

II Samuel Lesson 14

II Samuel Chapter 14

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Memory verses for this week: *Prov 1:4 To give subtlety to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.*

Introduction: This next chapter presents the scheme devised by Joab to bring Absalom back to David. The king at first, though longing to see his son, could not bring himself to face him. Finally, however, Absalom conspired events so that he was brought to David.

I. The Recall of Absalom

2 Sam 14:1 Now Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart was toward Absalom.

2 Sam 14:2 And Joab sent to Tekoah, and fetched thence a wise woman, and said unto her, I pray thee, feign thyself to be a mourner, and put on now mourning apparel, and anoint not thyself with oil, but be as a woman that had a long time mourned for the dead:

2 Sam 14:3 And come to the king, and speak on this manner unto him. So Joab put the words in her mouth.

The cousin of David and his longtime general perceived David's confused emotions toward Absalom. He hatched a scheme to bring Absalom to him.

Joab sent for a woman from Tekoah (a city likely in Judah) known to be **wise**. The word translated her (Mkx *chakam*) can also have the idea of 'cunning.' This woman evidently had a reputation for being a good actress. Joab directed her to portray herself before the king as a woman in mourning and he told her what to say.

2 Sam 14:4 And when the woman of Tekoah spake to the king, she fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance, and said, Help, O king.

2 Sam 14:5 And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, I am indeed a widow woman, and mine husband is dead.

2 Sam 14:6 And thy handmaid had two sons, and they two strove together in the field, and there was none to part them, but the one smote the other, and slew him.

2 Sam 14:7 And, behold, the whole family is risen against thine handmaid, and they said, Deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him, for the life of his brother whom he slew; and we will destroy the heir also: and so they shall quench my coal which is left, and shall not leave to my husband neither name nor remainder upon the

earth.

This actress went to David with the story that Joab had concocted. Though the circumstances of this imaginary story were different from David's family, the real issue was the bitter estrangement between David and Absalom. Moreover, as in the story which Joab had created, Absalom had in fact killed his brother. Implicit is that much of David's family thought that vengeance should be wreaked upon Absalom for his deed.

2 Sam 14:8 And the king said unto the woman, Go to thine house, and I will give charge concerning thee.

2 Sam 14:9 And the woman of Tekoah said unto the king, My lord, O king, the iniquity be on me, and on my father's house: and the king and his throne be guiltless.

2 Sam 14:10 And the king said, Whosoever saith ought unto thee, bring him to me, and he shall not touch thee any more.

2 Sam 14:11 Then said she, I pray thee, let the king remember the LORD thy God, that thou wouldest not suffer the revengers of blood to destroy any more, lest they destroy my son. And he said, As the LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth.

2 Sam 14:12 Then the woman said, Let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak one word unto my lord the king. And he said, Say on.

2 Sam 14:13 And the woman said, Wherefore then hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God? for the king doth speak this thing as one which is faulty, in that the king doth not fetch home again his banished.

David took the bait. **"And the king said unto the woman, Go to thine house, and I will give charge concerning thee."** David informed her that he would look into this matter and give her a judgment. It would seem that the woman suddenly became frightened realizing that a royal inquiry was about to begin into her false story. David, not understanding her story was a parable and assured her that his protection would be upon her. The woman of Tekoah further appealed to David's justice. She pled that those seeking vengeance would not harm her, or her son. David therefore solemnly swore by the name of Jehovah that no harm would come to him.

In verse 12, the actress of Tekoah, therefore got down to why she was really there. She asked the king if she could bring up one last thing. He said, in effect, go ahead. She raised the issue. After having obtained the audience of David and having received assurance from him of justice, she then boldly charged the king himself with being faulty. The word translated (Mva *ashem*) literally means 'guilty.' **She drove home her point: "the king doth not fetch home again his banished."** Clearly, she was referring to Absalom.

2 Sam 14:14 For we must needs die, and are as water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person: yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him.

2 Sam 14:15 Now therefore that I am come to speak of this thing unto my lord the king, it is because the people have made me afraid: and thy handmaid said, I will now speak unto the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his handmaid.

2 Sam 14:16 For the king will hear, to deliver his handmaid out of the hand of the man that would destroy me and my son together out of the inheritance of God.

The woman boldly continued, “For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person: yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him.”

She implied that all will die like water being spilt. consequently, Amnon had died, although prematurely. The phrase **“neither doth God respect any person”** literally has the sense “neither does God take every soul.”

The idea is that God does not slay every guilty person, and He certainly had not done so to Absalom. God had already devised means whereby a banished one (the guilty party) might go to a city of refuge. **The woman claimed that she came on behalf of her son and the king had assured her that no harm would come to her son.**

Therefore, by implication, David ought to do the same for Absalom. Of interest is that the woman still continued to act out her cover story. She further hinted that there was unrest amongst the people over how the matter of Absalom had been handled.

2 Sam 14:17 Then thine handmaid said, The word of my lord the king shall now be comfortable: for as an angel of God, so is my lord the king to discern good and bad: therefore the LORD thy God will be with thee.

2 Sam 14:18 Then the king answered and said unto the woman, Hide not from me, I pray thee, the thing that I shall ask thee. And the woman said, Let my lord the king now speak.

2 Sam 14:19 And the king said, Is not the hand of Joab with thee in all this? And the woman answered and said, As thy soul liveth, my lord the king, none can turn to the right hand or to the left from ought that my lord the king hath spoken: for thy servant Joab, he bade me, and he put all these words in the mouth of thine handmaid:

2 Sam 14:20 To fetch about this form of speech hath thy servant Joab done this thing: and my lord is wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth.

She concluded her speech before the king by praising him. “Then thine handmaid said, The word of my lord the king shall now be comfortable: for as an angel of God, so is my lord the king to discern good and bad: therefore the LORD thy God will be with thee. “

She left off by 'buttering up' David and assuring him that the Lord would give him insight into the matter of Absalom. David by now was suspicious of this bold intrusion into his personal affairs. David invoked the woman to be totally honest with him. She replied for him to continue. David evidently knew that Joab favored bringing Absalom back. He already had cause to question Joab's loyalty.

David pointedly asked the woman if Joab was behind her intrusion. She admitted that Joab had put her up to it. *She concluded her appearance in complimenting David further by noting David as wise and insightful to perceive "all things that are in the earth."* The word translated as earth (Ura eretz) is most frequently rendered as 'land.' She in effect applauded David for perceiving what was going on in the land—in his kingdom. He suspected who had put her up to what she had done. As the following text will indicate, David took the hint, but did so only half-heartedly. **His emotions were still in conflict.**

II. David's Half Hearted Forgiveness of Absalom

2 Sam 14:21 And the king said unto Joab, Behold now, I have done this thing: go therefore, bring the young man Absalom again.

2 Sam 14:22 And Joab fell to the ground on his face, and bowed himself, and thanked the king: and Joab said, To day thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant.

David ordered Joab to go and bring Absalom to Jerusalem. Joab did obeisance to the king and thanked him for being gracious. He also admitted that he had been the instigator behind all of this. His thanking David for his grace may also be linked to the assumption that David had finally forgiven him for his murder of Abner.

2 Sam 3:30 So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle.

2 Sam 14:23 So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem.

2 Sam 14:24 And the king said, Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face. So Absalom returned to his own house, and saw not the king's face.

David allowed Absalom to come home, but he would not see him. It is clear that David still could not bring himself to forgive Absalom for what he had done. David's sin years before still kept him miserable. Indeed, the harvest of sin is long and bitter. Moreover, as events will unfold, David would have been wiser to ignore Joab's device and to have left Absalom at Geshur.

III. Absalom Has Great Beauty

2 Sam 14:25 But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him.

2 Sam 14:26 And when he polled his head, (for it was at every year's end that he polled it: because the hair was heavy on him, therefore he polled it:) he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels after the king's weight.

2 Sam 14:27 And unto Absalom there were born three sons, and one daughter, whose name was Tamar: she was a woman of a fair countenance.

The narrative now turns to Absalom and his designs. Absalom, though not in the king's favor, nevertheless became very popular in Israel. He is described as being altogether handsome with no flaw in his physical appearance. The word translated as **polled** (xlg *galach*) simply means to cut or to shave. Evidently Absalom had thick beautiful hair and that he only cut it off once a year.

In fact, the weight of his hair amounted to two hundred shekels. Precisely how much that was is not clear. However, what is clear is that Absalom had a thick head of hair. In verse 27, further details of Absalom's life in Jerusalem are noted. The bible says he fathered three sons and one daughter. He evidently named his daughter after his sister Tamar. She is described as being beautiful in her appearance.

2 Sam 14:28 So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not the king's face.

2 Sam 14:29 Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to have sent him to the king; but he would not come to him: and when he sent again the second time, he would not come.

2 Sam 14:30 Therefore he said unto his servants, See, Joab's field is near mine, and he hath barley there; go and set it on fire. And Absalom's servants set the field on fire.

2 Sam 14:31 Then Joab arose, and came to Absalom unto his house, and said unto him, Wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire?

2 Sam 14:32 And Absalom answered Joab, Behold, I sent unto thee, saying, Come hither, that I may send thee to the king, to say, Wherefore am I come from Geshur? it had been good for me to have been there still: now therefore let me see the king's face; and if there be any iniquity in me, let him kill me.

Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not the king's face. Five years had passed since he had murdered his brother. No doubt having learned of Joab's intercession on his behalf earlier, Absalom sent for Joab whom was to be sent to the king. Joab would not come to him.

Absalom sent again the second time, he would not come. Joab evidently figured he had pressed his luck far enough in trying to reconcile David and Absalom. Therefore, he ignored Absalom's messages. In verse 30, **Joab continued to ignore Absalom's messages, and Absalom decides to get Joab's attention.** Absalom sent his servants

to burn Joab's barley field. Absalom's intent was simple. He wanted to talk to Joab. He soon got his wish. **Joab rushed over to Absalom's place and wanted to know why he burned his field?**" Absalom had gotten his attention.

The immaturity and arrogance of Absalom is apparent. He wanted his way. He complained to Joab that what good was it that he had brought him from Geshur. As far as he was concerned, he would have been better off if he had stayed there. He demanded that Joab arrange an audience with his father. He further had the impudence to say, "and if there be *any* iniquity in me, let him kill me."

2 Sam 14:33 So Joab came to the king, and told him: and when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king: and the king kissed Absalom.

Joab evidently told David what Absalom had done. David allowed an audience with his son. Absalom evidently was contrite before his father in bowing himself to the ground before him. David therefore kissed him. This at the least was in fatherly love to his long estranged son. However, there is no indication that there was any true reconciliation. The following chapters will demonstrate that.

Genesis 9:6 Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

If we let private affections stand in the way of public duty, we may justly expect that God will make the one whom our foolish pity spares, a scourge upon us.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.