**2 Samuel 14: Absalom’s Return**

* Amnon was the crown prince. He was the rightful heir to the throne. Had Amnon died of natural causes, Absalom would have been the rightful heir to the throne.
* Absalom was disqualified from the throne due to his ambition and the murder of Amnon.
* In Exodus 20:12, 14 every violent death requires the death of the guilty party.
* *What about David?* David planned the violent death or Uriah not to mention the other men who were fighting on the battlefield with Uriah.
* David, as king, had the prerogative of mercy, which he may exercise provided there was sufficient reason not to apply the rigor of the law.
* With King David the sufficient reason not to apply the rigor of the law was his repentance, submission to God’s will and his trust in God as expressed in the Psalms.
* Even with the sin of King David he was still a man after God’s own heart. King Saul did not believe in repentance.
* Joab was the commander of David’s army. He perceived that the king’s heart went out to Absalom.
* At this point it is not clear what Joab’s motive is in trying to reconcile David with Absalom. *Was he genuinely interested in the reconciliation of David and Absalom or did he have ulterior motives?*
* Joab makes use of a woman from Tekoa to bring about Absalom’s return to Jerusalem from Geshur.
* The first scene of Joab’s ploy is Joab’s instruction to the woman of Tekoa that she is to present herself to King David as a woman in mourning.
* She is to put on mourning garments, she is not to anoint herself with oil, she is to behave like a woman who has been mourning for many days.
* She is to ask for the king’s help. She will explain that she had two sons. They quarreled in an open field with one son killing the other.
* Being a mother, she mourns the loss of the one son but does not want to lose two sons.
* Her family has raised up against her. They want the son who killed his brother to pay with his live.
* She appeals to King David not only as a mother who loves her surviving son. If her son is killed there will be no surviving “heir” for the family. There will be no one to carry on her husband’s name.
* The parable of the woman of Tekoa is similar to the parable of Nathan when Nathan confronted David on his sin with Bathsheba.
* In Nathan’s parable, David did not realize that the parable pertained to him. He was the rich man with many lambs and cattle while Uriah was the poor man with one lamb.
* It was only when Nathan told David that he was the rich man in the parable that he acknowledged his sin before God
* It is clear from the scripture that King David does not recognize himself or Absalom in the woman of Tekoa’s parable.
* In Nathan’s parable, David acknowledges his sin and implores God’s forgiveness. In the parable of the woman of Tekoa it is David who is being asked to forgive his son’s sins.
* The second scene focuses on the dialogue between the woman of Tekoa and King David.
* After hearing the woman of Tekoa’s plea he is filled with compassion for her. David advises that he will give a command or her behalf.
* David assures her that no harm will come to her or her son with his authority and protection as king.
* The woman of Tekoa is bold in asking David if she can speak a word to him.

***“So the woman said: ‘Why, then, do you think the way you do against the people of God? In pronouncing as he has, the king shows himself guilty, in not bringing back his own banished son.’”***

* In the parable of Nathan, David does not realize that he is the rich man.
* When he learns that the rich man had taken the lamb of the poor man to be prepared for the traveler, David burns with indignation stating, *“As the Lord lives, the man who did this deserves to die.”*
* In the parable of the woman of Tekoa, David does not see himself or Absalom.
* David convicts himself in that he shows compassion for the woman and her son in stating that he will protect them while his son Absalom still lives in exile.
* David recognizes that Joab is behind the woman’s intervention. He asks her to answer him honestly if Joab was behind her intervention.
* David comes to terms with this and grants permission for Absalom’s return.
* The third scene is a formal portrayal of Absalom. The description of his physical appearance is like the description of Saul’s physical appearance.
* While both men were physically striking in their physical appearance, they were both self-obsessed and morally corrupted.

2 Samuel 14:28-32; Absalom is Pardoned

* Absalom had returned to Jerusalem, but King David would not meet with him. Two years went by. Absalom sends two messages to Joab requesting that Joab arrange for him to meet with his father.
* Joab did not come to Absalom. To get Joab’s attention, Absalom has his servants set Joab’s fields on fire. To have Joab’s fields set on fire reflects the content of Absalom’s character. There is no action he will not take to get his way. He is aggressive and immoral.
* The prodigal son returned to his father humble and repentant while Absalom returned indignant and burning the fields of Joab when he could not have his way.
* ***“If I am guilty, let him put me to death.”*** There is no repentance in Absalom. In his mind he was completely justified in murdering his brother Amnon for raping his sister.
* The reason that he murdered Amnon was not to avenge the rape of his sister but to be the next in line for the throne.

The Navarre Bible; Joshua – Kings; 2 Samuel; Scepter Publishers; New York; 1986

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