

THE EXILE OF ABSALOM

- I. Contextual Considerations (1 Samuel 13:39 – 14:1)
- A. Chapter 13 ended with the statement that David longed to go forth to Absalom after he was comforted over Amnon's death.
1. The interpretation that is usually given is that David missed Absalom and wanted to bring him back to Israel.
 2. Yet, because he was King, David was forced to uphold the law and remain separate from his son who was guilty of murder.
 3. David is pictured as being torn in two directions and, therefore, weak and indecisive.
 4. Joab and the wise woman of Tekoah are seen as using trickery to put David back on the right path.
- B. However, one must consider carefully the context of this passage.
1. As King, David could have allowed Absalom's return at any time.
 2. In fact, when Absalom did return, David confined him to his own house and would not see or visit him (14:24).
- C. The Bible paints a very different picture of David and this situation.
1. The word for "longed" in 13:39 means, "To end, to cease, to be finished."
 2. The idea seems to be that David desisted from going forth against Absalom – that is, "he gave up plans of pursuit and revenge" (Cambridge).
 3. The word for "comforted" means, "To be sorry; to pity; to console; or to avenge" – it can even mean, "To repent."
 4. David was grieved over the death of Amnon and appears to have been seeking justice.
 5. Remember that Absalom was with his grandfather, David's father-in-law, with whom David did not want to go to war.
- D. Chapter 14 begins with the statement that the "king's heart was toward Absalom."
1. Again, it is assumed that David was longing for his wayward son.
 2. In truth, this verse means that David's mind was on Absalom (LITV, YLT).
 3. David was thinking about the situation – as he should in his role as King and as a father.
- E. It must be remembered that Joab always had his own motives for his actions – and they were seldom righteous.
1. Here, he uses deception and coercion to change the King's mind to his way of thinking.
 2. He was not trying to convince David to do God's will, but Joab's!
- F. Joab was concerned for Absalom because he wanted him to be king following the reign of David.
1. However, Absalom was unable to campaign and gain people to his side if he were exiled from Israel.
 2. Thus, Joab plotted to bring him back to the land – not to seek justice and not with a penitent heart, but to position himself to seek power.
- G. Joab, like many others, had forgotten that God chooses who will rule over the kingdom of Israel.

2 Samuel 14

- II. The Wise Woman Speaks to David (2 Samuel 14:1-20)
- A. The plot of Joab was deceptive yet shrewd.
 - 1. It seems that Joab wanted to use the same technique that had proved fruitful with Nathan the prophet.
 - 2. However, Nathan was delivering the Word of God while Joab is not.
 - B. Joab convinced a woman from Tekoah (about 10 miles south of Jerusalem) to disguise herself as a mourning widow to appeal to David's compassion.
 - C. However, she would actually use this as an opportunity to deliver Joab's message to the King.
 - D. First, she told a story that closely paralleled what had happened between Absalom and Amnon.
 - E. David maintained his integrity and acted judiciously according to the law.
 - 1. There were no witnesses to this supposed murder.
 - 2. Thus, the son of the widow was to be considered innocent until proven guilty.
 - F. The woman continued to plead with David, finally invoking the name of God to trap the King in an oath.
 - G. Once David had made a solemn vow, her demeanor and language changed sharply.
 - H. She accused David of not keeping his word because he had not acted the same toward Absalom and brought him back to Israel.
 - I. She even claimed that God does not banish His children forever, but devises means to bring them back to Him.
 - 1. While this is true, part of God's means of reconciliation is the repentance of the wayward child.
 - 2. Absalom had not repented.
 - J. She tried to claim that she had spoken this way to the King because the people were afraid of what would happen if Absalom did not return.
 - K. But, David saw through her deception and realized that Joab was behind her words.
 - L. In all that follows, it must be remember that David was not deceived by Joab.
- III. The Return of Absalom (2 Samuel 14:21-28)
- A. David gave Joab the command to bring Absalom back to Israel.
 - B. However, he was placed under "house arrest" and not allowed into the royal court or the presence of the King.
 - C. A description of Absalom is given to show why the people desired him to be the next king over Israel.
- IV. The Reconciliation with Absalom (2 Samuel 14:29-33)
- A. Clearly, the character of Absalom had not changed – he was as selfish and violent as ever – and he showed no signs of repentance.
 - B. When Joab failed to answer his summons, Absalom set fire to Joab's fields.
 - C. He wanted to know why he had been brought back if he was to be excluded from the King's presence.
 - D. Joab took his case to the King and David granted him an audience.
 - E. Absalom feigned penitence by bowing before the King.
 - F. Graciously, David forgave his son – kissing him as a sign of reconciliation.