

2 Samuel 14

Verses 1 - 3

Now Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart *was drawn* toward Absalom. ² So Joab sent *a messenger* to Tekoa and brought a wise woman from there, and said to her, "Please follow mourning rites, and put on mourning garments now, and do not anoint yourself with oil but be like a woman who has been mourning for the dead for many days. ³ Then go to the king and speak to him in this way." So Joab put the words in her mouth.

Now Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart *was drawn* toward Absalom.

David wanted his son to return but then refused to see Absalom's face for two years after he returned to Jerusalem. David loved his son but had to set an example to his other sons and the public that they cannot take the law into their own hands. However, his return did not turn out good for David or Absalom.

² So Joab sent *a messenger* to Tekoa and brought a wise woman from there

See Map 1405



Tekoa is about ten miles south of Jerusalem. Joab was reared near Tekoa and he might have known the wise woman. Tekoa was the residence of the prophet Amos.

³ Then go to the king and speak to him in this way.” So Joab put the words in her mouth.

Joab used a wise woman to deliver a message to the king but he gave her the exact words that she was to speak. Even when a message is scripted it's always good to send a capable messenger.

Verses 4 - 7

⁴ Now when the woman of Tekoa spoke to the king, she fell on her face to the ground and prostrated herself, and said, “Help, O king!” ⁵ And the king said to her, “What is *troubling* you?” And she answered, “Truly I am a widow, for my husband is dead. ⁶ And your servant had two sons, but the two of them fought in the field, and there was no one to save them from each other, so one struck the other and killed him. ⁷ Now behold, the entire family has risen against your servant, and they have said, ‘Hand over the one who struck his brother, so that we may put him to death for the life of his brother whom he killed, and eliminate the heir as well.’ So they will extinguish my coal which is left, so as to leave my husband neither name nor remnant on the face of the earth.”

⁴ Now when the woman of Tekoa spoke to the king, she fell on her face to the ground and prostrated herself, and said, “Help, O king!”

Nathan told David an alleged court case (a parable) to get a judgment from David and then used it against him. Joab does the same thing. Joab's words were not from God like they were in the case with Nathan but they were effective.

⁶ And your servant had two sons, but the two of them fought in the field, and there was no one to save them from each other, so one struck the other and killed him.

If this story were true it would be a tragic situation. The woman had lost one son and the other son would stand trial for murder and would most likely be found guilty and receive the death penalty. This meant there would be no son to carry on the family name.

Verses 8 - 11

⁸ Then the king said to the woman, “Go to your home, and I will issue orders concerning you.” ⁹ The woman of Tekoa said to the king, “My lord, the king, the guilt is on me and my father’s house, but the king and his throne are guiltless.” ¹⁰ So the king said, “Whoever speaks to you, bring him to me, and he will not touch you anymore.” ¹¹ Then she said, “May the king please remember the Lord your God, so *that* the avenger of blood will not continue to destroy, otherwise they will destroy my son.” And he said, “As the Lord lives, not one hair of your son shall fall to the ground.”

⁹ The woman of Tekoa said to the king, “My lord, the king, the guilt is on me and my father’s house, but the king and his throne are guiltless.”

According to the law the son would have to flee to a city of refuge, and there would have to be a trial. If the death of his brother was determined to be pre-meditated, he would be put to death. If he was found innocent, he still had to stay there until the High Priest died.

See Numbers 35:12

¹² The cities shall serve you as a refuge from the avenger, so that the one who commits manslaughter does not die until he stands before the congregation for trial.

Verse 12 is quoted here but it is best to read all of chapter 35 to get the fuller picture.

The woman knew the law concerning this matter but she wanted David to override the established law of God in this case. However, no such provision is given in the law that allowed a king to do such a thing. If David overruled the law he would be guilty of breaking the law but the woman says that that guilt should be laid on her. She wanted to free David of any guilt being put on him or the throne for this action.

¹¹ Then she said, “May the king please remember the Lord your God, so *that the avenger of blood will not continue to destroy, otherwise they will destroy my son.*”

If the court case went forward her son would lose his life. The only way to prevent that from happening would be for David as king to step in and make a decree that her son was free from prosecution concerning this crime.

And he said, “As the Lord lives, not one hair of your son shall fall to the ground.”

David had no authority as the king of Israel to make this promise but who would dare go against a decree from the king?

Verses 12 - 17

Then the woman said, “Please let your maidservant speak a word to my lord the king.” And he said, “Speak.” ¹³ **The woman said, “Why then have you planned such a thing against the people of God? For in speaking this word the king is as one who is guilty, *in that* the king does not bring back his banished one.** ¹⁴ **For we will surely die and are like water spilled on the ground which cannot be gathered up again. Yet God does not take away life, but plans ways so that the banished one will not be cast out from him.** ¹⁵ **Now the reason I have come to speak this word to my lord the king is that the people have made me afraid; so your maidservant said, ‘Let me now speak to the king, perhaps the king will perform the request of his maidservant.** ¹⁶ **For the king will hear and deliver his maidservant from the hand of the man who would destroy both me and my son from the inheritance of God.’** ¹⁷ **Then your maidservant said, ‘Please let the word of my lord the king be comforting, for as the angel of God, so is my lord the king to discern good and evil. And may the Lord your God be with you.’”**

¹³ **The woman said, “Why then have you planned such a thing against the people of God? For in speaking this word the king is as one who is guilty, *in that* the king does not bring back his banished one.**

David had already made a judgment in favor of the woman’s son so she revealed the true purpose of her mission. If David believed her son deserved to be forgiven then how could he still harbor resentment against Absalom?

The law said the son should die for killing his brother but the law of Mercy triumphs over the law of Judgment.

See James 2:13

¹² **So speak, and so act, as those who are to be judged by *the* law of freedom.**

¹³ **For judgment *will be* merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.**

Yet God does not take away life, but plans ways so that the banished one will not be cast out from him.

David was a good example of this truth. According to the law, David should have been put to death for his adultery with Bathsheba and killing Uriah but God choose not to put him to death.

This is the Gospel message in a nut shell. God has taken the punishment that we deserve and laid it on Christ.

¹⁷ Then your maidservant said, ‘Please let the word of my lord the king be comforting, for as the angel of God, so is my lord the king to discern good and evil. And may the Lord your God be with you.’”

God made David King that he might rule with true justice. The law demanded judgment but God has always judged man by His grace. This was true before the law came into existence (1446 BC), while the law was in effect, and after the law was replaced by the New Covenant (28 AD). So God’s grace has been in effect through all of human history.

Verses 18 - 20

¹⁸ Then the king answered and said to the woman, “Please do not hide anything from me that I am about to ask you.” And the woman said, “Let my lord the king please speak.” ¹⁹ So the king said, “Is the hand of Joab with you in all this?” And the woman replied, “As your soul lives, my lord the king, no one can turn to the right or to the left from anything that my lord the king has spoken. Indeed, it was your servant Joab who commanded me, and it was he who put all these words in the mouth of your servant. ²⁰ In order to change the appearance of things your servant Joab has done this thing. But my lord is wise, like the wisdom of the angel of God, to know all that is on the earth.”

¹⁹ So the king said, “Is the hand of Joab with you in all this?” Indeed, it was your servant Joab who commanded me, and it was he who put all these words in the mouth of your servant.

Joab knew the king wanted his son back and what better way to make it happen then by showing David that if he was willing to forgive a stranger who had committed murder how much more his own son who had committed the same offense.

But my lord is wise, like the wisdom of the angel of God, to know all that is on the earth.”

Joab picked a woman that knew how to use flattery.

Verses 21 - 24

²¹ Then the king said to Joab, “Behold now, I will certainly do this thing; go then, bring back the young man Absalom.” ²² And Joab fell on his face to the ground, prostrated himself, and blessed the king; then Joab said, “Today your servant knows that I have found favor in your sight, my lord the king, in that the king has performed the request of his servant.” ²³ So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. ²⁴ However, the king said, “He shall return to his own house, but he shall not see my face.” So Absalom returned to his own house and did not see the king’s face.

“Today your servant knows that I have found favor in your sight, my lord the king, in that the king has performed the request of his servant.”

It seems that Joab had a vested interest in bringing Absalom back. Was this done to benefit David or Joab?

²⁴ However, the king said, “He shall return to his own house, but he shall not see my face.”

Just as God forgave David but punished him for his sin so now David forgives his son but punishes him for his sin. However, this is not the end of the story about Absalom.

Verses 25 - 27

²⁵ Now in all Israel there was no one as handsome as Absalom, so highly praised; from the sole of his foot to the top of his head there was no impairment in him.

²⁶ And when he cut the hair of his head (and it was at the end of every year that he cut *it*, because it was heavy on him, so he cut it), he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels by the king’s weight. ²⁷ And to Absalom there were born three sons, and one daughter whose name was Tamar; she was a woman of beautiful appearance.

²⁵ Now in all Israel there was no one as handsome as Absalom, so highly praised; from the sole of his foot to the top of his head there was no impairment in him.

Absalom was the son of a handsome king and his mother was of royal descent. We don't know much about his mother from scripture but David had a knack for attracting beautiful woman. We know Abigail and Bathsheba were beautiful woman.

²⁶ And when he cut the hair of his head (and it was at the end of every year that he cut *it*, because it was heavy on him, so he cut it), he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels by the king's weight.

The weight of his hair was around 3 to 4 pounds. Absalom's hair was extraordinary but it would lead to his death in the end.

²⁷ And to Absalom there were born three sons, and one daughter whose name was Tamar; she was a woman of beautiful appearance.

Absalom set up a pillar that stated he had no sons to carry on his name.

See 2 Samuel 18:18

¹⁸ Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and set up for himself a memorial stone, which is in the King's Valley, for he said, "I have no son to continue my name." So he named the memorial stone after his own name, and it is called Absalom's Monument to this day.

Some scholars believe that Absalom's 3 sons died during infancy and he set up this memorial to so his name would not be totally forgotten or lost in Israel.

And one daughter whose name was Tamar

It seems likely that she was named after her aunt.

Some scholars believe that this Tamar became the wife of Rehoboam or her daughter became the wife of Rehoboam.

These kinds of facts (what some scholars believe) can be interesting but they can also lead to rabbit holes that require a lot of time to research and add very little to the text and subject at hand.

Verses 28 - 33

²⁸ Now Absalom lived two full years in Jerusalem, yet he did not see the king's face. ²⁹ Then Absalom sent for Joab, to send him to the king, but he would not come to him. So he sent *word* again a second time, but he would not come.

³⁰ Therefore he said to his servants, "See, Joab's plot is next to mine, and he has barley there; go and set it on fire." So Absalom's servants set the plot on fire.

³¹ Then Joab got up, came to Absalom at his house, and said to him, "Why have your servants set my plot on fire?" ³² Absalom answered Joab, "Behold, I sent for you, saying, 'Come here, so that I may send you to the king, to say, "Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me still to be there."' Now then, let me see the king's face, and if there is guilt in me, he can have me executed." ³³ So when Joab came to the king and told him, he summoned Absalom. Then *Absalom* came to the king and prostrated himself with his face to the ground before the king; and the king kissed Absalom.

²⁹ Then Absalom sent for Joab, to send him to the king, but he would not come to him. So he sent *word* again a second time, but he would not come.

Joab had already helped Absalom but he was not inclined to follow up a second or third time.

³⁰ Therefore he said to his servants, "See, Joab's plot is next to mine, and he has barley there; go and set it on fire." So Absalom's servants set the plot on fire.

Absalom knew how to get a response out of Joab.

³² Absalom answered Joab, "Behold, I sent for you, saying, 'Come here, so that I may send you to the king, to say, "Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me still to be there." Now then, let me see the king's face, and if there is guilt in me, he can have me executed."

Absalom was at home in Jerusalem but he might as well be in Geshur because without some standing before the king the people would not listen to him. And he needed the people to put their trust in him in order to form a coalition against the king.

David restored him to his full position of trust and honor which opened the door for Absalom to begin his plans to become king.