

Sunday Night Message

June 6, 2020

2 Samuel 14 – The Restoration of Absalom

Topics – David; Absalom; rebellion

Series – *2 Samuel*

Introduction (v. 1)

In chapter thirteen, we learned of Absalom's murder of his brother Amnon after Amnon had raped Absalom's sister Tamar. Absalom had fled to Geshur, which is to the north of Israel, but probably still part of the overall kingdom of Israel (see map). In chapter fourteen, we will see the events that bring about Absalom's restoration in Israel, and his reconciliation with his father, King David. This happy reunion will not last long, however, as Absalom will rebel against his father and attempt to overthrow him from being the king (2 Samuel 15 – 21).

At the beginning of chapter fourteen, Absalom had been in Geshur for three years, and David had done nothing to bring him back, perhaps for political reasons. Joab, however, knew that David's "*heart was toward Absalom*," meaning that the king desired to restore the relationship with Absalom. It seems that David's personal problems were affecting his ability to perform his duties as the king.

Practical Note – when a leader is dealing with problems at home, it will hinder his ability to lead.

Joab probably is not so much concerned with David's family situation, though he himself is a nephew of David. He is concerned about the kingdom, and he wants David's head back in the game.

Remember, the root of all of these problems that David is facing (and will face) was his sin with Bathsheba. The few moments of pleasure he received from his adultery with Bathsheba would ultimately have to be paid for with years of internal problems within David's family, which spilled over and adversely affected the whole kingdom.

I. The Plot of Joab to Bring Absalom Home (vs. 2 – 20)

Joab hires a "wise woman" from Tekoah to put on a performance for David.

Note – Tekoah was where the prophet Amos was from. He was a herdsman from Tekoah. Tekoah is a country town ten miles south of Jerusalem (see map).

She tells a fictitious story about a situation in her family that causes David to think about his own family. This is almost the same thing the prophet Nathan does to David after his sin with Bathsheba and the murder of Urijah. This woman spins a tale about her two sons, one who killed the other in a fight. The rest of the family wanted the surviving brother to be put to death, but the woman had only this one son left, and wanted him to live to be the heir and to take care of her. David, of course, sides with the woman, just as he did with the poor man who had his ewe lamb taken from him in Nathan's parable (2 Samuel 12:1 – 6). The woman then makes the application for David. She tells David that he should have done the same thing with Absalom, instead of letting him remain in exile.

Verse 2 – “wise (חָכָמָה – *chakam*) woman” – most of the time this Hebrew word, “chakam,” is translated into the English word, “wise.” Sometimes, however, it is translated, “cunning.” It is also the same word translated, “subtil,” in reference to Amnon’s friend Jonadab. You get the idea here in this passage that this wise woman was able to convincingly play the part in this fiction that Joab had devised.

Verse 7 – According to the Law, this son that killed his brother should have been put to death:

“He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death.” (Exodus 21:12; see also Leviticus 24:17)

The family members also had a right to kill the brother because of the laws regarding the revenger of blood (see also v. 11), which basically allowed a family member to avenge the blood of his near relative. (Numbers 35:6 – 8; Deuteronomy 19:1 – 13)

“Quench my coal” – this phrase has to do with preventing this woman from having any descendants. By killing her only remaining so, she would have no heir. The picture presented here was that this last coal (or ember) was needed to keep the fire burning in her family line. God provided some interesting measures in the Law for preserving a person’s “seed,” including commanding a brother to marry his deceased brother’s wife to “raise up seed” to his brother (see Deuteronomy 25:5 – 10; Genesis 38:8; Luke 20:28)

Verse 9 – The woman assures David that if he were to agree to let her son live, any eternal consequences would be placed upon her, not David.

Verse 14 – the woman claims to be speaking on behalf of Israel. The people of Israel loved Absalom, and they probably feel that he was justified in killing his brother Amnon.

Verses 18 – 20 – Although the woman put on a good performance, David figured out that Joab was behind this whole story.

Note – this story spun by Joab through the wise woman bears a striking resemblance to the account of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4:1 – 15.

II. The Pronouncement of David (vs. 21 – 24)

David agrees to send for Absalom, which is what he really wanted anyway. He just needed a little nudge in the right direction.

Verse 22 – Joab was relieved that his plot had worked. He had certainly taken a risk by deceiving the king the way he did. However, Joab knew that David really wanted his son back.

Note – some believe that Joab’s praise and flattery were insincere, and that he was only acting in order to advance his interests.

Verse 24 – David allowed Absalom to return, but he would not see him, which would cause a great deal of bitterness to develop between Absalom and David.

III. The Praising of Absalom (vs. 25 – 27)

Verse 25 – notice that Absalom was a very attractive man – like Saul, he looked like someone that would make a good king. Remember appearances can be deceiving. It was said about the Lord:

"For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him."

(Isaiah 53:2)

Regarding women, the Apostle Paul said:

"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." (1 Timothy 2:9-10)

What matters most is what is on the inside. Absalom was good looking on the outside, but he had some serious issues on the inside.

Verse 26 - Absalom's hair weighed 200 shekels (approximately five and one half pounds).

According to the Holman Bible Dictionary:

There seems to have been three kinds of shekel current in Israel: (1) a temple shekel of about 10 grams (.351 ounces) which depreciated to about 9.8 grams (.345 ounces); (2) the common shekel of about 11.7 grams (.408 ounces), which depreciated to about 11.4 grams (.401 ounces); and (3) the heavy ("royal"?) shekel of about 13 grams (.457 ounces).¹

Verse 27 – Absalom had a beautiful daughter that he named after his beautiful sister.

I wonder what ever happened to Tamar?

Absalom had everything going for him. He seemed to be the perfect human for the next king.

IV. The Presumptiveness of Absalom (vs. 28 – 33)

Verse 28 – Absalom plotted the death of his brother for two years. He was in Geshur for three years, and now he is in Jerusalem for two more years, without being able to see his father.

Vs. 29 – 33 – Absalom uses Joab as the go-between between him and David. Joab at first ignores the request, but then Absalom sets his fields on fire, which gets Joab's attention enough that he will now go the king on Absalom's behalf, and the king agrees to see his son. It appears that all is well. However, we will soon discover that the bitterness in Absalom's heart was only just beginning to become apparent.

Conclusion

All of this was the result of David's sin (See 2 Samuel 12:11 – 12).

¹ M. Pierce Matheney, "Weights and Measures," ed. Chad Brand et al., Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 1665.

In a practical way, David's actions added to his problems with Absalom. He would not demonstrate mercy and forgiveness to his own son, and that neglect caused Absalom to develop hatred toward his father.

"And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4)

"Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged." (Colossians 3:21)

