

GOD PORTRAYS MORE WOMEN

by

Grace E. Mc Allister

Copyright © 1956

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE WISE WOMAN OF TEKOA

(II Samuel 14)

KING DAVID HAD BEEN DRINKING from a bitter cup for five or six years. His unhappiness was the result of sin, his own and that of his children. Amnon his son had defiled Tamar the sister of Absalom, and though David had heard about it and was very angry, he had failed to discipline Amnon in any way. Absalom who loved his sister deeply resented the injury done to her, and his father's unreasonable delay in doing anything about it. He hated Amnon and determined to have his revenge. He invited all the sons of King David including Amnon to a sheep-shearing and while they were there his servants at Absalom's command killed Amnon. Absalom instantly fled to Geshur and remained there three years. In time David's sorrow over the death of Amnon was abated, and he yearned for his son Absalom.

Joab, the general of the army, was greatly troubled about the king's continuous grief and determined to persuade him to send for Absalom to come home. He could not do this directly as that would seem an act of impertinence. He remembered when Nathan the prophet had successfully employed a parable to reach the conscience of the king and thought such a plan would succeed again.

Joab was acquainted with a clever woman living in the distant city of Tekoah who agreed to act out a parable which he planned. He instructed her to dress in widow's garments and to approach the king as a most pathetic figure and cry to him, "**Help, O King.**" She was to relate to David that she had lost her husband and then one of her two sons had accidentally killed his brother during a quarrel. Her great trouble at the time was that her husband's family now demanded that the remaining son be killed to avenge the death of his brother. Joab felt sure David would be most sympathetic toward anyone in grief caused by the death of a loved one.

The plan worked well, the woman from Tekoah acted her part as instructed. When she dramatically cried out concerning her husband's relatives: "**They shall quench my coal which is left, and shall not leave to my husband neither name nor remainder upon the earth**" (14:7), the king sought to soothe her by saying, "**Go to thine house, and I will give charge concerning thee**" (14:8).

A man and his family are often called a lamp or a light in Scripture.

Perhaps the thought was that every godly home was another testimony for God on the earth. To illustrate, the day came when Israel refused to permit King David to go into the battles lest he “**quench the light of Israel**” (21:17).

The woman of Tekoah was not content with David’s verbal assurance lest in the multitude of his duties he forget her case. She became more urgent and the king gave his oath that not a hair of her son’s head would fall to the ground.

With the utmost tart and yet courage she applied her parable. How is it that you would give your oath to a poor widow like me to protect my son from the avenger of blood, yet your own boy is in exile because of the murder of his brother, and the people of God want you to bring him back?

Of course the case she presented was entirely different to that of Absalom. His crime was long premeditated and carefully planned while the story she told was of an accidental killing. The city of refuge offered no haven to a willful murderer. According to the law, her son should have fled to the nearest city of refuge and brought his case up and, if it were an accidental murder, he would be safe from the avenger of blood as long as he remained in the city of refuge until the death of the high priest.

The woman continued with her plea. She asked him why he did not bring his son home and added: “**For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again**” (14:14). Did this remind David forcibly of the message he had sent to Joab following the death of Uriah? He had said: “**Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another**” (11:25). The woman concluded her plea with a further argument to David that he bring Absalom home, “**neither doth God respect any person: yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him**” (14:14).

By this time King David discerned the hand of Joab behind all the woman’s acting and demanded of her if that were not the case. She had to admit that it was so, and with a bit of flattery added that the king had the wisdom of an angel and that nothing could be hid from him.

Evidently Joab was in attendance at the interview and the king spoke directly to him. “**Go therefore, bring the young man Absalom again.**” Joab was deeply grateful for the success of his scheme and departed on his errand. But when he returned with Absalom David 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**” (14: 24). Apparently David had certain doubts that he was doing the right thing bringing Absalom back to live as he had done before. He knew that God had said that “**whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed**” (Genesis 9:6). His fatherly compassion warred against his sense of justice.

There is no record of a word of regret or penitence from the handsome, ruthless Absalom.

He was greatly annoyed by his prolonged ostracism and demanded that Joab intercede for his reinstatement with his father the king. He did not ask for any reconciliation. He had no notion of apologizing or regretting his art. Joab tried to put him off by refusing to obey his summons.

So Absalom set Joab's adjoining barley field on fire to force his appearance. God acts so differently. His pleas are many and varied but men persist in turning deaf ears to Him until disaster overtakes them. Then they are sometimes ready to flee to Him.

Joab finally interceded with David for Absalom and David consented to see his son. We read in verse 33 that Absalom "**bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king; and the king kissed Absalom.**" He did not say like the prodigal, "**Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee.**"

David soon learned that mercy to the impenitent only seems to give them license to sin. For it was not long after this that Absalom labored to dethrone David his father and to seize the kingdom for himself. Is it not amazing what some of the people in the Bible are famous for? Absalom had a warped soul in a fine body. He is remembered for his good looks and rascality. Goliath is remembered for his great height, Og for the size of his bed, and Dives for his good clothes and sumptuous food. For what will you and I be remembered?

Thank God, we who deserved eternal banishment from God can be brought back righteously by a just God and a Saviour. David could not be just and the justifier of Absalom. On the cross Christ was made sin for us "**who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him**" (II Corinthians 5:21). "**He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed**" (Isaiah 53:5).

The Lord lifted up His rod—
O Christ, it fell on Thee!
Thou wast forsaken of Thy God;
No distance now for me.
Thy blood beneath that rod has flow'd,
Thy bruising healeth me.

Christ has made atonement for us, the debt is paid, and God is satisfied and is righteously able to open His arms to repentant, returning prodigals. When He hears the words, "**Father, I have sinned,**" He is righteous in showing mercy.

Mercy does not glory over judgment. We are not only forgiven, but have a seat at His table continually enjoying His smile. Our hearts should be grateful, devoted, and loyal to Him.

~ end of chapter 15 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>
