpath — “May God write it on your soul: if the pardon you want is that God should wink at your sin, He will not do it.”

Don't miss this! David was willing to have the kiss of peace without the truth. He failed Absalom and he failed Israel. What a warning for parents and for those in leadership in the local church.

QUOTE:

A.W. Pink — His better judgment blinded by intemperate affection for his son, David invited Absalom to the palace. “David’s inordinate tenderness only paved the way for Absalom’s open rebellion. Terrible warning! Deal tenderly with evil, and it will, assuredly, rise to a head and crush you in the end. On the other hand, meet evil with a face of flint, and victory is sure. Sport not with the serpent, but at once crush it beneath your feet.”

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